

The Cult of Paul



examining the contrasting lives, values, & theologies
of Jesus Christ and Paul -- Jesus' most zealous “apostle”
and the true father of the modern-day Christian church

via Scaughdt
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“For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but rather – having itching ears – will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires. They will turn away from listening to the Truth and instead wander into the lands of haze and myth.” ~ 2 Timothy 4:3-4

“For ages self-professed prophets and self-lauded scholars have beat upon the anvil that is God's Word, and though the noise of their thunderous blows was often heard – and though many were often led astray by those strikes' most raucous clang, their hammers are becoming more brittle by the hour – and indeed are destined to ultimately shatter, while the anvil itself remains forever whole and fully unharmed.” ~ inspired by Earl Merritt & William Hare

“Everyone who does not abide in the teachings of Christ, but rather goes beyond them, cannot truly know God; while whoever does choose to enliven those teachings shall have both the Father & the Son.” ~ 2 John 1:9

“For the Lord himself will come down from the heavens, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” ~ **Paul** of Tarsus (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

“The Kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they be able to say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘Look, there it is!’ For, in fact, the Kingdom of God is already within you ... Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last; the humble servant of all.” ~ **Jesus** Christ (Luke 17:20-21 & Mark 9:35)

“And who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.” ~ **Paul** of Tarsus (Romans 1:4)

“Why do you call me good? No one is truly good except God alone ... I do not accept glory from human beings.” ~ **Jesus** Christ (Mark 10:18 & John 5:41)

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people ... My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me” ~ **Paul** of Tarsus (Romans 1:18 & 1 Corinthians 4:4)

“The Father judges no one, but rather has given all judgment to the Son ... Indeed, it is you who judge by human standards, while I judge no one ... I do not even judge those who hear my words and do not keep them, for I did not come to judge the world” ~ **Jesus** Christ (John 5:22, John 8:15, & John 12:47)

“For [Christ] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.” ~ **Paul** of Tarsus (1 Corinthians 15:25)

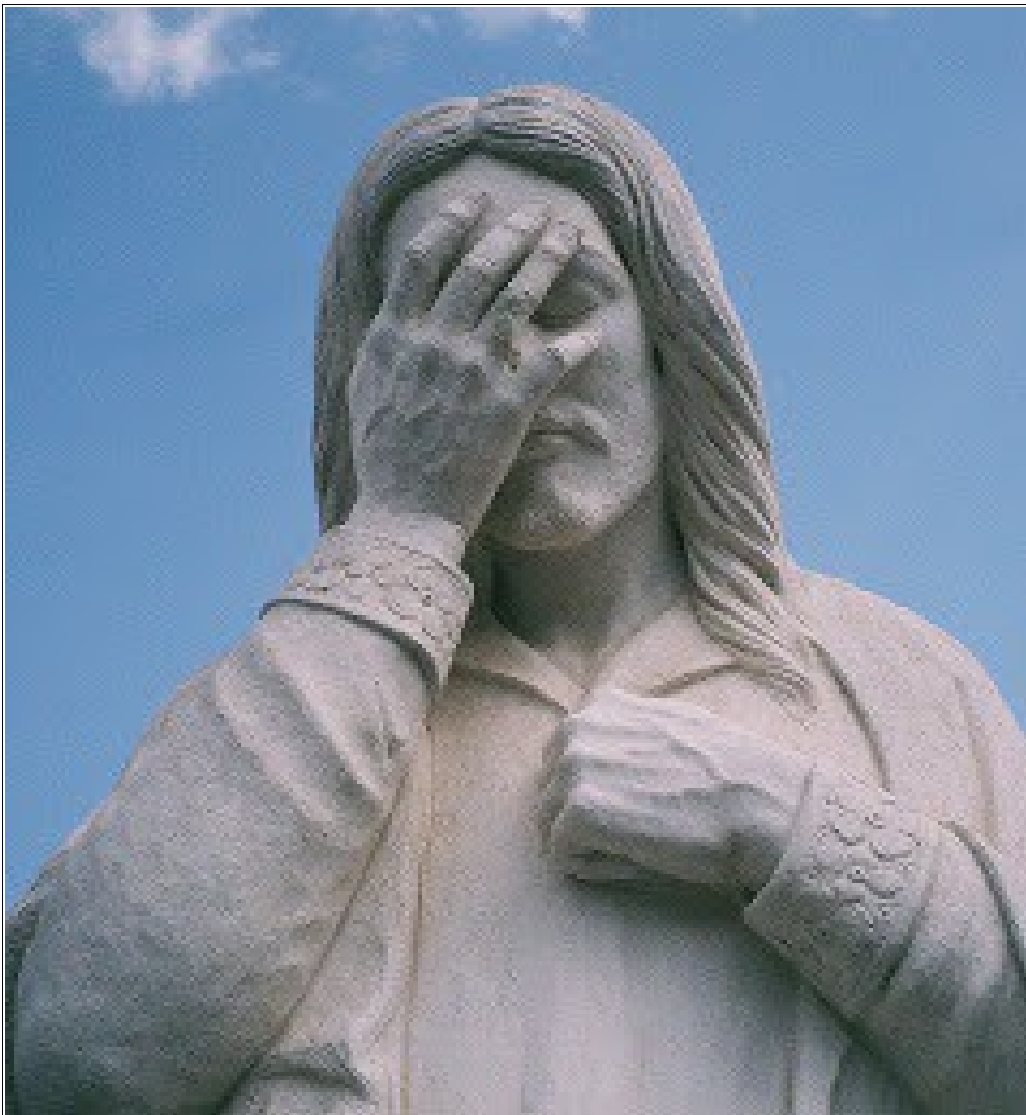
“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you ... Only then you will be considered Children of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful & the wicked ... Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” ~ **Jesus** Christ (Luke 6:27-36)

“I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot ever hope to inherit the Kingdom of God.” ~ **Paul** of Tarsus (1 Corinthians 15:50)

“As you go, proclaim the message that the Kingdom of Heaven is even now at hand ... for God is not the God of the dead but of the living ... and the Kingdom of Heaven is already within you.” ~ **Jesus** Christ (Matthew 10:7 + Matthew 22:32 + Luke 17:20-21)

“I have set you an example, that you should do for one another as I have done for you ... By this others will know that you are my followers: that you show Love to one another ... Anyone who loves me will enliven my teachings ... Indeed, a new command I give you: Love one another. Just as I have Loved you, so you must Love one another ... The Kingdom of God will be give those who produce its Fruit ... In truth, my Father is glorified by this: that you bear much Fruit and become my disciples ... And by this everyone will know that you are my disciples: when you show Love to one another.” ~ **Jesus** Christ (John 13:15 + John 13:35 + John 14:23, John 13:34 + Matthew 21:43, & John 15:8 + John 13:35)

“But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed ... through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are now justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood – effective through faith ... Know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but rather by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ ... Indeed, if you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” ~ **Paul** of Tarsus (Romans 3:21-25, Galatians 2:16, & Romans 10:9)



“No sooner had Jesus knocked over the menacing dragons of religious dogma and spiritual superstition than the 'apostle' Paul boldly set them back upright again. In truth, there is not one word of Pauline Christianity to be found in the gospel utterances of Jesus, and there has thus never been a more monstrous imposition perpetrated than the one where the Christian religion imposed Paul's soul upon the soul of Christ – and this, in Jesus' name no less! ... Almost as egregious, this fresh doctrine of Paul's was one that sought not to topple or even significantly alter the unjust political systems of its day, but was rather designed to coddle them and the corrupt delegates who ran them. As such, it can come as no surprise that The Way of Jesus Christ was suppressed by the time's political authorities (and thereafter all but eliminated by the Christian Church), even as the theology of Paulinism overran the entire western civilized world and was adopted as its official faith.” ~ via George Bernard Shaw

Forward ... the WHY of it all

While engaging my own in-depth study of the Bible over the last several decades, I have been constantly amazed at the vastly different interpretations people have formulated as to its most important spiritual tenets. Indeed, it seemed that no matter who I asked, I was always met with a differing set of responses; responses (even from Christian preachers & self-professed biblical scholars) that often seemed to flagrantly contradict the very Way of Jesus Christ that the Bible's canonical gospels so clearly portrayed. For those of you less familiar with the Bible's specific contents, consider the following examples:

*While the Christian church tells us to willingly tithe a portion of our earnings every Sunday, Jesus was not a fan of the same; preferring instead that we follow his Way and “Give for alms those things that are within ... When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms might be given in secret.” (Luke 11:41 & Matthew 6:3)

*While the church frequently teaches that that God is a God of vengeance and that all “non-believers” are damned to Hell for eternity, Jesus noted instead that “The Father judges no one” (John 5:22), that “I do not judge anyone who hears my words and yet still does not keep them” (John 12:47), and that we are to “Be merciful, just as your [heavenly] Father is merciful ... Do not condemn and you will not be condemned.” (Luke 6:36-37)

*While the church teaches that Salvation comes from verbally professing a faith in Jesus Christ as being “the only Son of God” and one's “personal Savior”, Jesus himself noted that “No one is Good but God alone” (Mark 10:18), that “whomever believes in me believes not in me but in Him who sent me” (John 12:44), that “I do not accept the glory of human beings” (John 5:41), that “If you wish to enter into Life, uphold the Commandments” (Matthew 19:17), and that “If you understand these things, blessed are you while you perform them.” (John 13:17)

*While most church leaders preach that Jesus was sinless and that no one else can hope to attain his level of moral brilliance, Jesus himself begged to differ – stating quite plainly that “the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do, and in fact will do even greater works than these” (John 14:12) and that “On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and that you are in me, and that I am in you.” (John 14:20)

*While the church teaches that Divine Justice is a punishment-based “eye for an eye”, Jesus informed us that God's Love is unconditionally “perfect” (Matthew 5:48 – i.e. without any punishment whatsoever; see 1 John 4:18) and that “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” (Matthew 12:7)

*While the church tends to preach that Heaven exists “up above” and can only be entered after one dies, Jesus directly noted that “The Kingdom of Heaven is not coming [at some point in the future] with things that can be observed .. For in truth the Kingdom of Heaven is already within you.” (Luke 17:20-21)

*While most in the church believe that “the Good News” is Jesus' resurrection from the dead, Jesus himself quite clearly defined his “Good News” twofold – first, that “the Kingdom of Heaven is already at hand” (Matthew 10:7) and second, that entrance thereto was attained only by those who persisted in selflessly Caring for others. (Matthew 24:12-14 – also John 13:15-17)

*While many in the church still quote some of the more violent passages of the Hebrew Bible (a.k.a. the Old Testament) to justify their non-loving, war-justifying, and even bigoted behaviors, Jesus plainly stated that “Blessed are the Peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9), and that we are to “Love [our] enemies” (Matthew 5:44). Indeed, the New Testament itself went even further in stating that “In speaking of a New Covenant, [Jesus] has made the first one obsolete.” (Hebrews 8:13)

*While the church claims that all the words in the Bible are objectively true and must be read “literally”, Jesus gives us a far better standard for judging the Truth of the Scriptures (as well as the words of the “prophets” and pastors who claim to understand them) when he tells us to put them all into practice and thereby test every profession thereof to see whether or not they bear the “Fruits of the Spirit” – (a la “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit ... The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil” ~ Luke 6:43-45).

While there are many Christian apologists who go to great lengths to explain &/or justify these quite blatant contradictions, the fact remains that the Bible obviously contains a number of theological doctrines that are at best at odds with one another. And it is at one of the most important (if not *the* most important) of these schisms that this treatise takes aim – namely, the stark contrast between (and indeed contradictory espousals of) the life & teachings of Jesus Christ (as read in the canonical Gospels of [Matthew](#), [Mark](#), [Luke](#), and [John](#)) and the very different life & teachings of the essential founder of the modern-day Christian Church – who was and remains Paul of Tarsus, a self-proclaimed “[apostle](#)” of Jesus Christ.



Christianity is currently the world's largest religion, representing the primary spiritual affiliation for almost 2.5 billion people, or roughly one third of the current human population. And yet to be fair it is difficult to identify one true Christian religion – with the World Almanac stating that there are over 400 different known Christian denominations, and with the World Christian Encyclopedia breaking those major designations down even further to count over 20,000 significant differences in dogma among the world's Christian believers. These variations range from ultra-conservative “literalists” to hyper-liberal “progressives,” and differ in their beliefs about such important concepts as the honoring of the Sabbath, the washing of others' feet, the ownership of possessions, entering into Heaven, the nature of Heaven itself, receiving baptism, communion’s exclusivity, communion itself, speaking in tongues, the handling of serpents, prophesying, prayer, works vs faith, how to read Scripture, the nature of the Rapture, the character of God, the requirements for redemption, the necessity of confession, the holiness of Mary, the acceptable translation(s) of the Bible, the existence of predestination, and the severity (or even the existence at all) of Hell.

And yet as far as this particular tome is concerned, when I write the word “Christian” I am referring to someone who believes in the fundamental tenets that all (or almost all) of the aforementioned denominations share – namely the five fundamental “*Solas*” of the modern-day Christian Church, which are the following:

**Sola Scriptura* – stating that the books of the Bible have sole spiritual authority over all humankind. The words of the Bible (whether read literally or metaphorically) are to be treated as the actual words of God, and the actual representations of God's will for humanity.

**Soli Deo Gloria* – stating that humans are to give all glory to the one true God.

**Sola Fide* – stating that Salvation (recognized as some form of eternal existence in some form of a halcyon Hereafter) comes solely from having a mental belief in, professing a verbal faith for, and indeed enlivening an active worship of Jesus Christ as one's “personal savior.”

**Solus Christus* – stating that Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead and who is the only true Son of God, is the sole spiritual mediator between God and humanity.

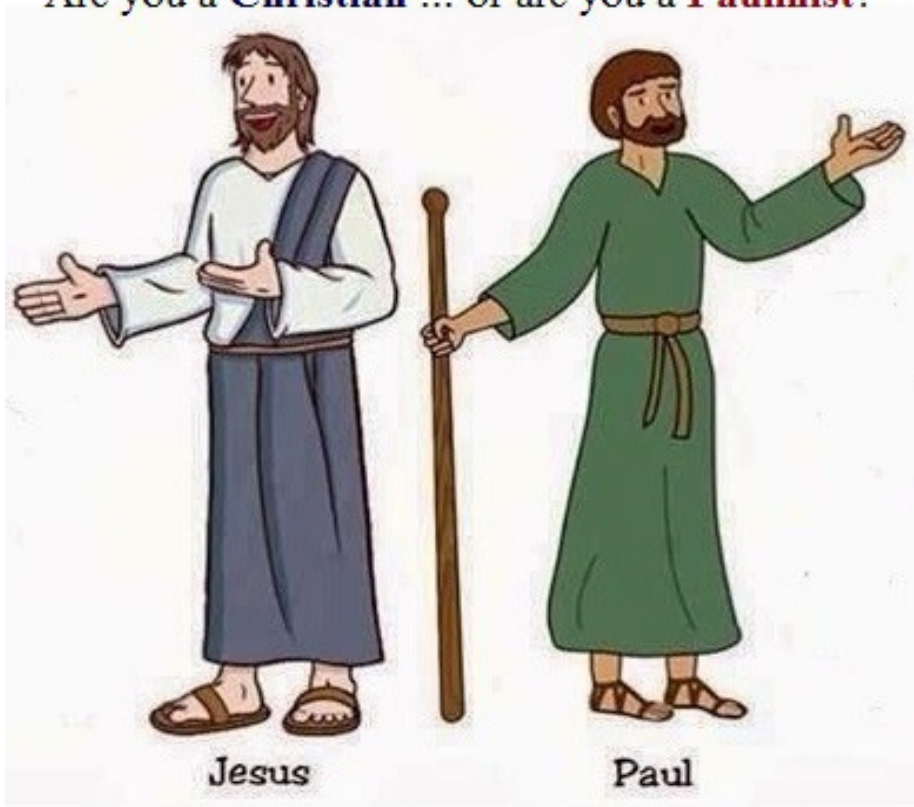
**Sola Gratia* – stating that Salvation cannot be earned solely via one's deeds; that all humans are innately fallible “sinners” (if not fully unworthy of redemption) and that only the merciful “Grace of God” can save those deemed worthy thereof.

Most importantly, at least as far as this work is concerned, the last three of these fundamental pillars of Christianity (and to a degree the 2nd pillar as well – via any sincerely devout application of the 3rd) all stem directly and solely from the writings of Saul of Tarsus – the self-proclaimed “apostle” today known as Paul. In truth, these current cornerstones of the Christian religion not only were never once espoused by Jesus Christ in the Gospels, but Jesus himself actually went out of his way to *reject* each and every one of them therein (more on this later). And yet Paul most certainly *did* champion them, and he did so not without a high degree of both vehemence and eloquence. Indeed, the following words from his letter to the [Romans](#) (one of the last canonical letters, if not *the* final such letter, he penned before his death¹) shows this quite clearly to be the case. Consider his words therein: “But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed ... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith ... God proves his love for us in that while we are still sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the coming wrath of God.” (Romans 3:21-25 + 5:8-9 – see also Acts 9:20-22 & 1 Corinthians 15:1-10)

1 It is important for the reader to NOTE that this treatise will only use &/or reference Paul's “actual” epistles found in the Bible – that is to say, the writings which the consensus of biblical scholarship agrees were truly penned by his hand. These works are (in the probable chronological order in which they were written) [1 Thessalonians](#), [Philippians](#), [Philemon](#), [Galatians](#), [1 Corinthians](#) (not counting the verses thereof that were added thereto after Paul's death for personal &/or political reasons – e.g. [1 Corinthians 14:34-35](#)), [2 Corinthians](#) (actually a compilation of 4+ different letters from Paul), [Romans](#) & [Colossians](#). As far as the unauthenticated Pauline epistles that remain, consider the following: [2 Thessalonians](#) uses a different tone than the aforementioned letters, pre-assumes the prevalence of forgeries, and mentions Paul's personal “mark” in [2 Thessalonians 3:17](#) (something Paul himself would not have included had he been the one doing the actual writing thereof). [1 Timothy](#), [2 Timothy](#) & [Titus](#) all use a distinct Geek style and vocabulary not found in any of Paul's “legitimate” letters, and also all focus on a church hierarchy that almost certainly did not exist before Paul's death. [Hebrews](#) presents theological concepts found nowhere else in Paul's other epistles, and [Ephesians](#) was quite clearly a pseudepigraphical copy/edit of [Colossians](#), one almost certainly written at some point after Paul's execution.

And so it is that we come to the crux of the matter – a quite thorough and most needed exposé of one of human history's greatest (and ultimately most influential) impostors, an exhaustive biblical proof of what you the reader will soon see as the simple fact that Paul was in no way a true apostle of Christ, but rather was and remains one of Christ's most ardent *opponents* – meaning that the modern day Christian church², a church founded primarily upon the teachings of Paul, in no way honors the “savior” it pretends to worship – and indeed in actuality gravely dishonors him thereby.

Are you a **Christian** ... or are you a **Paulinist**?



"My Gospel is that you are all innately Children of God, and that you can therefore all experience the 'Kingdom of Heaven' right this instant by simply reaching out to selflessly Love your enemies &/or Care for the poor in your midst." ~ **Jesus** (John 12:44-47, Luke 17:20-21, Matthew 24:12-14 & John 13:15-17)

"My gospel is that you are all innately sinners, and that you will therefore only be allowed into Heaven after you die if you openly worship Jesus Christ in this lifetime as if he were the one and only Son of God." ~ **Paul** (1 Corinthians 15:1-4 & Romans 10:9 et al)

² Here, an important **DISCLAIMER**: This tome is in no way an attack on Christian beliefs, Christians themselves, or Christianity as a whole. Rather, it is merely intended to show all non-Christians that the Christian religion is not at all founded on the brilliant moral teachings of Jesus as found in the Gospels, and designed to prove to all Christians beyond even the faintest shadow of any doubt that they all have a theological choice to make – *either* abide in the quite un-Christian religious dogma of Paul *or* follow (i.e. emulate) The Way of selfless LOVE taught by Jesus Christ.

An introductory look at Paul of Tarsus

While there are several extra-biblical sources that mention Paul (including Clement's 1st epistle to the Romans, Ignatius' letter to the Romans, and Polycarp's letter to the Philippians – all written during the late 1st &/or early 2nd centuries), the primary historical wellspring related to the life and teachings of Saul of Tarsus is the Bible itself – both the book of *Acts* (written by Paul's traveling companion and ostensible friend, Luke) and the authenticated biblical works written by Paul himself (*1 Thessalonians*, *Philippians*, *Philemon*, *Galatians*, *1 Corinthians*, *2 Corinthians*, *Romans* & *Colossians*). In these latter writings, Paul is heard to instruct his would-be followers in all manner of things theological – among them the over-arching worth (or lack thereof) of the Judaic Law (what some called “the Law and the prophets” in his day and what many call “the Old Testament” today), the non-necessity of circumcision, the power of grace, the necessity of faith over works, the way to Salvation via atonement, the nature of the Holy Spirit, the nature of Jesus as the only Son of God, the reception of spiritual gifts, the donning of “the armor of God”, how to properly worship the Divine, the specific qualifications for church organization and membership, and how others were to conduct themselves in their relationships with believers & non-believers alike.

And yet what makes Paul's letters most intriguing is their authoritative tone. Paul is not writing as one giving mere advice to companions or cohorts. No, he is writing as one who *knows* – as one whose opinions must be obeyed – as one who is an authoritative “apostle” of Christ. And Paul goes so far as to explicitly announce the same on a number of occasions. Consider this passage from his letter to the *Galatians* as proof enough of the same: “For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but instead received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism; how I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being.” (*Galatians* 1:11-16) And this is in fact the case, for if we examine the biblical texts closely, we see that Paul never once met Jesus Christ in the flesh and never once heard Jesus preach or teach in person. Indeed, when we first meet Paul in the Bible, he is seen as a violent persecutor of a non-violent group of Jesus-adherents who called themselves “Followers of The Way” (read from *Acts* 7:54 – where Paul is seen witnessing and even approving of the dramatically immoral stoning of Stephen – through *Acts* 8:3 & thereafter *Acts* 9:1-2 & *Galatians* 1:13, where Paul himself admits to committing those same acts of abuse). Thereafter we read that Paul experienced his aforementioned “revelation” on the Road to Damascus – presumably from the spirit of Jesus Christ (*Acts* 9:3-6) – and goes blind for three days as a result (*Acts* 9:8-9). Then, oddly enough, after regaining his sight Paul goes on to spend the rest of his life championing a Jesus-based theology that is nowhere to be found in the Gospel-teachings of Jesus himself (even having the gall to call his newly converted followers “Christians” – see *Acts* 11:26). In truth, when we read Paul's letters, we hear him go on & on & on about being a “servant” of Jesus or being “in Jesus Christ” or working “through Jesus” or being informed “by Jesus' revelation”, and yet Jesus himself is almost completely absent from Paul's written works – with almost no mention of his teachings, and almost no mention of his life.

It is also intriguing that Paul only quotes Jesus a few times in all of his letters, and that the few times he does so are done curiously. In [Acts 20:35](#), Paul has Jesus quoting a common Greek proverb – a saying from Jesus that is found *nowhere else in the Gospels*. Later, Paul supposedly quotes Jesus at “the last supper” in [1 Corinthians](#) (see [1 Corinthians 11:23-26](#)) – a letter that was in all likelihood written *before the biblical Gospels were penned at all*. As such we are left to wonder: what were Paul's sources for these quotations, and how are we to consider those sources, seeing as how neither of them belong to the canonical record?

Indeed, as the rest of the latter pages of this tome will show, not only does Paul fail to even indirectly summon the moral majesty of the teachings of his self-professed “Lord” but the unique theology he creates actually abandons and in many ways openly rejects the same. As such, it can really be no surprise to the ardent student of the Scriptures to read thereafter about the intense conflicts Paul experienced with Jesus' actual disciples (see [Acts 4:15-31](#), [2 Corinthians 11:4-5](#), [2 Corinthians 11:22-24](#), [Galatians 1:6](#), [Galatians 1:18](#), [Galatians 2:11-21](#), & [Galatians 3:1-3](#) et al) – with those men who had actually spent time with Jesus and watched him enliven his Way in his interactions with others, with those men who had actually heard Jesus' teachings directly from his lips, with those men who were actually striving to follow and emulate the same. Possibly as a consequence thereof, in [Acts 15:7](#) we see Peter (upon whom Jesus himself said his true followers should rest their spiritual fellowship – see [Matthew 16:18](#)) in effect banishing the rogue Paul to the Gentiles, whereafter Paul mutinies once more and remains instead primarily ensconced in the comfortable confines of the Jewish communities with which he was already familiar (see [Galatians 2:7](#) et al).

In essence then, what we see in the Scriptures is not Paul going forth to help the disciples spread the “Good News”, but rather Paul going forth – without any authority from those original apostles to do so – and spreading a Gospel message that directly contradicted their own. In truth, Paul actually had the gall to proudly claim in his letters that he needed no external authority to preach his self-engendered version of the Gospel ([Galatians 1:1](#) et al). And so it can again come as no surprise that all Hell broke loose (literally – pun intended, with my humble apologies) when the envoys that James had sent to check up on Paul heard his heresies firsthand ([Galatians 2:11-13](#)). Indeed, several of Paul's other letters also appear to have been written in no small part to quell a similar unrest amongst his Jewish Christian critics (see [Galatians 1:20](#) and [2 Corinthians 11:31](#) et al).

As such, one might wonder how it was that Paul's heavily criticized Jesus-based theology became the basis for our modern, later-day versions of Christianity, and yet the answer thereto seems to be a relatively simple one. For the community of Jewish Christians of Paul's time were clustered in and around the city of Jerusalem, and after their leader James the Just was murdered in 62 C.E. and their Temple then razed by the Romans a few years later, the Followers of Christ movement was essentially crippled. On the other hand, it is easily understandable that Paul's “Jesus as the resurrected Son of God” religion – sprinkled as it was throughout the Roman Empire, and founded as it was in the relatively comforting doctrine of atonement via mere faith alone – would thrive.

Regardless of how it came to pass, of course, come to pass it did. The theology of Paul was steadily and assuredly adopted as the cornerstone of the Christian Church, and The Way of Jesus Christ steadily faded into its now-shadowed background.

“Now as Saul was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? ... I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do' ... Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight.” ~ Acts 9:3-9



[And Jesus] said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.” ~ Luke 10:18

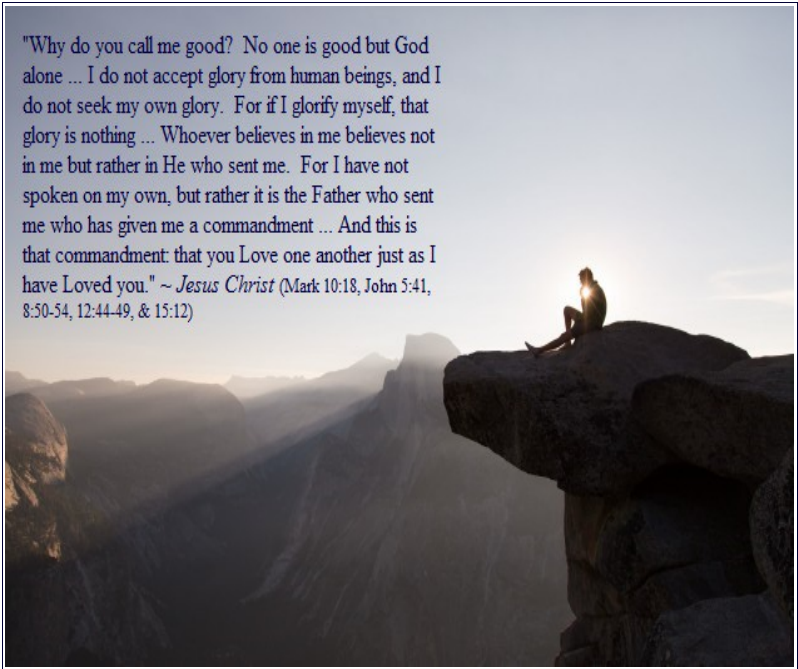
“The triumph of Paul's Gospel is all the more remarkable in view of the Jesus' repeated warnings that false teachers would arise after his 'going away'. Thus we read in Matthew: 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them ... Not every one who saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven; but only he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven' ... This warning fits Paul snugly – Paul, who taught that entry into the Kingdom of Heaven depends upon faith instead of loving deeds; Paul, who repeatedly called Jesus 'Lord, Lord', and yet did not teach the pure way of living alone by which man could enter the Kingdom. And if we apply to Paul Jesus' test 'By their fruits ye shall know them' it becomes abundantly clear that Paul was a false prophet. We have seen that it was he who founded the Pauline Church in spite of the true Apostles' opposition thereto, and that it was he who formulated its current-day doctrines. In truth the Christianity which nations currently claim to follow is nothing more than the religion of Paul, essentially the only theologian the Church recognizes. And because of his open betrayal of Jesus' teachings, the vision of true Christianity has been so dimmed that men have been able to defend war and champion slavery and uphold a host of other evils (such as sexism and flesh eating and bigotry) all on the supposed authority of the Bible. Had the teachings of Christ maintained their proper place at the pinnacle of our practiced spirituality such misinterpretations would have been unthinkable. As such we would all do well to awaken and grieve that Christians have failed to give more heed to the Savior's warnings against such false messengers.” ~ via Vincent Holmes-Gore

A few of the Bible's "smaller hints"...

... several of the seemingly minor, yet still intriguing scriptural nuggets that show Paul to be an actual *opponent* of Jesus, rather than an oracle thereof

*Paul preaches "in his own name" ...

In [John 5:43](#), **Jesus** ostensibly warns his followers of a false prophet "coming in his own name." Later, in the book of [Acts](#), we see **Paul** doing just that – preaching under his taken name Paul instead of his given name Saul (starting with [Acts 13:9](#)). To be fair, Christian apologists have correctly pointed out that it was not uncommon for Jews of this region to have two names – one their Hebrew name (Saul) and another its Greek equivalent (Paul). They also note that the book of [Acts](#) was written by Luke, not Paul himself, and that [Acts 13:9](#) simply states that Saul was "also known as Paul", not that Paul himself actively changed his name from one to the other. That having been said, critical here is the fact that Jesus did not warn of a false prophet who changes his own name, but rather one who "comes in his own name" – or rather, a prophet who preaches under his own authority; something Paul does repeatedly throughout his ministry. Paul instructs the Corinthians to "be imitators of *me*" ([1 Corinthians 4:16](#)), he compliments the Thessalonians for becoming "imitators of *us*" ([1 Thessalonians 1:6](#)), he tells the Galatians that many others were "glorifying God in *me*" ([Galatians 1:24](#)), he informs the Romans both that God will judge others and that God is able to strengthen others "according to *my* gospel" ([Romans 2:16](#) & [Romans 16:25](#)), and he compliments the Philippians in significant part "because you hold *me* in your heart" ([Philippians 1:7](#)). Paul even has the gall to announce himself as an authentic apostle of Christ – doing so explicitly in 9 of the 13 biblical letters attributed to his pen. In his second letter to the Corinthians he even goes so far as to place himself on equal footing with "the most eminent apostles" – that is to say, the disciples who actually lived & served with Jesus Christ and who were actually appointed to their apostleship by Jesus himself ([2 Corinthians 11:5-10](#)). He even had the audacity in his letter to the [Galatians](#) to openly curse anyone professing "a gospel contrary to the one *we* proclaimed" ([Galatians 1:8](#)) – a direct reference to Peter, James, and John; true disciples of Christ who were in direct theological conflict with Paul at the time (see [Galatians 2](#)). Fittingly, of the 22 times in the Bible where Paul is referred to as an apostle, only twice are those referrals made by anyone other than *himself* – and both of those times the one doing the referring is Luke, the author of [Acts](#) and Paul's traveling companion and personal press secretary (see [Acts 14:4-14](#)). Indeed, Paul is quite clearly far more focused on establishing his own honor and his own popularity than any of the other New Testament contributors, using the personal pronouns *I*, *me*, *my*, and *mine* over three times more than any of his scriptural rivals. Of course, as Jesus mentions in [John 5:43](#), no true disciple or prophet would ever have to go to such lengths to convince others of their legitimacy. In truth, Jesus himself noted that even if he alone bore witness to himself, then even *his* witness should be considered invalid as well (see [John 5:31](#)).



"Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone ... I do not accept glory from human beings, and I do not seek my own glory. For if I glorify myself, that glory is nothing ... Whoever believes in me believes not in me but rather in He who sent me. For I have not spoken on my own, but rather it is the Father who sent me who has given me a commandment ... And this is that commandment: that you Love one another just as I have Loved you." ~ Jesus Christ (Mark 10:18, John 5:41, 8:50-54, 12:44-49, & 15:12)

*Paul claims the title of spiritual “Father” ...

Jesus makes it quite clear in [Matthew 23:9](#) that his followers were to “call no one your father on earth, for you have but one Father – the one in Heaven.”, and yet we see **Paul** doing just that in his first letter to the Corinthians, stating – “For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus *I became your father* through the gospel. I appeal to you, then – be imitators of me.” ([1 Corinthians 4:15-16](#))

*Paul was blinded by his spiritual “awakening” ...

In dramatic contrast to *Jesus* Christ, who received a noted enhancement of clarity after his baptism (“And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon him.” ~ via [Matthew 3:16](#); also [Mark 1:9-11](#) & [Luke 3:21-22](#) et al³), **Paul** was blinded for three days after his own “awakening” (“Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus.” ~ [Acts 22:11](#) – see also [Acts 9:8](#))



³ There are actually a number of verses in the New Testament proclaiming that Jesus was a champion of sight (see [Matthew 5:8](#), [Matthew 7:4-5](#), [Matthew 11:2-5](#), [Matthew 13:10-17](#), [Mark 8:17-18](#), [Luke 4:18](#), [Luke 10:22-24](#), [John 9:39](#), & [John 17:24](#)) &/or a direct provider thereof (see [Matthew 9:30](#), [Matthew 20:32-34](#), [Mark 8:22-25](#), [Luke 24:31](#), & [John 9:7](#)) ... In profound contrast, along with being himself blinded after supposedly encountering “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” on the Road to Damascus (as described in [Acts 9](#)), Paul's subsequent ministry contained several references to sight itself being over-rated, if not a direct hindrance to faith (see [Romans 8:24](#), [1 Corinthians 2:9](#), [2 Corinthians 4:18](#), & [2 Corinthians 5:7](#)), and he was even known to have at least once intentionally blinded one of his opponents – “But Saul, also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, 'You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? And now listen: the hand of the Lord is against you, and you will be blind for a time, unable to see the sun.' Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he went about groping for someone to lead him by the hand.” ([Acts 13:9-11](#))

***Paul downplays the innate holiness of “little children” ...**

Jesus makes it clear that **children** (more accurately read as “very young children” or “toddlers” in the ancient texts) are to be considered role models for our behavior – especially the unconditional Love they exhibit in their interactions with others & the innocent Wonderment they exude in their interactions with their surroundings (see Matthew 18:3-4 – “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like very young children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Indeed, whoever becomes humble like this very young child *is* the greatest in the Kingdom” – see also Matthew 18:6-7 & Mark 10:13-16) ... In marked contrast, **Paul's** reverence for the very young is nowhere to be seen in the Bible, and indeed he seems to at least once intimate exactly the opposite in his first letter to the Corinthians: “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, and I reasoned like a child. And yet once I became a man, I did away with childish things.” (1 Corinthians 13:11)



***Paul is without doubt a man “of the world” ...**

While *Jesus* made it repeatedly clear that “my Kingdom is not of this world” (Acts 18:36), that “the ruler of this world has been condemned” (John 16:11), and that “I have conquered the world” (John 16:33 – see also John 17:16 “[my disciples] do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world”), **Paul** not only repeatedly coddled to (and even brazenly called upon) worldly authorities⁴, but he even came right out and said that “the earth and its fullness are the Lord's.” (1 Corinthians 10:26)



“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.” ~ Paul (Romans 13:1-2)

⁴ This is a reference to the many times that Paul worked for &/or availed himself to the “mercy” of human religious leaders &/or human political authorities (see Acts 8:1-3, Acts 9:1-2, Acts 16:38-40, Acts 25:10-11, & Acts 26:5 et al).

*Paul affirms all within the “one body” (regardless of doctrinal differences) ...

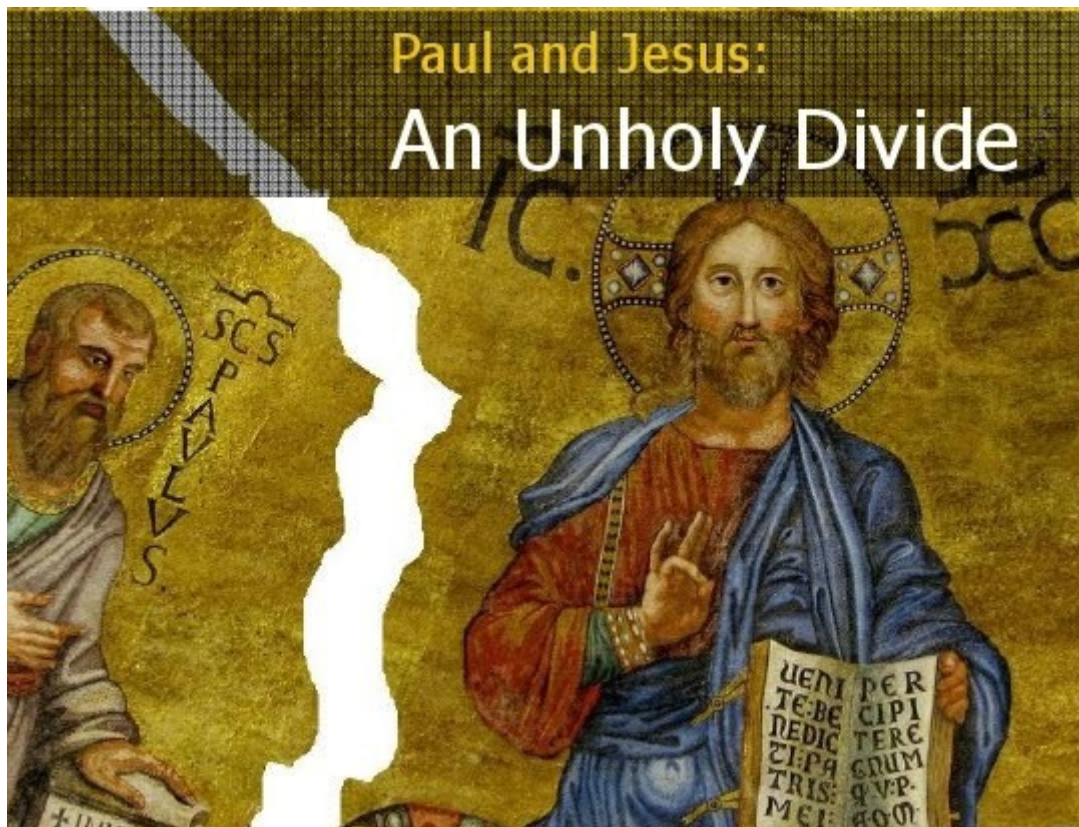
Jesus makes it quite clear that there is only one Way to enliven the will of his all-Loving Father (see *John 14:6* – focusing on *dia*, the Greek word often translated as *through*, much more than the Greek word *emou*, oft translated as *me*) and only one very narrow gate of selfless sacrifice through which any & all must pass to attain entrance to *his Kingdom of Heaven* (see *Matthew 7:13-14* + *Matthew 18:3-4* + *Matthew 24:12-14*). He even goes so far as to say that any & all self-focused habits &/or addictions must be cut off and thrown away in order to do so (a la “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it is better for you to lose it than for your whole body to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away as well; for it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into Gehenna.” ~ *Matthew 5:29-30*). **Paul**, on the other hand (pun intended), is embarrassingly lax when it comes to sinful violators of the Law; establishing a new codex grounded in a mere profession of faith, regardless of one's actual conduct (see *Romans 3:31*, *Romans 7:4-6*, & *Romans 10:1-10* et al), even going so far as to say: “As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor. Our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it as well.” (*1 Corinthians 12:20-26*)

*Some even say that the Bible shows Paul to be “the Antichrist” ...

While I personally do not subscribe to this particular argument, it is still interesting to note the following biblical tidbits: **A)** that the numeric value of *Tarsus* in Hebrew (*TRSV*) is 666, **B)** that the 1290 days mentioned in *Daniel 12:11* match the probable length of Paul's ministry, **C)** that **Paul** persecuted the saints of the early church in alignment with the “prophecy” of *Daniel 7:25* (see also *Matthew 24:15*), **D)** that the author of *1 John* clearly states “the Antichrist [is] the one who denies the Father and the Son” (*1 John 2:22*) – something Paul regularly does throughout his writings (regularly downplaying the importance of the former in favor of solely exalting the latter – see *1 Corinthians 4:15*, *Romans 10:9-10*, & *Romans 15:1-4* – and these alongside *Galatians 5:14* & *Romans 13:9* when they are contrasted with *Matthew 22:37-40*), **E)** that Paul performed “signs and wonders” that indeed “misled the elect” (as this book quite clearly shows) just as *Jesus* warned the Antichrist would (see *Acts 15:12* & *Matthew 24:24*), and **F)** that Paul's “revelation” on the Road to Damascus (“Now as [Saul] was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him” ~ *Acts 9:3*) quite eerily hearkens back to *Jesus'* utterance in *Luke 10:18* (that he “saw **Satan** fall like lightning from the heavens”).

*The book of *Revelation* strongly hints that Paul is a false prophet ...

Ephesians 1:1 has Paul telling the church there that he is “an apostle of Christ Jesus.” And this claim is much more than a mere Paulinist boast. For of the 7 churches noted in the book of *Revelation*, the one in Ephesus is the only one cited for having dealt with false apostles (stating in *Revelation 2:2* that “you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them to be false”). This fact is made all the more potent when we realize that the biblical record makes it equally clear that Paul had a great deal of trouble with the Ephesian congregation during his ministry (see *Acts 19:8-9*). In addition, the letter of *2 Timothy* (admittedly probably written by a follower of Paul, not by Paul himself) has Paul admitting that “all those in Asia have turned away from me” (*2 Timothy 1:15*). As such, when we remember that Paul is the only person in the Bible (other than the original 12 disciples) who ever claimed to have been an apostle, what we have here is **A]** Paul falsely claiming to be an apostle of Christ (while preaching his own unique religious doctrine to the contrary), **B]** the Ephesian Church vehemently rejecting the same, and **C]** a “returned Christ” thereafter *applauding* the Ephesian Church for doing so!



"Paul avoids quoting the teaching of Jesus, in fact even mentioning the same. In truth, if we had to rely on Paul, we would not know that Jesus taught in parables, we would not know that Jesus had ever delivered the Sermon on the Mount, nor that he had taught his disciples the 'Our Father.' Indeed, even where they are specially relevant, Paul blatantly ignores the words of his Lord ... Paul obviously did not desire to truly know Christ. And the fateful thing is that the Greek, the Catholic, and the Protestant theologies all contain the Gospel of Paul in a form which does not continue the Gospel of Jesus, but rather wholly displaces it." ~ via Albert Schweitzer

"Fundamentalism is nothing more than the triumph of Paul over Jesus ... Paul created a theology of which none but the vaguest warrants can be found in the words of Christ; a theology about the man instead of his teachings – a man who Paul never even knew and a theology written some 50 or more years after the death of that same man ... Paul replaced moral conduct with mere creed as the test of Virtue. It is in no way an understatement to say that this was quite the tragic shift." ~ via Will Durant

*“The name 'disciple of Jesus' has little applicability to Paul, with the obvious contradictions in the three accounts given by him in regard to his Road to Damascus conversion being more than enough to arouse a palpable distrust in the man ... The moral majesty of Jesus -- his purity and piety, his ministry among the people, his manner as a prophet, the concrete ethical-religious content of his earthly life – signifies very little whatsoever for Paul's Christology. As such we are confronted with Jesus **or** Paul: the fundamental choice that all are required to make; the choice that embodies the primary spiritual battleground of our present day.” ~ via William Wrede*

As the previous pages have shown, there is quite obviously a stark contrast in the Bible between the words attributed to Jesus Christ and the theology Paul presents in his epistles. And yet a schism as critical as this one warrants a much more thorough examination of the Scriptures with regards to these two men and their beliefs, and that is precisely what now follows – namely, an in-depth examination of their very different lives, their very different personalities, and their very different teaching styles – all of which contributed to or directly engendered what turned out to be their very different (and indeed, patently contradictory) theologies. And yet before we look into the latter, let us cast a closer glance at how the two men are portrayed ...

Jesus & Paul: a look at their lives ...

First off, let me state quite clearly that I no way claim to know “the Truth” about Paul or Jesus. I don't know whether or not the words in my Bible (as someone interested in scholarship, I prefer the NRSV over all other translations) are fully accurate, I don't know if the spiritual concepts expressed therein are valid, and I don't even know whether or not Paul or Jesus actually said what they are reported to have said – much less whether either man actually existed at all. And yet none of those issues are relevant to the task at hand – namely, showing how the Bible itself (or at least one of its more widely accepted versions) proves quite convincingly that Paul was not a supporter of Jesus and his teachings, but was rather a stark opponent thereof. And the best place to start during such an examination is a look into how the texts of the Bible portray the lives of the two men – very different lives that in and of themselves do not prove my primary postulation, and yet very different lives that do indeed explain how such radically divergent theologies could come to be. As such, please consider the following biblical contrasts that show the same:

Contrast #01: their citizenship ...

Though **Paul** was a self-proclaimed Roman citizen regularly respected by the authorities (see [Acts 16:37](#) & [Acts 22:25-28](#)), **Jesus** is portrayed as coming from the home of a common Jewish laborer⁵ & as an itinerant preacher often met with scorn and disdain (see [Matthew 13:54-58](#), [Mark 6:3](#), & [John 6:42](#)).



⁵ Though common Christian tradition cites Jesus as having been a “carpenter”, the actual Greek word used in the relevant verses is *tekton* (Strong's # 5045), a word that actually meant “laborer” or “artisan.” While some scholars have noted that this would have made Jesus a well-respected craftsman of sorts, the opposite is more than likely to have been the case, with the average peasant artisan residing even below the peasant farmer on the sociological pecking order of the day. Indeed, there was no “middle class” to speak of in more ancient times. Rather, there were those like Paul and his family who had wealth, and there was everyone else who essentially didn't. This would explain the disdain and even disrespect that Jesus obviously receives in the above-cited verses. Indeed, it is intriguing to note that Jesus never once mentions the bustling city of Sepphoris in the Gospels, and this even though he grew up within sight of its walls. He also rarely talks in urban images, even though he was raised near a mid-sized metropolis, and even though his family probably worked regularly therein. As such it seems that Jesus quite obviously knew that cities were the places where opulence gathered, and that cities were the sources of the very same peasant oppressions that his ministry was designed to stifle and quell.

Contrast #02: their personal wealth ...

Though the scholarship on this issue admittedly remains slightly divided, the majority of those “in the know” agree that the Bible shows **Paul** coming from an upbringing of great wealth and Jesus from one of great poverty. As far as the former is concerned (and aside from the fact that Paul himself admits to a relatively luxurious pre-apostle life in his letter to the **Philippians**, stating quite plainly “I know what it is to have plenty” in **Philippians 4:12**), consider the following evidence: *Paul was born into the home of a devout Pharisee who also happened to be a Roman citizen (see **Acts 23:6**, **Philippians 3:5**, **Acts 22:25-28**, & **Acts 25:7-12**) – a pedigree that in and of itself granted Paul no small measure of social status ... *Paul twice introduces himself as being “a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia” (**Acts 21:39** & **Acts 22:3**), with Tarsus being the capital of Cilicia at the time, and having a reputation as being a center of Greek philosophical and literary education. This would explain Paul's high degree of learning, which was evidenced by the large and distinctively sophisticated Greek vocabulary he employed in his letters. Indeed, over half of the words used in the Greek New Testament are used by him and him alone ... *Paul's letters also employ metaphors drawn from the upper-class domains of law, business, politics, and leisure, and they regularly reflect Greek oratory tradition and Stoic methods of argumentation – forms of prose essentially unknown to the common men of the day. Indeed, his style of debate was often so sophisticated that even Peter and the other disciples had difficulty understanding it (see **2 Peter 3:16**) ... *Scholars have also noted that Paul was obviously familiar with the Greek Septuagint translation of the Jewish scriptures (seeing as how he quoted from it frequently) – not a trait prevalently found in the average Judean pauper ... *In addition, the Bible makes it clear that Paul was later able to receive the highest level of tutelage available (at the feet of Gamaliel, a leading scholar of Jewish law who was held in great repute at the time – see **Acts 22:3** & **Acts 5:34**) in Jerusalem (located some 350 miles from Tarsus; an expensive distance to travel by any means, and thus more evidence of the probable wealth of Paul's family) ... *Paul's privileged youth also brought early fruits, as evidenced by him being entrusted at a relatively young age with the task of arresting early Christians (followers of “The Way” – see **Acts 9:2**) in Damascus and returning them to Jerusalem to be tried for blasphemy (see **Acts 8:3**, **Acts 9:1-2**, **Acts 16:4**, & **Acts 22:4**); a task of some import, and not one that would have been given to any mere “college student” ... *Paul traveled along the Road to Damascus with a group of men who were clearly his subordinates, if not his servants (see **Acts 9:7-8**) ... *He was also able to repeatedly defend himself with no small amount of mastery in Jewish, Greek, and Roman courts of law (impressing the Roman proconsul on Cyprus, escaping from Jewish prosecutors in Antioch and Iconium and Lystra, asserting his legal rights in Philippi, settling a case in Thessalonica, obtaining a stay of action in Athens, winning a legal victory before the proconsul of Corinth, exposing illegal magicians in Ephesus, and defending himself before the Roman governors in Caesarea). While more than a few historians have noted that these successes had little to do with his Roman citizenship or his manipulation of the actual law, there can be little doubt



"But we have this glorious treasure hidden in clay jars, so that it might be made clear that our potential for extraordinary beauty belongs to God and does not come from ourselves." ~ inspired by Paul (2 Corinthians 4:7 ... ahhh, the irony!)

that the average layman would not have been able to finagle such successes – that in all likelihood the high social standing of Paul's family (&/or the powerful social connections he had forged therewith) was instrumental in allowing Paul to so often escape his lions' legal dens ... *While there is admittedly some evidence that Paul chose to live more austere during the days of his latter ministry, there is also much to suggest that he remained a man of means until the very end – living in a Roman apartment for “two whole years at his own expense” (**Acts 28:30**), sponsoring a Nazarite vow in **Acts 21:23-26**, being held in special custody by Felix for a lengthy period of time (**Acts 24:27**) – the former of whom openly had hopes of receiving a bribe from Paul during said house arrest (**Acts 24:26**), and promising to pay Philemon any debts incurred by Onesimus (**Philemon 1:18-19**) – not to mention having regular access to writing materials throughout his travels.

In marked contrast, *Jesus* is seen throughout the Gospels as being a man of meager means, a man who embraced detachment from material riches as a means to the true wealth of spiritual purity (Matthew 6:25-33). Consider the following biblical evidence thereof: *Prior to his birth, Mary is seen joyfully announcing “He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with pure things, and sent the rich away empty-handed” (Luke 1:52-53) ... *Jesus was not born in an inn or a household, but rather in a “dwelling” (Matthew 2:11) where he was thereafter was laid in a “manger” (Luke 2:7 & Luke 2:16) ... *Jesus was raised by a father who was a “menial laborer” (see Footnote 5 on page 21) in the meager village of Nazareth (Luke 2:39 & Matthew 21:11) ... *After his birth, Jesus is taken to the Temple where a sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves and two young pigeons” is made for him there (Luke 2:22-24) – the sacrifice that was demanded of all *poor families* by Leviticus 12:8 ... *Jesus lived home-free; as an itinerant preacher who had no home of his own (Matthew 8:20) ... *Jesus openly blessed and even lauded the poor (“Blessed are you who are poor⁶, for yours is the Kingdom of God” ~ Luke 6:20) ... *Even Paul – the self-proclaimed “apostle of Christ” – admits that Jesus “became poor, so that through his poverty you might become [spiritually] wealthy” (2 Corinthians 8:9) ... *Jesus publicly denounced those who expected him to wear fine clothes &/or live in pomp & luxury (Matthew 11:7-8) ... *Jesus repeatedly made it clear that neither he nor the founding values of his ministry were “of this world” (see Acts 18:36, John 16:11, John 16:33, & John 17:16) ... *Jesus quite flagrantly tells the wealthy young man in Matthew 19 to “sell all your possessions, give the proceeds to the poor, and then come and follow me” (Matthew 19:21) ... *Thereafter he tells his disciples that “it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God.” (Matthew 19:24) ... *Jesus passed on his ministry of austerity to his disciples, sending them forth in abject material poverty, with “neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts” (Matthew 10:9-12) ... *In one of his greatest sermons (if not his greatest sermon of all) Jesus extols his followers, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves can break in and steal ... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21) ... *Jesus even references the dangers of material wealth in the parable of *The Sower* – the parable that provides the foundation for understanding all his other parables (see Mark 4:13) – when he says “As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the Word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the Word, and it yields nothing” (Matthew 13:22) ... *Even in Jesus' greatest moment of earthly triumph, he chooses to broadcast the virtues of humility and purposeful poverty; entering Jerusalem as a servant and not a king – doing so “humbly riding on a donkey” (a la Zechariah 9:9 – see Matthew 21:1-8, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:29-35, & John 12:12-15) ... *This is also one of the reasons he proclaimed that “all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12) ... *Remember as well that one of the primary directives for becoming a true follower of Christ was willing self-sacrifice (“If any want to become my followers, let them *deny themselves* and take up their cross daily and follow me” ~ Luke 9:23; see also Matthew 10:38 & Mark 8:34-37) ... *Indeed, this is one of the reasons why Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all” (Mark 9:35) and why he warns his followers in the Gospel of Luke against material riches as well (“Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions ... The land of a rich man produces abundantly. And he thinks to himself, ‘I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.’ ... And yet God says to that man, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward the Lord ... None of you can truly become my disciples if you do not first give up all your possessions.” ~ Luke 12:15-21 & Luke 14:33) ...



⁶ Unlike in Matthew 5:3, where the words “in spirit” amend the word “poor” (*ptochoi* – Strong's #4434), here the term stands alone, and thus does indeed mean those who are materially destitute; those who are the extreme opposite of rich.

Contrast #03: how they “made their living” ...

Throughout **Paul's** ministry we see him seeking material security (and this, despite his regular claims to the contrary – e.g. “The one who is righteous will live by faith,” cited by Paul in both Romans 1:17 & Galatians 3:11; see also Romans 5:1-2, Romans 8:1-2, Romans 8:13, Galatians 5:16-17, Galatians 6:8, 1 Corinthians 2:5, & 1 Corinthians 15:1-28 – as well as 1 Corinthians 9:15-18 & 2 Corinthians 11:9) – doing so via working for money with his own hands (see Acts 18:1-4, Acts 20:34, 1 Thessalonians 2:9), doing so via directly asking for financial assistance from others (“Do we not have the right to our own food and drink? ... If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? ... In the same way the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.” ~ 1 Corinthians 9:4-14; see also Philippians 4:15-18, 2 Corinthians 9:11-14, 2 Corinthians 11:8, & Galatians 6:6's “Those who are taught the Word must share in all good things with their teacher”), and even doing so via guilt-tripping others into providing for his needs (see Romans 15:27, 2 Corinthians 8:2, Philippians 4:16, & 2 Corinthians 8:8-14's “I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others ... It is appropriate for you not only to do something but also to desire to do something. Now finish doing it, so that your eagerness might be matched by completing it according to your means. For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has ... I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is simply a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their present need”).

In marked contrast, **Jesus** consistently preaches living a life sustained by humility and faith (“One does not live by bread alone, but rather by every word that comes from the mouth of God” ~ Matthew 4:4) – *He taught that his followers must abandon all attachment to their material possessions (Luke 14:33), that they should use their wealth to lessen the suffering of the poor (see Matthew 19:16-21, Luke 12:33 & Luke 18:18-22) &/or to care for their enemies (a la Luke 10:29-37, – noting that the hero of this tale is a Samaritan, a cultural enemy of the Jews at the time; the one who “shows mercy”, something that can only be given to one who has wronged us), and that his disciples should only accept as “payment” that which is freely offered by others (see Luke 8:1-3 & Luke 10:5-7) ... *While he did indeed note that “laborers deserve their food”, Jesus felt that it was not for his followers to in any way expect the same, ask for the same, or provide for the same themselves (see Matthew 10:8-10, Matthew 6:25-33, Luke 10:1-8 & Luke 12:22-32's “Do not be concerned, for it is the Father's great pleasure to give you the Kingdom”) ... *In harmony with this admonition, Jesus never earned any money on his own, but rather ministered to all for free and lived only on what was freely given to him by others (see Luke 8:3 & Mark 15:41, along with the many times others invited him into their homes for food and shelter, a la Luke 11:37) ... *This is how Jesus avoided hypocrisy while making it clear that we can either serve “**God or wealth**”, never both simultaneously (see Matthew 6:22-24, Matthew 8:22-23, Mark 4:18-19, Luke 6:20, Luke 12:21, & Luke 16:13-15's “What is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God”) ... *As such, Jesus passionately advocated for storing up “treasures in Heaven” (via persistent deeds of selfless Kindness – see Matthew 25:34-40, Luke 6:30, John 13:15-17 + Matthew 24:12-14) instead of material “treasures on earth” (see Luke 12:15 & Matthew 6:19-21 + Luke 17:20-21).

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than mere food, and the body more than mere clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them ... And consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; neither toiling nor spinning. And yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. And yet if God so clothes the grass of the field, will He not much more clothe you as well? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ... Strive instead to serve the Kingdom of God and to embody His righteousness, and all these other things will be provided you as well.” ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:25-33)

Contrast #04: their affiliations with & towards the Pharisees ...

For the entirety of his ministry, **Paul** – wherever it suited him – openly proclaimed to be a devout member of the conservative Jewish sect known as the Pharisees (see Acts 23:6's “I am a Pharisee and the son of Pharisees” – also his similar boasts in Acts 26:5, Galatians 1:14, & Philippians 3:4-5) ...

Jesus, on the other hand entirely, both frequently and vociferously denounced the Pharisees and their teachings (and encouraged his followers to do the same) – calling them “blind guides of the blind” (Matthew 15:12-14; juxtaposed intriguingly with Paul losing his sight on the Road to Damascus in Acts 9:3-9), warning his followers to “beware the yeast of the Pharisees ... [that is to say] the teachings of the Pharisees” (Matthew 16:6-12 & Mark 8:15; both potently juxtaposed with the admonitions of 2 John 1:9 “Everyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but rather goes beyond it, does not know God; whereas whoever abides in [Christ's] teaching has both the Father and the Son” & John 8:31-32 “If you continue in *my* word, you are truly my disciples; and you will thereby know the truth, and the truth will set you free”), telling his followers “do not do as [the Pharisees] do, for they do not practice what they teach” (Matthew 23:3 – see also Luke 12:1), and openly denouncing his Pharisee critics, saying “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you, you hypocrites! For just as it is written: ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines’ so you too abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.” (Mark 7:6-8)

"Beware the yeast of the Pharisees."

~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:6)

§ The Pharisees were one of the more popular & more influential sects of Judaism in Jesus' day ...

§ They were highly judgmental of others (Matthew 23:15), and hypocritically emphasized strict obedience to the Law over sincere worship from the Heart (Luke 12:1) ...

§ The Pharisees were conservatives through & through; valuing traditional interpretations of the Scriptures as highly as the Scriptures themselves ...

§ They were narrow-minded exclusivists -- believing that they & they alone understood the "true" meaning of the biblical texts, and that anyone who disagreed with them was ignorant and "lost".

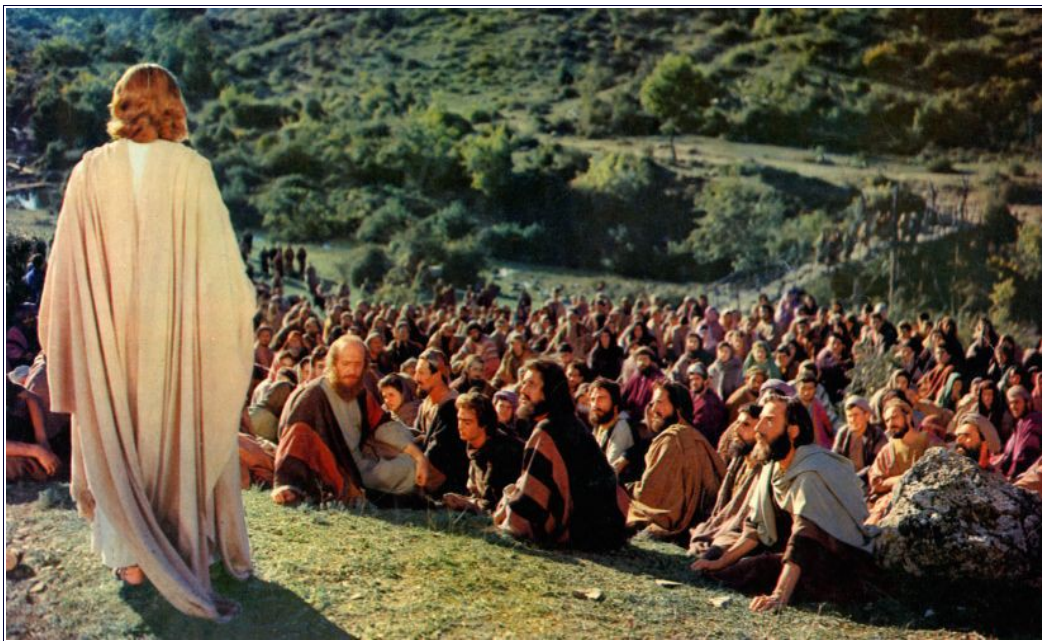
P.S. Paul was a self-proclaimed Pharisee. (Acts 23:6-8 & Acts 26:4-5)



Contrast #05: to whom they most readily preached ...

Another marked contrast between Paul and Jesus is readily seen in their preferred audiences, with **Paul** frequently speaking to those with whom he was already familiar (a la “Come, let us return and visit the believers in every city where we have already proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are doing” ~ Acts 15:36) and **Jesus** seeming to share his message openly with any and all nearby. This is not to say that Paul only preached where it was comfortable to do so (He clearly didn't – see Galatians 2 et al) or that Jesus never chose to purposefully engage a particular group or gathering (He most certainly did – see Matthew 21 et al), and yet it is revealing nonetheless to note that for the most part Paul seemed to enter into religious dialogue in private arenas he had already visited (previously established churches, like the ones at Lystra & Iconium & Antioch in Acts 14:22-27 – churches where he “strengthened the souls of the [already won] disciples”, and like the one in Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 15:4 & Acts 21:17-18) &/or places in which he felt comfortable (local Jewish synagogues, like the one at Salamis noted in Acts 13:5, the one at Thessalonica mentioned in Acts 7:1-2, or the one at Berea referenced in Acts 17:10); speaking to audiences he already knew (like those present in the home of Lydia mentioned in Acts 16:40) &/or those who were predisposed to accept his message (like the “believers” in Macedonia mentioned in Acts 20:1-2).

Jesus, on the other hand, is frequently shown preaching in public to large gatherings of people who were unfamiliar to him (see Matthew 13:57-58 & Mark 6:4-6 et al) – people who had come *to him* instead of vice versa (see Matthew 4:25, Matthew 8:1, Matthew 8:18, Matthew 13:34, Matthew 14:13, Matthew 19:2, Matthew 20:29, Mark 3:7-8, Mark 3:32, Mark 5:21-24, Mark 9:14, Mark 10:1, Mark 10:46, Luke 5:1, Luke 7:11, Luke 8:4, Luke 8:42, Luke 9:11, Luke 11:29, Luke 14:25, Luke 18:36, Luke 23:27, & John 6:2). He is also often shown interacting with those who are considered to be disliked or despised or “undesirable” or “unclean” (e.g. lepers in Matthew 8:2-3, Mark 1:41 & Luke 5:13, prostitutes in Luke 7:37 & John 8:3-11, Samaritans in Luke 17:11-19 & John 4:7-40, Pharisees in Luke 7:36, and tax collectors in Luke 15:1 & Luke 19:7-10) and doing so with a message that was in & of itself less than comforting to those listeners. For he championed a kind of self-sacrificial Love that was active, not verbal; a Love that required actual courage to manifest, not mere religious piety (see Luke 9:23 “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” & Matthew 7:21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only the one who does the will of my [all-Loving] Father” & Matthew 18:3-4 “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become humble again like very young children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven”). He also encouraged others to abandon all their attachments – both to the ease of material wealth (see Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 19:21-24, Mark 9:35, Luke 12:15-21, & Luke 14:33 et al) as well as to the comfort of familiar relationships (see Matthew 12:50, Matthew 19:12, Matthew 19:29, Mark 3:33-35, Mark 10:29, & Luke 14:26).



Contrast #06: how they dealt with temptation ...

Note as well that whereas **Paul** claims that his succumbing to temptation is an innate inevitability (“But I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. I do not comprehend my own choices, for I do not do what I want, but rather the very thing I despise ... And yet in fact it is no longer I that do so, but rather the sin that dwells within me ... I can wish for what is right, but I cannot do the same” ~ Romans 7:14-18), **Jesus** – in a brilliant exemplification of his own teachings – stands fully resolute in the face of even the most insidious of misleadings during the most trying of circumstances (“And Jesus was led by the Spirit up into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was famished ... and the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and said to him 'all these I will give to you if you will but fall down and worship me.' And Jesus said to him 'Away with you Satan! For it is clearly written: 'Worship only the Lord your Father, and serve only Him.' and it was then that the devil left Jesus, and angels came to him thereafter.” ~ Matthew 4:1-11 – see also Luke 4:1-13).

Contrast #07: how they dealt with threats of violence ...

It is also interesting to witness how differently the two men handled situations involving physical adversity, especially ones dealing with threats of violence from their adversaries. On the one hand, **Paul** is regularly seen fleeing in fear from such encounters – most often in furtive fashion; often with the direct assistance of his followers (see Acts 9:23-25, Acts 9:28-30, Acts 14:5-6, Acts 14:19-20, Acts 17:14-15, & Acts 19:28-30), and twice even with the help of Roman soldiers (see Acts 21:35 & Acts 23:12-31) ... On the other hand, whenever **Jesus** is seen encountering similar mobs posing similar threats to his physical well-being, “no one laid hands on him” (John 7:30) and he is repeatedly seen to calmly “pass through⁷ the midst of them” instead (a la Luke 4:29-30 – see also John 10:39-40⁸) – almost as though he were gently “shaking the dust from his feet” as he departed (see Matthew 10:12-14). Even more intriguing is the fact that, while **Paul** almost always allowed his friends to keep him from coming into harm's path, **Jesus** sternly rebuked his disciples for attempting to do the same⁹ (“From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, be crucified, and then on the third day be raised. And when Peter took him aside and began to chastise him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you,' Jesus turned to Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.’” ~ Matthew 16:21-23).

Contrast #08: how they dealt with accusations of wrongdoing ...

It is equally interesting to note the stark contrast in which Paul and Jesus dealt with the local political authorities whenever accused of any wrongdoing. On the one hand, **Paul** defended himself passionately & vehemently whenever charged with any legal offense, using whatever means he could to escape punishment – including purposefully inciting religious dissension (Acts 23:1-7), blatantly lying about his support of the Jewish Law (Acts 24:10-14), openly calling upon and appealing to his Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25), and even once going so far as to appeal directly to the mercy of the Roman Emperor (Acts 25:8-11) ... **Jesus**, on the other hand, either answered curtly & cryptically (see Matthew 26:63-64, Matthew 27:11, Mark 15:2¹⁰ & Mark 14:61-62, & John 18:6¹¹) or remained completely silent (see Matthew 26:62, Matthew 27:12-14, Mark 15:3-5, Luke 23:9, & John 19:9) whenever similarly accused.

7 This interpretation is made even more convincing when we realize that the Greek word translated as “passing through” here (*dierchoma* – Strong's #1330) also means “to share” or “to relay”, as in to report to others or to disseminate information. In addition, the argument being made here takes on even more meaning when we look to some of the other places this term is used in the New Testament – “passing through” the eye of the needle in Matthew 19:24, “passing over to the other side” in Mark 4:35, the sword “passing through” the Soul in Luke 2:35, and Jesus' disciples “passing through” various villages in Luke 9:6.

8 To be fair, there is one instance where Jesus “hid himself” before “passing through” his enemies (John 8:59), and yet the argument can be readily made that he did so in this instance not out of fear, but rather to preserve the intricate timeline of his pre-planned crucifixion (see Note 9 hereafter).

9 If one reads the New Testament texts carefully, it is easy to see that Jesus “[knew] all that was to happen to him” (John 18:4) – namely, that he in all probability pre-planned his own crucifixion. He repeatedly told his disciples ahead of time that he was going to be “handed over to the chief priests” to then “rise again after three days” (Matthew 20:17-19 – see also Mark 9:30-32, Luke 9:22, Luke 9:44, John 12:27 et al), he regularly showed that he had pre-arranged the event (see Matthew 21:1-9, Matthew 21:17, Matthew 26:18, Mark 11:11, Luke 9:52, Luke 10:1, Luke 19:5, John 7:10 et al), and he frequently noted that he was doing everything purposefully “so that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (see Matthew 26:54-56, Luke 24:44, John 12:23-34, John 17:12, & John 18:11 et al) ... For a plethora of additional proof for this theory, see Part 2 (beginning at page 35) of my book *Exhuming Easter*, readable online at the following link: <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/55687577/exhuming-easter-complete-3rd-edition>

10 “You say so” is a subtly important answer here, if for no other reason than – when combined with the words of John 6:15 – it becomes Jesus' way of coyly saying “No, I am not” (or “No, not you” – as in Matthew 26:25).

11 Quite importantly, Jesus does **not** say *eimi* in the Greek texts – which could indeed have been translated as “Yes, I am.” Instead, the texts show him saying *ego eimi*, a phrase which literally means “**I, I am**” – and which contextually means “I am the essence of I Am” or “I am an embodiment of the Child of God within.” (see John 14:12 & John 14:20)

“In the teachings of Christ, religion is completely present tense: Jesus is the prototype and our task is to imitate him; to enliven his teachings and thereby ourselves become his disciples. And yet then through Paul came a fundamental alteration; with Paul drawing attention away from imitating Christ and fixing that attention on the death & rebirth of Jesus. What Martin Luther failed to realize is that even before Catholicism came along, Christianity had become degenerate at the hands of Paul. By making it a religion about worshipping Jesus instead of enlivening the internal Christ, Paul turned Christianity into the religion of Paul. In essence, Paul threw the Christianity of Christ away and completely turned it on its head, morphing it into a religion lauding the exact opposite of the original proclamations of Jesus.” ~ via Soren Kierkegaard

“If Christianity needs an Anti-Christ, it needs look no farther than Paul ... As represented in the Gospels (of Jesus) on one hand and Paul's epistles on the other, we find two quite different kinds of men, and two quite different – if not fully opposing – spiritual traditions being inculcated. In the spirituality of Jesus Christ we find all the good that has ever been the result of biblical application, while in the religion of Paul we find all the disastrous mischief which has so indisputably flowed from the same.” ~ via Jeremy Bentham

Jesus & Paul: a look at their personalities ...

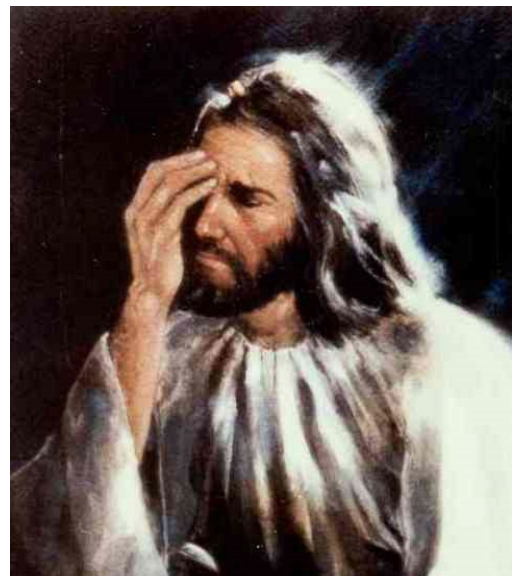
While it is true that exposing the vast differences in the lives & lifestyles of Jesus Christ and Paul of Tarsus (a la the evidence provided in the previous 8 pages of this tome) does not in & of itself prove that the two men espoused competing theologies, those differences in upbringing do explain what I will now show – namely, that Paul & Jesus exhibited stark discrepancies of basic personality & character; discrepancies that do not always mandate the development of different spiritual beliefs, and yet discrepancies that can help us to understand the same.

Contrast #09: Paul's cowardice & Jesus' courage ...

More than a few Christians take offense when Paul's cowardice is mentioned by “non-believers”, claiming that no martyr can ever be properly labeled as such. Aside from the fact that **Paul** was not a true martyr – in that a true martyr (like Stephen, for example, whose brutal murder Paul witnessed and of which Paul himself approved – see [Acts 7:58](#) to [Acts 8:3](#)) is given the choice to recant and yet chooses to remain steadfast and die anyway (whereas Paul was simply imprisoned against his will and executed by Nero thereafter), there is a large amount of biblical evidence showing Paul as having a cowardly character. Yes, Paul was a blowhard who openly claimed to be “[ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem](#)” ([Acts 21:12-13](#)), and yet real courage is not shown by what one says, but rather by what transpires thereafter – by what one does. And what happens to Paul after he makes his proud claim? We see him rescued from martyrdom by the Gentiles in [Acts 21-23](#), we see him protected from the Jews by Felix in [Acts 23-24](#), and we see Paul appealing to the mercy of the Roman Emperor and the regulations of Roman law in [Acts 25:9-12](#) – and this, despite Paul himself telling his followers in Corinth to never ever “[go to law before the unrighteous](#)” ([1 Corinthians 6:1-11](#) – see also [Contrasts #7 & #8](#) on page 27 herein) ... **Jesus**, on the other hand, not only had the courage to consistently preach and personally embody an extremely uncomfortable Gospel that directly challenged the current religious authorities (see [Matthew 5](#), [Matthew 21:12-13](#), [Mark 2:1-12](#), [Mark 2:23-27](#), [Mark 11:27-33](#), [Mark 12:35-37](#), [Luke 5:29-32](#), & [Luke 20:1-8](#) et al) but he also had the courage to confront his accusers with bold silence (see [Matthew 26:62](#), [Matthew 27:12-14](#), [Mark 15:3-5](#), [Luke 23:9](#), & [John 19:9](#)), the courage to arrange his own crucifixion (as his final and ultimate sermon on selflessness – see [Note 9](#) at the bottom of page 27 herein), and then the courage to face down his persecutors with amazing grace (“[Father, forgive them; they know not what they do](#)” ~ [Luke 23:34](#)).

Contrast #10: Paul's arrogance & Jesus' humility ...

There is possibly no greater – nor more telling – difference in character between Paul & Jesus than the jittery arrogance of the former and the assured humility of the latter. Indeed, **Paul** (no less than a *self-proclaimed* “apostle” of Jesus Christ – see [Romans 1:1](#), [1 Corinthians 1:1](#), [2 Corinthians 1:1](#), [Galatians 1:1](#), [Colossians 1:1](#) et al) has the repetitive gall to openly glorify his own ministry ([Romans 11:13](#)), to publicly claim that his ministry is given directly from God ([2 Corinthians 3:5](#) & [2 Corinthians 10:17-18](#)), to harshly condemn his religious opponents ([Galatians 1:7-8](#)), to judge the readiness of his followers ([1 Corinthians 3:2](#)), to laud his own efforts as being better than &/or more worthy than those of all others ([1 Corinthians 15:10](#) & [2 Corinthians 10:8](#)), and to demand that his readers “[be imitators of me](#)” ([1 Corinthians 4:16](#), [1 Corinthians 11:1](#) & [Philippians 3:17](#)) and “[maintain the traditions just as I have handed them on to you](#)” ([1 Corinthians 11:2](#)) ...



Jesus Christ, on the other hand – despite the Bible's clear portrayal of him as a bona fide embodiment of the Divine, is shown repeatedly humbling himself before others (“I am among you as the one who serves” ~ Luke 22:27). First & foremost, Jesus always places God above and beyond himself¹² (see Matthew 4:1-10, Matthew 23:8-9, Matthew 26:37-39, Mark 10:18, John 5:41, John 6:38, John 8:50-54, & John 12:44-50 et al). Second, Jesus is shown regularly & repeatedly associating with the downtrodden and others considered to be “undesirable” (e.g. lepers in Matthew 8:2-3, Mark 1:41 & Luke 5:13, prostitutes in Luke 7:37 & John 8:3-11, Samaritans in Luke 17:11-19 & John 4:7-40, Pharisees in Luke 7:36, and tax collectors in Luke 15:1 & Luke 19:7-10). Third, Jesus frequently demands that others not treat him as holy or announce him as the Messiah (see Matthew 16:13-20, Mark 1:21-25, Mark 1:40-44, Mark 7:32-36, Mark 8:27-30, Mark 9:1-9, Luke 5:12-14, Luke 8:49-56, & Luke 9:18-21 – see also John 6:15 & John 13:5 et al). Finally, in his teachings Jesus places humility above all other virtues (see Matthew 11:29, Matthew 20:27, Matthew 23:11-12, Luke 9:48, Luke 14:7-11, Luke 22:26, & John 13:14, et al); even making it a direct requirement for one's personal Salvation (see Matthew 18:3-4 – also John 14:12).

Contrast #11: Paul's callousness & Jesus' caring ...

Possibly due to his obvious low sense of self-esteem &/or his aforementioned high degree of arrogance, **Paul** frequently treats others with a callousness that is anything but Divine (“I declare to you this day that I am not responsible for the blood of any of you.” ~ Acts 20:26 – see also Romans 2:1's “Therefore you have no excuse”, 1 Corinthians 5:11's “do not associate with anyone ... who is sexually immoral or greedy”, & Galatians 1:9's “let that one be accursed”). Indeed, nowhere is Paul's cold demeanor more evident than in his belief in a wrathful God (“For the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth” ~ Romans 1:18 – see also Romans 2:12 & 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16) and his open support for God's actualization of that wrath (see 1 Corinthians 6:10 & 2 Corinthians 11:14-15) ... **Jesus** Christ, on the other hand, repeatedly exuded an unconditional kindness and a humble sense of caring for all those he met – for sinners of lust and greed (see Luke 7:37, Luke 15:1, Luke 19:1-10, & John 8:3-11), for cultural enemies (see Luke 17:11-19 & John 4:7-40) and religious opponents (see Luke 7:36), for the “unclean” (see Matthew 8:2-3, Mark 1:41, Luke 5:13, & Luke 8:43-48), and even for thronging crowds for whom he had great compassion (see Matthew 9:36-38, Matthew 14:14, Matthew 15:32, & Mark 6:34 et al). In great contrast to Paul, Jesus actually cared about those in need. He actually wanted above all to lessen others' suffering and to enhance their Joy (John 15:11), and his actions throughout his ministry proved the same.

“The conversion of Paul was no conversion at all: instead it was Paul converting a lifestyle that raised one man above sin and death into a religion that has delivered millions of men so completely into their own dominion that their common nature has become a horror to them, and their religious life a denial of life itself.” ~ via George Bernard Shaw

12 It is true that Jesus *seems* to claim divinity in a number of “I am” verses in the New Testament – most notably Mark 14:62, where he *seems* to answer “[Yes] I am” when asked if he was the Messiah. Of course, when we look to the Greek texts of this and all his other similar “I am” verses (including John 8:58), we can clearly see that Jesus does **not** ever say *eimi* – which could indeed be correctly translated as “Yes, I am.” Instead, the texts show him saying *ego eimi*, a phrase which is literally translated as “**I, I am**” – and which contextually means “I am the essence of I Am” or “I am an embodiment of the Child of God within.” (see also John 14:12 & John 14:20)

Contrast #12: Paul's condemnation & Jesus' forgiveness ...

In line with many of the aforementioned contrasts (directly via Contrast #04 on page 25, Contrast #10 on pages 29-30, and Contrast #11 on the previous page, and indirectly via Contrast #05 on pages 25-26 & Contrast #09 on page 29) there is a clearly defined dichotomy between Paul and Jesus in the way they judge the actions of others – with Paul tending to staunchly condemn those believing differently than he does or acting in ways he deems to be unacceptable, and Jesus repeatedly and unconditionally forgiving the same¹³. **Paul** calls a spiritual opponent a “son of the devil” and then blinds him in Acts 13:8-11, whereas **Jesus** calmly informs his religious opponents “now that you say 'We see,' your sin remains” in John 9:41 – and this, after having cured a man who had been blind from birth (see John 9:1-7; also Matthew 9:27-31, Mark 8:22-25, Mark 10:46-52, & Luke 18:35-43) ... **Paul** coldly proclaims that “those who practice such things deserve to die” in Romans 1:32, whereas **Jesus** tells a critical crowd “Do not condemn others by appearances, but rather judge [their deeds] with proper discernment” (in John 7:21-24) and later tells his Pharisee opponents “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I come that you might have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10) ... **Paul** claims that the sinful cannot “escape the judgment of God” and that they “are storing up wrath on the day of wrath” (Romans 2:3-5), whereas **Jesus** speaks frequently and consistently of a celestial Father whose Love is “perfect” (see Matthew 5:44-48) and thus completely without punishment (see 1 John 4:18), as well as of a God whose mercy is unconditionally given to all who forgive others (see Matthew 6:14 – see also Matthew 18:21-22¹⁴ & Luke 6:36) ... **Paul** is seen demanding that a congregation member guilty of “sexual immorality” should be “[handed] over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh” (1 Corinthians 5:1-5), whereas **Jesus** extends open kindness towards a woman who has committed a similar offense (see his “neither do I condemn you” in John 8:1-11) ... **Paul** aggressively states “You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?” (Galatians 3:1), whereas **Jesus** calmly reminds us that “anyone who says ‘You fool’ is liable to the fires of Gehenna” (Matthew 5:22) ... Indeed, **Paul** repeatedly makes brazen statements of condemnatory judgment (see “Let anyone be accursed who has no love for the Lord” via 1 Corinthians 16:22, “We are ready to punish every disobedience” via 2 Corinthians 10:6, “I wish those who unsettle you would castrate themselves” via Galatians 5:12, and “Their end is destruction” via Philippians 3.18), whereas **Jesus** over and over & over again expresses gentleness and understanding towards those steeped in sin, all while telling his followers to avoid judging others at all costs. (see “Do not judge, so that you might not be judged. For with the judgment you levy upon others will you yourselves be judged, and the measure you give out will be the measure you receive in return.” ~ Matthew 7:1-2, see “Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own? ... You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, for only then can you see clearly enough to take the speck out of your neighbor’s.” ~ Luke 6:41-42, see “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you ... for your Father in Heaven makes the sun rise upon both the evil and the good, and sends rain to both the righteous and the unrighteous.” ~ Matthew 5:44-45, and see “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” ~ Luke 23:34)

“God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be saved through him ... I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to offer it salvation ... As you enter a house, greet it. If the house is receptive, let your peace flow upon it; and yet if it is not so, allow your peace to return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, gently shake off the dust from your feet as you calmly leave that house or town.” ~ via Jesus Christ (John 3:17, John 12:47, & Matthew 10:12-14)

13 Yes, it is true that Jesus somewhat testily – if not seemingly rudely – calls his listeners “broods of vipers” twice in the New Testament (in Matthew 12:34 & Matthew 23:33), and yet readers would do well to note that on both occasions Jesus is speaking to groups of Pharisees (like Paul) who had chosen to be cunning in their denouncement of The Way of Christ – cunning like the serpent whose guile had deceived Adam in the book of Genesis; with the Hebrew word for cunning being extremely similar to the Hebrew word for naked in that tome. As such, Jesus is not so much insulting the Pharisees here as he is noting that he is aware of their trickery, and that he will neither honor nor tolerate the same.

14 Importantly, numbers had potent sub-meanings for the authors of the biblical texts; in this instance with the number 70 speaking to the seventy nations of humanity mentioned in Genesis 10 (i.e. that we are to forgive *everyone*) and the number 7 referring to perfection or wholeness (i.e. that we are to forgive them *completely* and without condition).

Contrast #13: Paul's divisiveness & Jesus' peacemaking ...

This next contrast can truly come as no surprise, seeing as how condemnation by its very nature brings division – and forgiveness by its very nature engenders harmony. Indeed, for the entirety of his biblical account – no matter where **Paul** seemed to go – debate & dissension followed. He first preached in the synagogues of Damascus, whereby the Jews there became enraged and tried to kill him (Acts 9:19-25). He then escaped to preach in Jerusalem, whereafter the Hellenist Jews there tried to kill him as well (Acts 9:29). After his friends helped him escape to Tarsus, Paul found his way to Antioch, and yet before long bad blood began to boil there too, and he & Barnabas were sent away (Acts 13:9-12). Setting sail, Paul and his cohorts landed at Antioch in Pisidia, and yet it didn't take long for them to offend many of the Jews there, who then “drove them out of their region” (Acts 13:13-52). So off Paul went to Iconium – where he and his friends narrowly escaped being stoned for heresy (Acts 14:1-6). This led them to flee to Lystra, where Paul engaged in even more vociferous debates and was indeed subsequently stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:7-19). After retreating to the cozy confines of like-minded friends back in Antioch (Acts 14:24-28), Paul again began debating with local Jews (Acts 15:1-2) and thereafter went to Jerusalem to confront the disciples on his primary matters of theological contention. After hearing him out, James and Peter were at first unclear as to how they should deal with Paul's fervent ramblings, and yet ultimately decided that it would be in the best interests of everyone if he were simply sent back to Antioch (Acts 15:22-29). After remaining there for a time, Paul grew restless and wanted to “return and visit the believers in every city where we have already proclaimed the word of the lord” (Acts 15:36). True to form, Paul could not agree on which members of his cadre should take part in this journey, a dissension that grew so sharp that it led to he and long-time companion Barnabas non-amicably parting company (Acts 15:36-41). After making his way to Philippi, Paul and his new traveling companion Silas were charged with causing a public uproar, barely escaping an angry mob only to have the local magistrates flog and imprison them thereafter (Acts 16:16-24). After an earthquake allowed for a most miraculous escape, Paul and his cohorts made their way to Thessalonica, where it took Paul only three Sabbath speeches to inspire the next wave of rioting (Acts 17:1-5). Some pro-Paul believers then ushered Paul out of the city under cover of darkness, and he made his way to Berea, where his uniquely heretical rantings created still more trouble (Acts 17:10-13). Paul was then sent off to Athens, where the relatively sophisticated citizenry seemed to regard him with bemused contempt (Acts 17:15-33), inspiring him to be on his way once more. After thereafter arriving in Corinth, he began “arguing” every Sabbath in the synagogue there, causing no small amount of conflict and inspiring no small amount of derision (Acts 18:1-7). After narrowly avoiding sentencing at the hand of Gallio (Acts 18:12-16), Paul left for Ephesus, where he spent three months speaking in the synagogue before the offense taken by the Jews there became too rancid and Paul was forced to leave once again (Acts 19:1-9). He then went to Tyrannus, where he remained for two years, preaching his unique brand of “good news” (Acts 19:9-10). It was at some point shortly thereafter that yet another Paul-inspired riot broke out – this one leading to the mauling of two of Paul's traveling companions by an angry mob (Acts 19:28-29) and convincing Paul that it might be best if he left for Macedonia (Acts 20:1). Paul then passed through Macedonia and entered Greece, staying there for just three months before the next Jewish plot to kill him was set into motion and discovered (Acts 20:3). He fled and made his way eventually to Jerusalem by boat, where he once more narrowly escaped death when the Jews there tried to lynch him for his heresies, quite accurately stating: “This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere to turn against our people, our law, and this place [the Temple]” (Acts 21:27-36). It was here that Paul cast himself upon the mercy of the Roman Emperor (*not* on that of God or even of Jesus Christ, his self-professed Messiah – see Acts 22:22-30), causing him to be transferred to Caesarea where, in true Pauline fashion, he intentionally stirred up a squabble between the Pharisees and the Sadducees (Acts 23:6-10). The Jews then formed yet another pact to kill Paul, and yet this plot was foiled – again under cover of darkness – by Paul's newfound Roman friends (Acts 23:12-23). Paul eventually made it to Rome thereafter, where he continued to preach his contentious gospel until his death by decapitation several years later (Acts 28:24-31) ...

In quite marked contrast, Jesus Christ relayed his own very different Gospel (contrast Paul's Jesus-based gospel in Romans 10:9 & 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 with Jesus' Love-based Gospel in Matthew 10:7 & Matthew 24:12-14) with an air of calm authority – and this, even though his message was just as challenging as Paul's. Firstly, while **Paul** is frequently seen “arguing” in synagogues (a la Acts 17:2, Acts 17:17, Acts 18:4, & Acts 19:8-9 – and also 1 Corinthians 11:19's “There must be factions among you, for only so can it become clear who is genuine” and 2 Corinthians 10:4-5's “We destroy [others'] arguments ... and take [their] every thought captive”), **Jesus** is seen calmly *teaching* “with authority” in those same places of worship (see Matthew 21:23-27, Matthew 21:45-46, Mark 1:21-22, & Luke 4:31-32 – also Matthew 9:35, Matthew 13:54, Mark 1:39, Mark 6:2, Mark 11:18, Mark 12:12, Mark 12:35-37, Luke 2:43-47, Luke 4:15-22, Luke 4:44, Luke 19:47-48, Luke 20:1-8, Luke 20:20-26, Luke 21:37-38, John 6:22-59, John 7:30-46, John 8:2, & John 8:20) &/or serving others by *healing* them there (see Matthew 4:23, Matthew 12:9-13, Matthew 21:14, Mark 1:23-27, Mark 3:1-5, Luke 4:33-35, Luke 6:6-11, & Luke 13:10-16 – also Luke 14:1-5 & John 5:14) ... Secondly, note that while **Paul** is most often seen to seek out his listeners and then speak with them in private gatherings, **Jesus** is by far most often seen speaking to larger crowds in public – “with authority, not like the scribes” (i.e. not like Paul – see Matthew 7:29 & Mark 1:22); crowds who had over & over & over again sought *him* out, not vice versa (see Matthew 4:25, the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, Matthew 8:1-5, Matthew 8:18, Matthew 9:9, Matthew 9:27-32, Matthew 11:7, Matthew 12:15, Matthew 13:1-3, Matthew 14:13, Matthew 14:34-36, Matthew 15:10, Matthew 15:30, Matthew 19:2, Matthew 19:16, Matthew 20:29, Mark 1:32-33, Mark 2:1-2, Mark 2:13, Mark 3:7-8, Mark 3:20, Mark 4:1, Mark 5:21-24, Mark 6:33-34, Mark 6:54-55, Mark 7:24, Mark 8:1, Mark 8:22, Mark 9:15, Mark 10:1, Mark 10:13-17, Mark 10:46, Luke 4:42, Luke 5:1-3, Luke 5:11, Luke 5:15-19, Luke 6:17-18, Luke 7:11, Luke 8:4, Luke 8:40, Luke 9:11, Luke 9:37, Luke 12:1, Luke 14:25, Luke 15:1-2, Luke 17:11-12, Luke 18:15, John 4:45, John 6:2-5, John 6:24-25, John 10:41, & John 12:9-12) ... Thirdly, while **Paul** almost without exception attacked his religious opponents to the point of instigating violent conflict with them, we often see those same opponents (Pharisees & Sadducees & scribes – see Matthew 15:1, Matthew 16:1, Matthew 19:3, Matthew 22:15-23, Mark 7:1, Mark 8:11, Mark 12:13, Mark 12:18, Luke 7:14, Luke 13:31, Luke 17:20-21, Luke 20:27, & John 10:22-24, and even the occasional “leader of the [local] synagogue” – see Matthew 9:18, Mark 5:22, Mark 11:27, Luke 8:41, & John 8:1-9) seeking out **Jesus** to ask questions or seek his counsel ... Fourthly, while it is true that Jesus' ministry was a troubling one to the powers that were¹⁵; inspiring those authorities to regularly show him hostility (Luke 11:53-54) or ridicule (Luke 16:14) &/or persecution (John 5:16), it is crucial to note that **Jesus** just as often went out of his way to deescalate those moments of tension¹⁶ – telling his disciples to “shake the dust from [their] feet” and “flee” similar conflicts (see Matthew 10:14, Mark 6:11, & Matthew 10:23) and himself flowing smoothly away from the same (see him easily “passing through” an angry mob in Luke 4:24-30, removing himself from other aggressive gangs in John 8:59 & John 12:36, quietly leaving when asked to do so in Luke 8:34-37, “sighing deeply” and departing peacefully after being confronted by the Pharisees in Mark 8:11-13, calmly defusing yet another hostile band in John 10:31-40, avoiding Judea in John 7:1 when the Jews there were still angry with him, and later in John 11:53-54 taking a break from preaching entirely when tensions were at a peak) ... In conclusion, while **Paul** believed that Jesus “must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet” (1 Corinthians 15:25) and preached accordingly, **Jesus** consistently shared a Gospel of Love that was ever in harmony with his deepest sermons (here most notably Matthew 5:9's “Blessed are the peacemakers”).

15 And this, despite the fact that Jesus' openly professed mission was to “perfect the Law” – admittedly by radically amending it and thereby bring it to “completion” (the more accurate translation for the Greek word *plerosai* – Strong's #4137, most often read as “fulfilled” in Matthew 5:17-18).

16 NOTE that, whereas Paul was clearly interested in converting others to his ministry, Jesus was only interested in awakening others to his Way. Paul ran from aggression and sought new audiences for himself, while Jesus pre-planned his ministry solely for the benefit of others – solely to awaken as many as possible to the wonders of his brand of selfless Love. And proof of this is found quite readily in the Scriptures – with Jesus only twice provoking others to the point of aggression; once in the very beginning of his ministry (Luke 4:24-30) and once near that ministry's end (via turning over the money-changers tables in the Temple, in all probability to purposefully draw attention to his subsequently self-organized crucifixion – see Matthew 21:12-17, Mark 11:15, & Luke 19:45). This explains why he is repeatedly shown to so easily avoid injury or arrest; why “no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come.” (see John 7:30-44 – also John 2:4, John 7:6, & John 8:20)

Contrast #14: Paul's passive-aggression & Jesus' gentle kindness ...

For those who are unclear on the matter, the term “passive aggressive” relates to statements or actions which seem calm, detached, or even well-intended on their surface, and yet which have an underlying manipulative motive &/or aggressive intent. Some examples of this dysfunctional trait are found in expressions of melodramatic pettiness, pity-ploys, insincere compliments, blame-shifting, behavior shaming, guilt tripping, embittered complaining, paranoia, “white lie” dishonesty, griping gossip, caustic criticism, &/or a rationalized lack of remorse or empathy. Passive aggressive individuals often feel that they are being treated unfairly, and almost always feel entitled to more respect or honor than they currently receive. Reading the biblical letters of Paul with these definitions in mind, it is quite easy to see that **Paul** regularly & flagrantly exhibits a classic passive aggressive personality¹⁷. He regularly attempts to summon pity from his readers (see 1 Thessalonians 2:2, 2 Corinthians 2:1-9, 2 Corinthians 11:16-33, & Colossians 1:24), he frequently disguises his true motives behind false denials (see 1 Thessalonians 2:8 & 2 Corinthians 7:2-4), and he openly admits to his attempts to “make my own people jealous, and thereby save some of them” (see Romans 11:14). He claims to not be shaming his followers while obviously shaming them (see 1 Thessalonians 2:9-11, Galatians 1:6-9, Galatians 3:1-3, Galatians 4:8-11, 1 Corinthians 4:14, & 2 Corinthians 11:7-11), he sets himself up as the only acceptable arbiter of truth (see 1 Thessalonians 4:8, Galatians 1:11-12, 1 Corinthians 14:37-38, & Romans 15:15-19), he makes “velvet threats” related to the potential future misdeeds of his readers (see 2 Corinthians 12:19-21), he lauds the past behaviors of one congregation in order to manipulate another into supplying him with similar gifts or benefits (see 2 Corinthians 8:2-24 & 2 Corinthians 9:5), and he openly denigrates his opponents – and thereby passively threatens his readers with similar denigration should they be similarly disobedient (see 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, Galatians 2:11-14, Romans 1:20-22, Romans 10:2-3, & Romans 16:17-20) ...

Jesus Christ, on the other hand, is regularly seen being unconditionally kind to others while being blatantly direct with them at the same time. Indeed, it is no accident that he openly champions flagrantly honest speech (“Let your ‘yes’ mean Yes and your ‘no’ mean No” ~ Matthew 5:37) and that he openly lauds & honors “children” (see Matthew 18:3-6 & Matthew 19:13-14, where the Greek word *paidia* – Strong’s #3813 – actually means “toddlers” or “very young children”); in the case at hand those who are fully incapable of engaging in passive-aggressive manipulations of any kind. Where **Paul** frequently threatens and inspires fear in others as a manipulative tool, **Jesus** repeatedly encourages his followers to “Be not afraid” (see Matthew 10:26-31, Matthew 14:27, Matthew 17:7, Matthew 28:5-10, Mark 5:36, Mark 6:50, Luke 5:10, Luke 8:50, Luke 12:4-11, Luke 12:32, John 6:20, along with John 14:27’s “My peace I give to you”). Where **Paul** threatens God’s wrath and punishment, **Jesus** speaks of God’s unconditional Love (see Matthew 5:44-48, Luke 6:36, Luke 15:11-32, John 3:16-17, John 15:9-17, along with 1 John 4:7-18 and Luke 12:32’s “It is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom”). Where **Paul**’s ministry is clearly designed to establish *his* theology and ultimately *his* church, **Jesus**’ teachings are all about bringing others Joy and lessening their suffering (see Matthew 5:3-11, Matthew 11:28-30, Luke 10:20, Luke 15:1-7, Luke 17:20-21, & John 16:20-22 – as well as Luke 7:13’s “Do not weep”, John 15:11’s “I have said these things to you so that my Joy might be in you” and John 17:13’s “I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves”). Where **Paul** is often cold-hearted and lacking in empathy, **Jesus** often shows great compassion for others’ confusion and suffering (see Matthew 9:36, Matthew 14:14, Matthew 15:32, Matthew 20:34, Mark 1:40-42, Mark 6:34, Mark 8:2-3, Luke 7:13 & Luke 19:41-42 et al). Where **Paul** tempts his adherents to worry about imminent danger or future discomfort, **Jesus** encourages his followers to have faith and focus only on the present moment (see Matthew 6:25-34, Mark 4:39-40, Luke 12:22-26, along with John 16:33’s “I have said these things to you so that in me you might find peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; for my way has conquered the world”).

¹⁷ In all fairness to Paul, most of his passive aggressive manipulations are found in his letters to the Thessalonians & the Corinthians, with far fewer examples thereof being found in his ministry’s final two epistles, Romans & Colossians.

And finally, where **Paul** is frequently stern and even harsh with his readers, **Jesus** is almost always (except when exposing the hypocrisies of the Pharisees) seen being gentle and kind. Indeed, aside from the many times we see Jesus feeding the hungry or healing the ill or injured, we see him being gentle and kind without condition to all those who come to him. He was kind to lepers (see [Matthew 8:2-4](#), [Mark 1:40-42](#), [Luke 5:12-13](#), & [Luke 17:12-19](#)) even though the Judaic Law of the day forbid the same (see [Leviticus 13:44-45](#) & [Numbers 5:1-4](#)). He was kind a Roman centurion even though Roman legions were militarily occupying his homeland at the time (see [Matthew 8:5-13](#) & [Luke 7:1-9](#)). He was kind to an adulteress in [John 8:1-11](#), and he was kind to tax collectors and prostitutes in [Matthew 9:10-13](#), [Mark 2:15-17](#), [Luke 5:29-31](#), & [Luke 19:1-9](#). He was kind to all the ill & injured people who came to him in Simon's home (see [Mark 1:29-34](#) & [Luke 4:38-40](#)), and he was kind to an “unclean woman” who touched him (and thereby made him “unclean” as well – see [Leviticus 15:25-27](#)) without his permission (see [Matthew 9:20-22](#), [Mark 5:25-34](#), & [Luke 8:43-48](#)). He was kind to all the innocent animals who were being brutally butchered in the Temple (see [Matthew 21:12](#), [Mark 11:15](#), [Luke 19:45](#), & [John 2:14-16](#) – also [Matthew 9:13](#)'s “I desire mercy, not sacrifice”), and he was kind to the woman from Canaan in [Matthew 15:22-28](#) (even though such friendliness was forbidden at the time by Jewish Law – see [Deuteronomy 20:17](#)). He was kind to very young children (see [Matthew 19:13-15](#), [Mark 10:13-16](#), & [Luke 18:15-17](#)) and he was kind to “royal officials” (see [John 4:46-53](#)). Despite the centuries-old enmity that still existed between Jews & Samaritans at the time (see [2 Kings 17:29-41](#), [Matthew 10:5](#), & [John 4:9](#)), Jesus was openly kind to a Samaritan woman (see [John 4:5-26](#)), openly kind to Samaritans in general (see [John 4:39-40](#)), and even vehemently kind to a village of Samaritans who had rudely rejected him and his disciples (see [Luke 9:52-56](#)). He was kind to the “wasteful woman” who anointed him with expensive oil in [Matthew 26:6-13](#), [Mark 14:3-9](#), & [Luke 7:37-50](#) (see also [John 12:2-8](#), which pretty clearly references another anointing entirely) and he was also kind to Jairus, the leader of a local synagogue, in [Mark 5:21-24](#) & [Luke 8:41-55](#) (and also Nicodemus in [John 3:1-21](#)). He was repeatedly kind to his disciples (who were for the most part completely clueless for the entirety of his ministry, and who often frustrated him immensely throughout the same – see [John 13:3-8](#); also [John 20:20-23](#) et al) and he was even kind to Judas during his betrayal (see [Matthew 26:20-25](#) & [Matthew 26:49-50](#)). Most telling of all, Jesus was kind during his darkest hour – even towards his crucifiers *during his crucifixion* (see “Father, forgive them – they know not what they do” in [Luke 23:34](#)).



Contrast #15: Paul's deceitfulness & Jesus' honesty ...

Seeing as how *Jesus* called the devil “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44), openly warned his followers of “the yeast of the Pharisees” (see Matthew 16:11-12 – properly juxtaposed with Acts 23:6, Galatians 1:14, & Philippians 3:5) and other “false prophets” who will work to “deceive the elect” (see Matthew 24:24 – also Matthew 7:15-21, Matthew 23:1-7, Matthew 23:12, Matthew 24:3, Luke 6:26, Luke 14:11, Luke 18:14, & Revelation 2:2), and boldly stated that his own primary purpose was “to testify to the Truth” (John 18:37), it is crucial for any earnest student of the Scriptures (&/or any devout believer in Christ) to understand that – even though he frequently made claims to the contrary (a la Romans 9:1-3, 2 Corinthians 11:31-33, & Galatians 1:15-20 et al) – **Paul** was quite obviously a liar, and even openly boasted of being the same (see Romans 3:7, 2 Corinthians 12:16, & Philippians 1:18).

As proof of this contention, please consider the following:

*Paul lied about being “entrusted with the gospel to the Gentiles” in Galatians 2:7 after Peter had quite clearly and quite publicly laid proper claim to this same task (see Acts 15:7) ...

*Paul clearly lied to James in Acts 21:18-26 about his well documented belief that the Law of Moses was no longer binding on Jews who “die daily” and are thus “crucified in Christ” (see 1 Corinthians 15:31 & Galatians 2:20 – also Romans 6:6-8, Romans 7:6, Romans 8:12-13, Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 5:24, Galatians 6:14, & Philippians 3:8 et al) ...

*Paul lied when he provoked dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees while being tried before Ananias and the rest of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem; knowingly & falsely proclaiming that he was being judged “concerning the resurrection of the dead” (Acts 23:6-7), when in truth he was being judged as someone “who teaches everywhere against the people, against the Law, and against [the Temple]” (Acts 21:27-28) ...

*Paul lied when he wrote to the Galatian Church and told them that the high council at Jerusalem only desired for them to “remember the poor” (Galatians 2:10), when in fact Paul knew quite well that the same council had clearly decreed that Gentiles must fully abstain from four points of the Law – “from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from whatever has been strangled, and from blood” (see Acts 15:20-29) ...

*Seeing as how the Jews in Jerusalem were already receiving direct testimony about Jesus from his actual disciples – from those who (unlike Paul) had actually lived and worked and served with Jesus during his ministry, Paul seemed to lie in Acts 22:17-21 when he claimed that Jesus had somehow personally told him to “get out of Jerusalem quickly, because [the Jews there] will not receive your testimony concerning me” ...

*Paul lied in Acts 9:22-25 when he claims that his Damascus persecutors were “the Jews”, when in fact he admits in 2 Corinthians 11:32-33 that it was actually “the governor under King Aretas” who was his primary persecutor at that time and place...

*Paul lied about when he met with the disciples after his revelation on the Road to Damascus (with Acts 9:20 stating that Paul preached in Damascus straight away thereafter and then went on to Jerusalem, and Galatians 1:16-17 claiming that Paul went first to Arabia for a time before then avoiding Jerusalem altogether and heading to Damascus instead)¹⁸ ...

18 Interestingly enough, there exists a document in the Dead Sea Scrolls (Q40266 – called *The Damascus Document*) which was written around the time of Paul's espoused trip to Arabia. As it turns out, this parchment is an excommunication document that condemns an unidentified man – referred to therein as “the lying adversary, the lying spouter, the tongue, the scoffer” – who had rejected the Law before an entire congregation. Maybe this document refers to Paul, and maybe it doesn't. Still, it adds a great deal of flavor to Acts 9:26-30, where Paul is shown to have great conflict with those in Jerusalem who “did not believe he was a disciple” and then “sent him away to Tarsus.”

*Paul lied to King Agrippa about his conversion experience on the Road to Damascus, originally telling the Jews in Jerusalem that the spirit of Jesus told him to “Get up and go to Damascus, where you will be told everything that has been assigned for you to do” (Acts 22:10 – an account that generally harmonizes with Luke’s regaling of the same event in Acts 9), and then later telling Agrippa an obvious fabrication; claiming that Jesus had instead told him to “get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose: to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me ... I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles – to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.” (Acts 26:16-18)

*“For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the Law I became as one under the Law so that I might win those under the Law. To those outside the Law I became as one outside the Law so that I might win those outside the Law ... I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some.” ~ Paul of Tarsus
(1 Corinthians 9:19-22)*



“Now concerning the things which I write to you,
indeed, before God, I do not lie.”
~ Paul of Tarsus (Galatians 1:20)

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘**You shall not swear falsely**, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord’ and yet I say to you, do not swear at all, neither by Heaven – for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth – for it is His footstool ... But rather let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’, and your ‘No’ be ‘No’, for anything more than this comes from the evil one.” ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:33-37)

“It is frankly more than a bit disappointing to see how Paul hardly ever allows the true Jesus of Nazareth to get a word in ... Indeed, the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount is in all truth completely opposed to the manipulative ramblings of his self-professed apostle.” ~ via Carl Jung & Martin Buber

“Paul himself stands in the twilight of heresy. In reading his letters, one immediately encounters a major difficulty – namely, that whatever Jesus had preached never entered the content of his missionary proclamations. In truth, the deeds and sayings of Jesus' ministry play little role whatsoever in Paul's understanding of Salvation.” ~ via Helmut Koester

Jesus & Paul: a look at their preaching ...

It can come as no surprise that two men with such dramatically different upbringings would develop such dramatically different personalities, and it can come as even less of a surprise that such dramatically different personalities would reflect themselves in such dramatically different styles of preaching ... Consider the following examples:

Contrast #16: Paul's pious boasting & Jesus' humble quietude ...

While there are admittedly exceptions to this generality found within the Scriptures – with Paul sometimes writing reservedly (a la his letter to [Philemon](#)) and Jesus every now and then booming his message with fervor (a la [Matthew 23](#) or [Luke 11:37-52](#)), for the most part it holds true that Paul was fond of brash boasting while Jesus preferred the peace of calm teaching or spiritual solitude. Whereas **Paul** regularly enters local synagogues to cajole, debate, &/or argue (see Contrast #17 that follows), **Jesus** is far more often seen retreating to pray alone (see [Matthew 14:23](#), [Matthew 26:36-39](#), [Mark 1:35](#), [Mark 6:46](#), [Mark 14:32-25](#), [Luke 5:16](#), [Luke 6:12](#), [Luke 9:18](#), [Luke 22:41-42](#), & [John 17](#) et al) ... Whereas **Paul** frequently compliments himself and “boasts in [his own] sufferings” ([Romans 5:3](#) – also [Romans 15:17](#), [1 Corinthians 4:9-13](#), [1 Corinthians 9:15](#), [1 Corinthians 15:10](#), [2 Corinthians 1:8-9](#), [2 Corinthians 6:4-10](#), [Galatians 1:24](#), [Colossians 1:24](#), & [1 Thessalonians 2:2](#) et al), **Jesus** encouraged his followers to do exactly the opposite (see [Matthew 5:10-11](#), [Matthew 6:1-4](#), [Matthew 6:16-18](#), [Matthew 10:39](#), & [Luke 6:22-23](#) – as well as his “Father ... not my will but yours be done” prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane in [Luke 22:42](#), [Matthew 26:39](#), & [Mark 14:36](#))... Whereas **Paul** openly “glorified [his own] ministry” ([Romans 11:13](#)), **Jesus** refused to do so; stating quite plainly that he could “do nothing on my own” ([John 5:30](#)), that he “accepted the glory of no human beings” ([John 5:41](#)) and that “if I glorify myself, that glory means nothing” ([John 8:54](#) – see also [Matthew 4:10](#), [Matthew 18:3-4](#), [Matthew 23:12](#), [Mark 10:18](#), [John 6:15](#), & [John 12:44](#) et al) ... Whereas **Paul** encouraged others to loudly praise Christ & publicly worship Jesus (see [Romans 10:9-13](#), [1 Corinthians 12:3](#), [1 Corinthians 14:4-5](#), [2 Corinthians 1:19-20](#), [Philippians 2:10-11](#), & [Colossians 1:15-17](#) et al), **Jesus** encouraged his followers to pray only to God and to do so in secret silence (see [Matthew 6:5-6](#), [Matthew 6:33-34](#), & [John 4:23](#) et al) ...

Finally, whereas **Paul** saw “signs & wonders” as proof of his divine apostleship (see [Acts 14:1-3](#), [Romans 15:18-19](#), [1 Corinthians 2:4-5](#), [2 Corinthians 12:12](#), & [1 Thessalonians 1:5](#)), **Jesus** often refused to engage in such showboating (see [Matthew 12:38-39](#), [Matthew 16:2-4](#), [Mark 6:4-6](#), & [Mark 8:12](#) – also [Matthew 24:24](#), [John 4:44-48](#), & [John 20:29](#)'s “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe”) and frequently refused to accept responsibility for any of his supposed “miracles” (see [Matthew 8:1-3](#), [Matthew 9:22](#), [Matthew 9:23-24](#), [Matthew 9:29-30](#), [Matthew 15:28](#), [Matthew 17:19-20](#), [Mark 1:40-44](#), [Mark 5:19](#), [Mark 5:34](#), [Mark 5:36-39](#), [Mark 7:36](#), [Mark 8:26](#), [Mark 9:23](#), [Mark 10:52](#), [Luke 5:12-14](#), [Luke 8:39](#), [Luke 8:48](#), [Luke 8:50-52](#), [Luke 17:19](#), [Luke 18:42](#), [John 5:19](#), [John 6:15](#), & [John 11:4](#)).



Contrast #17: Paul's heated preaching & Jesus' calm teaching ...

As mentioned previously (primarily on pages 31 & 32 herein), **Paul** tended to inspire vehement argument and aggressive opposition whenever & wherever he preached. Indeed, he is seen arguing with Hellenists in Acts 9:29, debating with Judean Jews in Acts 15:2, disagreeing sharply with Barnabas in Acts 15:39, haranguing Thessalonians in Acts 17:2, quarreling with Athenians in Acts 17:17, squabbling with Corinthians in Acts 18:4, bickering with Ephesians in Acts 19:8-9, stirring up dissension between Pharisees & Sadducees in Acts 23:6-9, and inspiring stark disagreement amongst Roman Jews in Acts 28:24-25. But it was not only the author of Acts who portrayed him in this light, as even in his own letters Paul openly brags about “destroying [others'] arguments” (2 Corinthians 10:4), brazenly curses his religious opponents (see 1 Corinthians 4:14, Galatians 1:9, & Galatians 3:1-3 et al), and encourages his followers to reject and “drive out the wicked from among you” (1 Corinthians 5:12-13) ... **Jesus** Christ, on the other hand, is repeatedly shown in quite a different light – repeatedly calling for peace and harmony amongst friends & enemies alike (see Matthew 5:9, Matthew 5:22, Matthew 5:44-48, Matthew 18:21-22, Matthew 24:12-14, Mark 11:25, Luke 6:27-36, Luke 10:29-37, John 13:15-17, & John 13:34-35 et al), teaching others his loving Gospel calmly “with authority” (see Matthew 7:29, Mark 1:27, & Luke 4:32) – others who often refused to debate him at all and who were regularly “astounded at his teaching” (see Matthew 7:28, Matthew 12:23, Matthew 13:54, Matthew 22:33, Mark 1:22, Mark 10:24, Mark 11:18, Luke 2:47, & Luke 4:32 – also Luke 19:48 & John 7:46).

Contrast #18: Paul's loyalty to allies & Jesus' devotion to strangers ...

It makes easy sense that relatively cowardly individuals with low self-esteem (see Contrast #09 on page 29 and Contrast #14 on page 34) would tend to gravitate towards speaking to gatherings of people who are either already well-known &/or who are likely to accept whatever is being sold or shared. And this is precisely what we see **Paul** doing throughout his ministry – traveling to &/or writing to the “believers” in already-established churches (see Acts 13:1, Acts 14:20-28, Acts 15:3-4, Acts 15:30-35, Acts 15:41, Acts 18:22-23, Act 20:2-3, Acts 20:17, Acts 21:7, Acts 21:15-17, & Acts 28:14-15 – also Acts 15:36's “Come, let us return and visit the believers in every city where we [have already] proclaimed the word of the Lord” and, of course, the biblical epistles Paul penned to the congregations in Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Philippi, Colossae & Thessalonica) &/or entering and preaching in pre-established synagogues¹⁹ (see Acts 9:20, Acts 13:5, Acts 13:14-16, Acts 14:1, Acts 17:1-2, Acts 17:10, Acts 17:17, Acts 18:4, Acts 18:19, & Acts 19:8 – and this despite Paul's proclamation that he had been “entrusted with the gospel for the *uncircumcised*” in Galatians 2:7). Paul also goes out of his way to laud those of like mind &/or like faith (see Acts 13:17, Romans 1:6-7, Romans 3:22, Romans 4:13, Romans 8:1, Romans 8:27-30, 1 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:15, Galatians 6:10, Philippians 1:3-5, Philippians 2:15, Colossians 1:12, Colossians 1:26-28, 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13, 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10, & 1 Thessalonians 5:2-5), to denigrate those who believe differently than he does &/or who aren't in his comfortable circle of friends (see Romans 1:18-21, Romans 1:28-32,



Romans 10:2-3, Romans 16:17-18, 1 Corinthians 2:14, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 2 Corinthians 6:14, 2 Corinthians 11:4-15, Galatians 1:6-9, Galatians 3:1-3, Galatians 4:30-31, Galatians 4:10-12, Philippians 3:2, Philippians 3:17, Colossians 2:8, Colossians 3:5-6, & 1 Thessalonians 2:14-15), and to coddle or bow down to those who had political power &/or influence (see Acts 16:40, Acts 18:1-4, Acts 18:7-8, Acts 20:3-4, Acts 22:25-28, Acts 23:5, Acts 23:16-32, Acts 24:22-23, Acts 25:10-11, Acts 27:3, & Acts 28:16 – also his admonition in Romans 13:1-2 to “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment”) ...

¹⁹ While it is admittedly true that Paul's self-made theology was not welcomed in the majority of the synagogues he visited, it is just as true that Paul was obviously well-versed in Jewish Law and felt quite comfortable arguing about the same in those particular arenas.

Jesus Christ, on the other hand, maintained a very different style of affiliating with others. First & foremost, while he did (like Paul) enter local synagogues to teach there, he spent the vast majority of his ministry teaching to crowds of strangers – crowds not that he had sought out, but rather who had thronged *to him* (see Matthew 4:25, the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, Matthew 8:1-5, Matthew 8:18, Matthew 9:9, Matthew 9:27-32, Matthew 11:7, Matthew 12:15, Matthew 13:1-3, Matthew 14:13, Matthew 14:34-36, Matthew 15:10, Matthew 15:30, Matthew 19:2, Matthew 19:16, Matthew 20:29, Mark 1:32-33, Mark 2:1-2, Mark 2:13, Mark 3:7-8, Mark 3:20, Mark 4:1, Mark 5:21-24, Mark 6:33-34, Mark 6:54-55, Mark 7:24, Mark 8:1, Mark 8:22, Mark 9:15, Mark 10:1, Mark 10:13-17, Mark 10:46, Luke 4:42, Luke 5:1-3, Luke 5:11, Luke 5:15-19, Luke 6:17-18, Luke 7:11, Luke 8:4, Luke 8:40, Luke 9:11, Luke 9:37, Luke 12:1, Luke 14:25, Luke 15:1-2, Luke 17:11-12, Luke 18:15, John 4:45, John 6:2-5, John 6:24-25, John 10:41, & John 12:9-12). Secondly, it is important to note that Jesus did not limit his interactions to those with whom he felt comfortable, but regularly and willingly associated with the meek and the downtrodden and the “undesirable” and the “unclean” – embracing lepers (see Matthew 8:3, Mark 1:41, & Luke 5:13), being kind to centurions (see Matthew 8:5-13 & Luke 7:1-9), forgiving prostitutes (see Luke 7:37-50 & John 8:3-11), honoring Samaritans (see Luke 17:11-19 & John 4:7-40 – also Acts 1:8 & Luke 10:29-37), dining with Pharisees (see Luke 7:36, Luke 11:37-54, & Luke 14), and openly associating with “tax collectors and sinners” (see Matthew 9:10-12, Luke 15:1-3, & Luke 19:1-10). Finally, Jesus refused to bend to pressures from political authorities; never appealing to their mercy, but rather answering their charges with either cryptic wisdom (see Matthew 26:63-64, Matthew 27:11, Mark 15:2, Mark 14:61-62, & John 18:6) or unwavering silence (see Matthew 26:62, Matthew 27:12-14, Mark 15:3-5, Luke 23:9, & John 19:9).



*“Paul would have done well to often ask himself: What would Jesus **not** have written – What would Jesus **not** have done? ... How fortunate we are that, despite this grave oversight, every day more and more people are waking up; that every day more and more are walking away from the church of Paul and heading back to the God of Christ.” ~ inspired by Chuck Palahnuik & Lenny Bruce*

Contrast #19: Paul's manipulation of Scripture & Jesus' use thereof ...

While it is true that both Paul and Jesus used external sources (including the Hebrew Bible – today known by many as the Old Testament) to illustrate their teachings and emphasize their sermons, it is just as true that they did so in very different ways for very different reasons. Whereas **Paul** was fond of quoting contemporary philosophers and poets as if they were the holy Word of God (see [Acts 17:28](#) – where Paul cites Platonic philosopher Posidonius' “in him we live and move and have our being” and Greek poet Aratus' “for we too are his offspring”, [1 Corinthians 2:9](#) – where Paul cites a non-canonical Jewish writing as if it is Scripture²⁰, [1 Corinthians 4:6](#) – where Paul quite ironically cites the well-known proverb “nothing beyond what is written”, [1 Corinthians 15:33](#) – where Paul quotes the Greek poet Menander's “bad company ruins good morals”, and [2 Corinthians 12:2-4](#) – where Paul references a popular Jewish mysticism found nowhere else in the Scriptures), **Jesus** was not. Intriguingly, **Paul** even goes a dramatic step further with this form of scriptural abuse by having Jesus himself quote from non-canonical sources – claiming that Jesus uttered the statement “It is more blessed to give than to receive” in [Acts 20:35](#) (a saying found nowhere in the Gospels-- indeed, one found nowhere else in the entire Bible²¹) and having Jesus apparently reference a common Greek proverb in [Acts 26:14](#) (“It hurts to kick against the goad”, ironically telling Paul therewith that the more he resisted the teachings of Christ, the more he and others would suffer) ... In addition, **Paul** can regularly be seen manipulating Old Testament scriptures to fit his own self-created (and thoroughly heretical – rejecting as he does both the traditional pro-Law beliefs of the Jews and the reformed pro-Love-via-selfless-deeds spirituality of Jesus Christ) theological agenda – combining the words of [Psalm 116:11](#) with [Psalm 51:4](#) to make his own Scripture in [Romans 3:4](#), combining the words of [Psalm 14](#), [Psalm 53](#), [Psalm 5](#), [Psalm 140](#), [Psalm 10](#), & [Psalm 36](#) with [Proverbs 1:16](#) & [Isaiah 59:7-8](#) to create his own Scripture in [Romans 3:10-18](#), molding [Psalm 143:2](#) into an entirely new context in [Romans 3:20](#), altering the intended focus of [Isaiah 28:16](#) in [Romans 9:33](#), falsely refuting [Leviticus 18:5](#) with [Deuteronomy 30:13-14](#) in [Romans 10:5-8](#) (when those two verses are actually in complete harmony with one another), inverting the effective context of [Isaiah 52:15](#) in [Romans 15:21](#), paraphrasing – and indeed altering – [Isaiah 28:9-12](#) as if he is quoting the same in [1 Corinthians 14:21](#), and combining & manipulating the words of [Leviticus 26:12](#), [Ezekiel 37:27](#), [Isaiah 52:11](#), [2 Samuel 7:14](#), & [Isaiah 43:6](#) to make completely new Scripture in [2 Corinthians 6:16-18](#) ...

“Paul has audaciously substituted a mere faith in Jesus for living a Christlike life ... Neither I nor anyone else I know have been able to follow the supposed wisdom of the supposedly blessed and glorious Paul ... Paul's words are not the Words of God. They are the words of Paul – and there is a vast difference between the two.” ~ via Walter Kaufman, Bishop Polycarp (one of the earliest of the Church Fathers; a man who scholars suppose learned about Jesus Christ directly from John the apostle himself), & John Spong

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- 20 NOTE that Paul's use of “as it is written” in this verse is not present in [Jude 1:9-14](#) where similar words are intoned. While it is admittedly possible that Paul is here once more piecing together various verses from the Old Testament (in this case [Isaiah 64:4](#), [Isaiah 65:17](#), & [Isaiah 62:15](#) from the Septuagint) in order to create a “holy word” more persuasive to his unique intentions, using the phrase “as it is written” – a phrase that clearly implies that the words mentioned thereafter are found wholly intact within the ancient texts – is intentionally misleading at the very least.
- 21 While the Gospel of Thomas 1:95's “do not lend at interest, but rather give to him from whom you will not receive in return” and [Deuteronomy 15:10-11](#)'s “give liberally ... open your hands to the poor and the needy neighbor in your land” both reflect the same wisdom Paul cites in [Acts 20:35](#), those two sources are actually far more reminiscent of the statements Jesus made in [Matthew 5:42](#), [Luke 6:35](#), & [Luke 14:12-14](#).

In marked contrast, while it is true that *Jesus* also occasionally combined words from different Old Testament verses to illustrate his teachings (see him seemingly composing his own Scripture by intermingling the words of seven different verses from the books of *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel* & *Joel* in *Mark 13:24-25*, seemingly adjusting the context of *Micah 7:6* while paraphrasing it in *Luke 12:53*, seemingly composing his own Scripture by combining several words from *Isaiah 56:7* & *Jeremiah 7:11* in *Luke 19:46*, and seemingly composing his own Scripture once more by combining *Isaiah 61:1-2* & *Isaiah 58:6* in *Luke 4:18-19*) and while it is also the case that he is at least once seen apparently citing a non-canonical text as though it were Scripture (see *Luke 11:49*, where he appears to quote from *The Wisdom of God*), he is far more often than not seen *accurately* alluding to the ancient Old Testament texts (alluding to *Psalm 1:1* & *Isaiah 61:2* in the Beatitudes of *Matthew 5:3-11*, alluding to *Psalm 72:2* in *Matthew 5:6-10*, alluding to *Psalm 24:4* & *Psalm 51:10* in *Matthew 5:8*, alluding to *1 Kings 19:10* & *Nehemiah 9:26* in *Matthew 5:12*, alluding to the “Prayer of David” in *2 Samuel 7:18-29* as well as *Leviticus 19:18* in *Matthew 5:44*, alluding to *Ezekiel 22:27* & *Zephaniah 3:3* in *Matthew 7:15*, alluding to *Jeremiah 14:14* in *Matthew 7:22*, alluding to *Isaiah 62:5* in *Matthew 9:15-17*, alluding to *Isaiah 29:18-19* & *Isaiah 35:5-6* & *Isaiah 42:18* & *Isaiah 61:1* in *Matthew 11:4-6*, alluding to *Isaiah 40:3* in *Matthew 11:10*, alluding to *Numbers 28:9-10* in *Matthew 12:5-6*, alluding to *Ezekiel 17:23* in *Matthew 13:31-32*, alluding to *Exodus 3:14* – along with the numerous “have no fear” verses in *Isaiah 40-55* – in *Matthew 14:27*, alluding to *Isaiah 22:22* in *Matthew 16:19*, alluding to *Deuteronomy 19:15* in *Matthew 18:16*, alluding to *Isaiah 56:3-5* in *Matthew 19:12*, alluding to *Isaiah 51:17* & *Lamentations 4:21* in *Matthew 20:22*, alluding to *Deuteronomy 6:5* & *Leviticus 19:18* in *Matthew 22:37-40* & *Mark 12:30-31* & *Luke 10:27*, alluding to the “gnats” of *Leviticus 11:20-23* & the “camels” of *Leviticus 11:4* in *Matthew 23:24*, alluding to *Leviticus 19:14* in *Matthew 24:10*, alluding to *Daniel 9:27* & *Daniel 11:31* & *Daniel 12:11* in *Matthew 24:15*, alluding to *Daniel 12:1* & *Joel 2:2* in *Matthew 24:21*, alluding to *Daniel 7²²* in *Matthew 24:27*, alluding to *Ezekiel 32:7* in *Matthew 24:29*, alluding to *Daniel 12:2* in *Matthew 25:46*, alluding to *Daniel 7:13* & *Psalm 110:1* in *Matthew 26:64*, alluding to *Isaiah 66:24* in *Mark 9:44-46*, alluding to *Leviticus 2:16* & *Ezekiel 43:24* in *Mark 9:49*, alluding to *Deuteronomy 6:4-5* & *Joshua 22:5* in *Mark 12:29-30*, alluding to *Isaiah 6:9-10* in *Luke 8:10*, alluding to *Isaiah 53:12* in *Luke 22:37*, alluding to *Hosea 10:8* in *Luke 23:30*, alluding to *Psalm 31:5* in *Luke 23:46*, alluding to *Isaiah 54:13* in *John 6:45*, alluding to *Psalm 82:6* in *John 10:34*, alluding to *Psalm 41:9* in *John 13:18*, and alluding to *Psalm 69:4* in *John 15:25*) or *directly* quoting from the Hebrew Scriptures (quoting *Deuteronomy 8:3* & *Deuteronomy 6:16* & *Deuteronomy 6:13* & *Deuteronomy 10:20* to rebuke Satan in *Matthew 4:4-10* & *Luke 4:4-11*, quoting *Psalm 37:11* in *Matthew 5:5*, quoting *Isaiah 66:1* & *Psalm 48:2* in *Matthew 5:35*, quoting *Proverbs 7:27* & *Proverbs 15:24* & *Jeremiah 21:8* in *Matthew 7:13-14*, quoting *Psalm 6:8* in *Matthew 7:22*, quoting *Hosea 6:6* in *Matthew 9:13* & *Matthew 12:7*, quoting *Micah 7:6* in *Matthew 10:35-36*, quoting *Malachi 3:1* in *Matthew 11:10* & *Mark 1:2* & *Luke 7:27*, quoting *Isaiah 42:1-4* in *Matthew 12:18-21*, quoting *Isaiah 6:9-10* in *Matthew 13:14-15* & *Mark 4:12* & *Luke 8:10* & *John 12:40*, quoting *Exodus 20:12* & *Deuteronomy 5:16* in *Matthew 15:4* & *Mark 7:10*, quoting *Isaiah 29:13* in *Matthew 15:8-9*, quoting *Isaiah 60:21* in *Matthew 15:13*, quoting *Genesis 2:24* in *Matthew 19:5* & *Mark 10:7-8*, quoting *Isaiah 56:7* & *Jeremiah 7:11* in *Matthew 21:13* & *Mark 11:17*, quoting *Psalm 8:2* in *Matthew 21:16*, quoting *Psalm 118:22-23* in *Matthew 21:42* & *Mark 12:10-11* & *Luke 20:17*, quoting *Exodus 3:6* in *Matthew 22:32* & *Mark 12:26*, quoting *Psalm 110:1* in *Matthew 22:44* & *Mark 12:36* & *Luke 20:42-43*, quoting *Psalm 118:26* in *Matthew 23:39*, quoting *Isaiah 13:10* in *Matthew 24:29*, quoting *Daniel 7:13* in *Matthew 24:30*, quoting *Isaiah 27:13* & *Zechariah 2:6* in *Matthew 24:31*, quoting *Zechariah 13:7* in *Matthew 26:31* & *Mark 14:27*, quoting *Psalm 22:1* in *Matthew 27:46* & *Mark 15:34*, and quoting *Jeremiah 5:21* & *Ezekiel 12:2* in *Mark 8:18*) instead of twisting or manipulating the same – doing so not to reject the Law, but rather to “*fulfill*” the same (see *Matthew 5:17-18*, where the Greek word often translated as “fulfill” is *plerosai* [Strong's #4137]; a word that actually means “to hone”, “to perfect”, “to cleanse”, or “to make whole”; something Jesus does with shocking regularity throughout the Gospels – see also *Matthew 7:15-20*, *Matthew 13:18-23*, *Matthew 13:52*, *John 5:39-40*, & *John 15:1-17*).



22 NOTE: when it comes to understanding the deeper implications of what Jesus meant by the term “Son of Man”, it is crucial to start by comparing & contrasting *Daniel 7:13-14* with *Matthew 4:1-11* (also *Matthew 26:64*).

Contrast #20: Paul's malleable theology & Jesus' consistent Way ...

In examining the writings of and about Jesus and Paul in the Bible, it becomes readily apparent to the earnest reader that whereas Jesus' fundamental teachings remain remarkably consistent throughout the New Testament²³, Paul's quite clearly do not. Indeed, Paul himself even goes so far as to openly boast about his knack for theological bendability, at one point bragging that “I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jew I became a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the Law I became as one under the Law (though I myself am not under the Law) so that I might win those under the Law ... I have become all things to all people, that I might be any and all means save some of them.” (1 Corinthians 9:19-22) He also admitted openly and without remorse that “I try to please everyone else in everything I do” in 1 Corinthians 10:33, and encouraged his followers not to speak their Truth courageously, but rather to “Let your speech always be gracious, and seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4:6), for in his opinion “some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, and others from goodwill ... [some] out of love ... and others out of selfish ambition ... What does it matter, so long as Christ is proclaimed? ... Whether out of false motives or true, in that I rejoice” (Philippians 1:15-18). Unsurprisingly, this penchant for irregularity manifested itself in many of the more fundamental tenets of Paul's theology ... Consider the following examples thereof:

***Paul** was inconsistent in his approach to *honoring the Law*. Sometimes he claimed to be a strictly staunch upholder thereof – “believing *everything* laid down according to the Law and written in the prophets” (Acts 24:14) and being “as to the righteousness under the Law, *blameless*” (Philippians 3:6 – see also Acts 22:3, Acts 23:6, & Acts 26:5), while at other times he spoke openly and quite heretically against the same – claiming in Romans 13:8-9 & Galatians 5:14 that all the Law could be fulfilled in one word (with Jesus saying otherwise in Matthew 5:17-18, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 13:16-23, Matthew 22:37-40, & Matthew 24:12-14 et al), claiming in 1 Corinthians 6:12-14 & Colossians 2:16 that all things were lawful (with Jesus saying otherwise in Matthew 5:18, Luke 6:17, & John 14:15 et al), claiming in Romans 14:14 that “nothing is unclean in itself” (with Jesus asserting otherwise in Matthew 5:8, Matthew 15:11, & Matthew 23:25-26 et al), claiming in Romans 6:14 & Romans 7:4 that Christ had abolished the Law and replaced it with grace (with Jesus noting otherwise in Matthew 5:17-18, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 19:17, Matthew 28:20, Luke 16:17, & John 13:15-17 et al), claiming in Romans 3:20, Galatians 2:16-21, & Galatians 3:11-21 that no one was justified by the Law and even in Galatians 3:13 that the Law was a “curse” (with Jesus clearly announcing otherwise in Matthew 7:20-21, Matthew 13:18-23, Matthew 16:27, Matthew 19:17, Matthew 24:12-14, & John 13:15-17 et al), and claiming in 2 Corinthians 3:12-16 that the Law was “veiled” and thereby too difficult to understand or fulfill (with Jesus intoning otherwise in Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 19:26, Matthew 22:37-40, John 14:4-6, & John 15:11 et al).

***Paul** was also inconsistent in his proclamations concerning *Faith & Works* – on the one hand often proclaiming that it was only faith that saved (see Romans 4:1-5, Romans 5:1-2, Romans 10:6-9, Galatians 2:21, & Galatians 3:22 et al), while on the other hand brazenly stating in Galatians 5:6 that “the only thing that counts is faith *enlivened*²⁴ by Love” and in Acts 26:20 that his followers should “turn to God and *do deeds* consistent with repentance²⁵.” Similarly, Paul cannot seem to make his mind up regarding when his version of faith takes hold – noting in Galatians 3:23 that “before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the Law”, and yet essentially stating exactly the opposite in his later letter to the Romans. (see Romans 4:3 & Romans 4:22)

23 Seeing as how the teachings of Jesus Christ as portrayed in the canonical Gospels are more often than not directly opposed to the words announced by the “angel” who spoke about “Jesus” in the book of Revelation, the latter tome must be summarily – and quite appropriately – discounted for this particular contrast to remain fully on point.

24 While it is true that this term is frequently translated as “working”, the actual Greek word here is *energoumene* (Strong's #1754) – a word which more accurately means “made operative”, “actively engendered”, or “enlivened.”

25 How intriguing that these particular sayings of Paul are fully in alignment not only with the teachings of James' “faith without works is dead” (James 2:14-17) but also the similar postulations of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 7:20-21, Matthew 7:24-27, Matthew 13:18-23, Matthew 24:12-14, & John 13:15-17 et al).

***Paul** was inconsistent in his teachings on *the nature of Jesus Christ* – on the one hand claiming that he was the divine Son of God (see 1 Corinthians 8:6 – also Romans 9:5, 1 Corinthians 2:16 & Romans 10:13), and on the other that he was a human saint, lord, and teacher. (see Romans 1:3, Galatians 4:4, 1 Corinthians 2:8, & 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 et al)²⁶

***Paul** was inconsistent in his proclamations about *predestination & choice* – on the one hand stating that God “has mercy on whomever He chooses, and hardens the heart of whomever he chooses” (Romans 9:18) and on the other that God “has imprisoned all in disobedience so that He might be merciful towards all” (Romans 11:32); on the one hand declaring that he sinned because of the Law (see Romans 7:7-13) and on the other that he “will not be dominated by anything.” (1 Corinthians 6:12)

*Perhaps most amusing of all, **Paul** cannot even make up his mind about making up his mind – stating on the one hand quite clearly that “If I were seeking to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10), and yet also stating just as boldly that “I try to please everyone in everything I do.” (1 Corinthians 10:32 – see also Romans 12:17, Romans 14:18 & 2 Corinthians 8:21)²⁷



- 26 While many a Christian will justify this obvious contradiction by calling upon “the Trinity” – their belief that Jesus was one of the three literal embodiments of God (with the other two being “the Father” and “the Holy Spirit”), it is important for the earnest student of the Scriptures to realize that this doctrine is essentially man-made and actually nowhere to be found in the earliest biblical manuscripts. Yes, 1 John 5:7-8’s “There are three that testify in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one” does *seem* to support this notion, and yet **A**) this “Johannine Comma” is not present in any of the earliest ancient manuscripts (it first appeared as a minor textual gloss sometime in the 4th Century, and remains completely absent from all Ethiopic, Aramaic, Coptic, Syriac, and Arabic translations of the Greek New Testament to this day), and **B**) it speaks literally of “the Word” – the Divine Essence that was thought at the time to animate all living beings – *not* of Jesus Christ as “the Son.” Most importantly of all, Jesus himself vehemently *denied* that he was a member of any such Trinity throughout the Gospels (see Matthew 4:8-10, Mark 10:18, Mark 13:32, John 5:41, John 7:16, John 8:50-54, & John 12:44 et al); stating instead that he was *an* embodiment of the “Son of God” – the same potential embodiment that resides *within us all* (see Matthew 28:19, John 8:58, John 10:30 & John 17:5 – juxtaposed with John 14:12 & John 14:20), never that he was in any way equal to God or that he was the *only* such embodiment.
- 27 Intriguingly, here are two saying of Jesus in the Gospels – “Woe to you when all men speak well of you” (Luke 6:26) and “what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of the Lord” (Luke 16:15).

Jesus Christ, on the other hand, never wavered in sharing *his* brand of Gospel – a Gospel which was clearly defined twofold: **A**) that the Kingdom of Heaven was already present in every single moment of every human's life (specifically that it is “even now at hand” via Matthew 10:7 – see also Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:15, Luke 10:9-11, & Luke 17:20-21 et al) and **B**) that the entrance into that Kingdom came only to those who were willing to actively (see Matthew 7:21 & John 13:15-17 et al) and self-sacrificially (a la Luke 9:23 & Matthew 16:24-26, along with Matthew 5:38-42 & Luke 6:28-30) care for others (explicitly referenced in Matthew 24:12-14) – especially the downtrodden in their midst (a la Matthew 25:35-40) &/or the enemies in their lives (a la Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 6:27-28 & Luke 10:29-37) ... Consider the following as additional proof for this remarkable theological unanimity:

*When crowds of people demanded he show them “signs” and miracles, Jesus often refused to do so – opting instead to share the message of his Way of selfless Love (see Matthew 12:38-39, Mark 8:11-13, Luke 11:29-30, & Luke 12:54-56 – also John 4:48-50).

*When strangers or his disciples or even demons proclaimed that he was the Davidian Messiah (instead of simply a pure relayer of a most pure Way), Jesus repeatedly informed them of their error and told them with great vehemence **not** to spread that particular falsehood to others (see Matthew 8:4, Matthew 9:30-31, Matthew 16:20, Mark 1:23-25, Mark 1:34, Mark 1:40-44, Mark 7:36, Mark 8:22-26, Mark 8:27-30, Mark 8:31-33, Luke 4:31-35, Luke 4:41, Luke 5:12-16, & Luke 8:49-56 et al).

*When tested on the Law, Jesus never faltered in defended the absolute purity of the same (see Matthew 5:17-18, along with the rest of Matthew 5-7) – ever doing so under the penumbra of its most essential Gospel (i.e. that God was a celestial Father of perfect Love & absolute mercy – a la Matthew 5:48 & Luke 6:36 et al, and that we could *all* become his spiritual Children via acting accordingly – see Matthew 7:21, Matthew 13:18-23, Matthew 24:12-14, John 10:34-38, John 13:15-17, John 14:12, & John 14:20-23 et al).

*Even when threatened by the authorities, Jesus affirmed his message and its underlying principles – calmly “passing through” violent mobs instead of caving to their criticisms (a la Luke 4:30), answering his aggressive questioners cryptically (often saying “No” in the form of the subtly coy “You say so” a la Mark 15:2 & Luke 23:3 juxtaposed with John 6:15 – see also Matthew 26:64 & Mark 14:61b-62 juxtaposed with Mark 10:18 et al), and even maintaining complete silence in the face of dire legal challenges (see Matthew 26:63, Matthew 27:12, Mark 14:61a, Mark 15:5, Luke 23:9, & John 19:9).

*Even though others persistently proclaimed that he was the Messiah – the one and only “Son of God”, Jesus repeatedly informed them that this was certainly **not** the case – that he was not equal to God (see Matthew 24:36, Mark 10:18, John 7:16, John 8:50-54, & John 12:44 et al), and that instead of worshiping him (see Matthew 7:21 & John 5:41's “I accept the glory of no human being” et al) they should all simply do as he had done (see John 11:26 + John 14:12 & John 13:15-17 et al) and thereby become as he had become (see John 10:34-35 & John 14:20-23 et al).

*Indeed, despite all manner of resistance & rejection & ridicule, Jesus' message remained stunningly consistent from start to finish – in his ministry's very beginning calling for all to “repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is even now at hand” (a la Matthew 4:17 & Mark 1:15 – see also Matthew 11:21, Luke 3:8-11, Luke 5:32, Luke 13:3-5, & John 3:3-8), throughout its course noting again & again & again that the “repentance” which he proclaimed²⁸ was nothing short of showing unconditional Love for others in the form of deeds of selfless kindness (see Matthew 5:39-48, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 18:21-22, Matthew 25:35-40, Luke 6:27-36, Matthew 22:37-40 juxtaposed with Luke 10:29-37, John 13:15-17, & John 15:12-13 et al), and defining his unique “Gospel” quite specifically in accordance with the same (see Matthew 24:12-14, where he quite clearly states “the Love of many will grow cold, and yet the one who endures [in Love] to the end will be saved. And it is *this* Good News of the Kingdom that must be proclaimed throughout the world” – see also Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-48, & John 20:21).

28 NOTE that the word often translated here as “repent” or “repentance” is the Greek word *metanoeo* (Strong's #4430), a word that combined one's state of mind (*noeo*) with the **active** renewal thereof (*meta*); meaning that – for Jesus at least – “repentance” had little to do with what one thought or said, and everything to do with what one did for others.

*Just as revealing, every single one of Jesus' biblical parables (by far his favorite teaching medium – see [Matthew 13:10-15](#), [Matthew 13:34](#), [Mark 4:33-34](#), & [Luke 8:10](#) – and also [John 16:25](#)) is grounded in the same Truth; namely, the Truth that the Way to real Life (what he sometimes refers to as “the narrow gate” – see [Matthew 7:13-14](#) & [Luke 13:23-25](#)) is tread solely via *deeds* of selfless caring & loving kindness. For starters, both his very first biblical parable (sometimes called *The Wise & Foolish Builders* – where the “wise man” was the one who “hears these words of mine and acts on them”; as found in [Matthew 7:24-27](#) and also [Luke 6:47-49](#)) as well as his final three such teachings (the parables of *The 10 Virgins*, *The Talents*, and *The Sheep & the Goats*²⁹ – all found in [Matthew 25](#)) are all built upon &/or immersed in this basic Christ-principle of selfless action for others. Even more importantly (at least for evangelical fundamentalists and any other “biblical literalists”), the *Parable of the Sower* – which Jesus himself clearly raises up as being the most important of all his parables (“If you do not understand this parable, how will you understand all [my other] parables?” ~ [Mark 4:13](#)) – quite obviously adheres to the same teaching; stating in no uncertain terms that “as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the Word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance” ([Luke 8:15](#) – see also [Matthew 13:23](#) & [Mark 4:20](#)). In truth, throughout the Gospels it can be readily seen that almost every single one of Jesus' parables has selfless action as one of its primary hubs, if not as its sole centrifuge (see his focus on the “harvest” of *The Tares* in [Matthew 13:24-30+36-43](#) and of *The Growing Seed* in [Mark 4:26-34](#), on the “sowing” of *The Mustard Seed* in [Matthew 13:31-32](#) & [Mark 4:30-32](#) & [Luke 13:18-19](#), on the “mixing” of *The Yeast* in [Matthew 13:33](#) & [Luke 13:20-21](#), on “seeking” *The Hidden Treasure & The Pearl* in [Matthew 13:44-45](#), on *The Two Sons* and “doing the will of the Father” in [Matthew 21:28-32](#) & [Mark 11:27-33](#) & [Luke 20:09-19](#), on going out and “gathering” guests for *The Wedding Banquet* in [Matthew 22:01-14](#) & [Luke 14:16-24](#) as well as for *The Great Supper* in [Luke 14:16-24](#), on *The Faithful Servant* being ever “at work” in [Matthew 24:45-51](#) & [Mark 13:33-37](#) & [Luke 12:35-48](#), on *The Good Samaritan* actively “showing mercy” in [Luke 10:29-37](#), on the generosity of *The Giving Friend* in [Luke 11:05-10](#) as well as *Lazarus and the Rich Man's* lack thereof in [Luke 16:19-31](#), and on celebrating the “finding” of *The Lost Sheep & The Lost Coin & The Lost Son* in [Luke 15:03-32](#)).



29 While not obvious at first glance, the parable of *The Sheep & the Goats* in [Matthew 25:31-46](#) is indeed a promulgation of Jesus' call to selfless service, with the lauded “sheep” being animals known for their gentle generosity (and as well being placed at “his right hand” – archetypally the hand of Giving) and the condemned “goats” being known for their greediness (and being not surprisingly put “at the left” – archetypally the hand of taking).

“Paul was the very first corrupter of the doctrine of Jesus Christ; a doctrine very different from the one practiced by those who would call me infidel while elevating themselves as preachers of the Gospel ... Indeed, these “Christian” impostors have compounded from the Halcyon Mysteries a religious system fully beyond the comprehension of humankind, one of which the greatest ethical reformer of the Jews, were he to return to Earth today, would not recognize a single feature.” ~ inspired by & via Thomas Jefferson

“Paul's soul is not the soul of a truly free man. He speaks rarely of Jesus' life, nor does he repeat his recorded words or reflect his championed teachings. Indeed, Paul strikes boldly – actually recklessly, and often blindly – with his own chipped hammer upon the Anvil of Truth; doing so in the name of one he clearly does not know and indeed never once even met.” ~ via Kahlil Gibran

Jesus & Paul: their conflicting theologies ...

And now we come to the crux of the matter. For just because the Bible clearly shows that Jesus & Paul had very different upbringings and led very different lives – and just because the Bible just as clearly shows that these two men exuded very different personalities and effectuated very different preaching styles, does not necessarily require that their spiritual philosophies contradict. That having been said, just because Paul repeatedly says that he is a follower of Jesus Christ and a proponent of Jesus' Way does not mean that he actually was the same.³⁰ **Paul** was fond of saying that God had appointed “apostles and prophets and teachers” (see 1 Corinthians 12:28), that he was one of the aforementioned appointed (see Romans 1:1, 1 Corinthians 1:1, Galatians 1:1, & Colossians 1:1 et al), and that his followers should “imitate me, as I am in Christ” (see 1 Corinthians 11:1 – also 1 Corinthians 4:16 & Galatians 1:2). And yet **Jesus** himself made it equally clear that “Many will come in my name, saying that I am the Messiah” (Matthew 24:5) and that “you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students” (Matthew 23:8). And in truth, all sincere students of the Scriptures can readily see that Jesus warned his followers of those who preach like Paul, if not even specifically of Paul himself – telling all to “beware the yeast of the Pharisees” (see Matthew 15:13-14, Mark 7:6-8, & Luke 12:1) when Paul was a self-professed Pharisee (see Acts 23:6, Acts 26:5, Galatians 1:14, & Philippians 3:4-5), warning that a false prophet(s) would “come in his own name” (John 5:43) when Paul did just that – not only altering his name from Saul to Paul depending upon his audience (via Acts 13:9) but also preaching his own unique Gospel (see Romans 10:9 & 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 et al) for his own self-aggrandizing ends (see Romans 2:16, Romans 16:25, 1 Corinthians 4:16, 2 Corinthians 11:5-10, Galatians 1:8, Galatians 1:24, Philippians 1:7, & 1 Thessalonians 1:6). Jesus also foretold in Matthew 24:24-26 of a deceiver “in the wilderness” (like the obviously false “Jesus” who spoke to Paul on the Road to Damascus in Acts 9) who would speak personally & privately (as in Galatians 1:11-12, where Paul claimed that his personal “revelation” did precisely that). Just as intriguing, the Bible shows that Paul himself (albeit inadvertently) warned others against his own false teachings, nowhere more notably than in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 when he warns of “boasters” (which he himself openly boasted of being – see see Romans 5:3 – also Romans 11:13, Romans 15:17, 1 Corinthians 4:9-13, 1 Corinthians 9:15, 1 Corinthians 15:10, 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, 2 Corinthians 6:4-10, 2 Corinthians 11:16-33, Galatians 1:24, Colossians 1:24, & 1 Thessalonians 2:2) who both “disguise themselves as apostles of Christ” (which he himself did far more than anyone else in the Scriptures – again see Romans 1:1, 1 Corinthians 1:1, Galatians 1:1, & Colossians 1:1 et al) and “disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness” (like he himself unabashedly did in 1 Corinthians 3:10 et al) ...

Of course all this evidence means nothing if the theologies of the two men are in fact somehow in harmony; if they do not in fact contradict one another. And yet contradict each other they do – both fully and quite dramatically. As proof thereof, please consider well the following exhaustively researched examples of conflict between them:

30 To be fair to Paul, while the vast majority of his writings and teachings do indeed directly contradict those of Jesus found in the Gospels, there are several verses sprinkled throughout Paul's biblical epistles that do seem to (though in all likelihood inadvertently) reflect The Way of Christ – among them Romans 2:1, Romans 2:13-15, Romans 8:5-6, Romans 8:14-16, Romans 12:10, Romans 12:14-21, Romans 13:8-10, Romans 14:4, Romans 14:13-14, Romans 14:19, Romans 14:22, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:17, 1 Corinthians 10:24, 1 Corinthians 13:2, 1 Corinthians 13:8, 1 Corinthians 16:14, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 5:6b, Galatians 5:14, Philippians 2:4-5, Philippians 4:5a, Colossians 2:20, Colossians 3:12-14, and 1 Thessalonians 5:15-18.

Conflict #01: Paul's replacing of the Law vs Jesus' reformation of it ...

While **Paul** regularly claims to affirm the validity of the Jewish Law (see Romans 2:12-13, Romans 3:31, Romans 7:12-25, Romans 8:4, Romans 10:5, & Galatians 3:19-21), these professings cannot be deemed sincere in light of the essence of his theology that dismisses and often even denigrates the same. Where **Paul** claims that “the very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me” (Romans 7:10), **Jesus** quite clearly states “If you wish to enter life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17). While **Paul** brazenly claims that “Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes” (Romans 10:4) and that via his version of faith in Jesus “we establish the Law [anew]” (Romans 3:31), **Jesus** calmly states that “it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a single letter of the Law to be dropped” (Luke 16:17) and that “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one stroke of a single letter will pass from the Law until all of it comes into being” (Matthew 5:17-18). Where **Paul** openly claims that a mere faith in Christ supersedes abiding in the Law's commandments (see Romans 1:17, Romans 5:10-20, Romans 6:14, Romans 10:9-13, Galatians 3:13, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, & 2 Corinthians 5:19 et al), **Jesus** states over & over & over again that he himself is **not** to be the focus of anyone's faith or worship (see Mark 10:18, John 5:41, John 7:16, John 8:50-54, John 12:44 et al) and that salvation comes instead from actively and selflessly fulfilling the Law (see Matthew 5:39-48, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 13:18-23, Matthew 19:17, Matthew 24:12-14, Matthew 25:35-40, Mark 8:34, Luke 6:27-36, Luke 10:29-37, John 13:15-17, John 14:12-20, & John 15:12 et al). And finally, while **Paul** established his theology as a way to circumvent the Law (see Galatians 2:16, Galatians 3:11, Galatians 5:4 et al), **Jesus** established his “new covenant” (Luke 22:20) by simplifying the Law (see his reference to The Golden Rule in Matthew 7:12 and his summary of the fundamental essence of the Ten Commandments in Matthew 22:37-40 as examples) in order that the Law might be *done* – in order that his followers would “*exceed* the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees” (Matthew 5:20), not discard or dismiss or reject or replace the Law they professed and promulgated.

Conflict #02: Paul & our innate sin vs Jesus & our inherent divinity ...

While **Paul** regularly focused on our tendency to fail as humans and thereby be less than divine (a la “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” ~ Romans 3:23 – see also 2 Corinthians 12:7-9), **Jesus** continually reminded his followers that they could always transcend such selfishness and thereby reflect their innate divinity instead (see John 1:12-13's “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God” + John 14:12's “the one who believes in me will do the works I do”). Whereas **Paul** claimed that our sinning was essentially inevitable (that we are all “sold into slavery under sin” ~ Romans 7:14-20 – see also Romans 5:12), **Jesus** repeatedly encouraged his followers by encouraging them to do the improbable (a la Matthew 5:44-48, Matthew 18:21-22, & Luke 6:27-36 et al) because “with God all things are possible” (see Matthew 19:26, Mark 10:27, & Luke 18:27).³¹ While **Paul** believes that we humans are weak and need saving by Christ (see Romans 5:18-19 & Romans 6:6-7 – also Romans 8:19-25 et al), **Jesus** reminded his followers that original sin is a myth (like the Old Testament says – see Deuteronomy 24:16 & Ezekiel 18:20); that the perfect Love of the heavenly Father (see Matthew 5:48) resides ever within us all (see John 14:20) and is easily re-enlivened with every choice of selfless kindness we make (see Matthew 24:12-14 & John 13:15-17; also Matthew 11:30's “my yoke is easy and my burden is light”, as well as Luke 12:32's “it is your Father's great pleasure to grant you the Kingdom”, the ubiquitous omnipresence of “the Kingdom of God” in Luke 13:18-19 & John 14:15-26, and our ready knowledge of The Way thereto mentioned in John 4:4).

31 In order to fully comprehend this verse (and all those similar to it) it is critical to comprehend two things about the ministry of Christ – namely, **A**) that for Jesus God resided “in Heaven” (see Matthew 5:16, Matthew 5:45, Matthew 6:1-9, Matthew 7:11, Matthew 10:20, Matthew 12:50, Matthew 18:14, Matthew 23:9, Mark 11:25, & Luke 11:13) and **B**) that for Jesus Heaven existed “*within*” us all (see Luke 17:20-21 – also Matthew 4:17, Matthew 10:7, Matthew 11:27, Matthew 22:32, Luke 3:22, Luke 12:31, John 1:18, John 3:23, & John 14:1-3 + John 14:20-26 et al).

Conflict #03: Paul guided by convenience & convention vs Jesus abiding by “the Fruit of the Tree” ...

A finer examination of the New Testament shows that **Paul** regularly coddled to religious traditions that were not in alignment with his own spiritual beliefs, essentially allowing the demands of public opinion to influence, guide, or even alter his behaviors. Even though Paul was adamant throughout his ministry that the Jewish Law was no longer to be considered a primary spiritual determinant (e.g. that it was not necessary to follow the Law's demands regarding food – see [Romans 14:21](#) & [1 Corinthians 8:4-13](#) & [1 Corinthians 10:19:29](#), that it was not necessary to follow the Law's demands regarding circumcision – see [Romans 2:29](#) & [1 Corinthians 7:18](#) & [Galatians 2:4](#) & [Galatians 5:2-6](#), and that faith in Christ was the only true prerequisite for salvation – see [Romans 1:17](#), [Romans 3:31](#), [Romans 5:10-20](#), [Romans 6:14](#), [Romans 10:4](#), [Romans 10:9-13](#), [Galatians 2:16](#), [Galatians 3:11-13](#), [Galatians 3:23-29](#), [Galatians 5:4](#), [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#), & [2 Corinthians 5:1](#)) he regularly caved to the conventional expectations of the Law's demands anyway – making sure that Timothy was circumcised in [Acts 16:3](#), cutting his hair (because he was “under a vow”) in [Acts 18:18](#), entering the Temple and “making public the completion of [his] days of purification” in [Acts 21:26](#), testifying publicly to Felix of “completing the rite of purification” in [Acts 24:17-18](#), openly & boldly claiming that “the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good” in [Romans 7:12](#), and stating that “whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” in [Romans 15:4](#). In essence, Paul was primarily interested in gaining as many followers as possible, and thus conveniently bent and twisted his theology depending upon the overarching beliefs of each particular audience (quite evident in his statement in [1 Corinthians 7:17](#) that “let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned”, and nowhere more telling than his admission in [1 Corinthians 9:19-22](#) that “though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all ... To those under the Law I became as one under the Law – though I myself am not under the Law ... To those outside the Law I became as one outside the Law ... To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. *I have become all things to all people*, that I might by any means save some”) ...

In astounding contrast, **Jesus** never vacillated in the content of his message – and this, no matter to whom he happened to be sharing it. Jesus was not out to convince or convert or cajole. He was simply determined to share the Truth of the Way of his Life (a la [John 14:6](#)) – namely the Truth that the Way to real Life would have to come from a radical purification of the common practice of the Jewish Law (see [Matthew 5:17-18](#), [Matthew 19:14](#), [John 5:39-40](#), & [John 8:45-55](#) et al). He shared that same message over & over & over again, and then he simply let others hear that message and either emulate his example or not as they saw fit (a la “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” in [Luke 9:23](#) – also [Matthew 3:3](#), [Matthew 11:9-10](#), [Mark 1:3](#), [Luke 3:4](#), & [John 1:23](#)). Indeed, where Paul often wavered in the face of expectation or caved to conventional whim, Jesus remained astoundingly consistent throughout his ministry. When his audience wanted to be coddled & comforted, Jesus was stark & uncompromising (e.g. [Matthew 7:13-14](#), [Matthew 19:21](#) & [Luke 18:22](#) – along with the majority of *The Sermon on the Mount* in [Matthew 5-7](#)). When his audience demanded his easy rejection in the form of a coerced self-incrimination, Jesus was either cryptic or silent (see [Luke 23:3](#) juxtaposed with [John 6:15](#) & [Mark 14:61b-62](#) juxtaposed with [Mark 10:18](#) – along with [Matthew 26:63](#), [Matthew 27:12](#), [Mark 14:61a](#), [Mark 15:5](#), [Luke 23:9](#), & [John 19:9](#)). And when his audience wanted to be saved by him, Jesus boldly reminded them that they would have to ultimately save themselves (see [Matthew 7:21](#), [Matthew 13:18-23](#), [Matthew 18:3-4](#), [Matthew 20:23-28](#), [Matthew 24:12-14](#), [Luke 10:29-37](#), [John 13:15-17](#) & [John 14:12-20](#) et al) ... In essence, where **Paul** frequently allowed the hopes & wishes of his audience to mold his message, **Jesus** remained ever steadfast – teaching without fail that his followers should do the same; that they should not follow cultural norms or communal expectations, but rather should abide fully in only those teachings that engender the “good fruit” of peace and harmony after they are set in motion (see [Matthew 7:15-20](#), [Matthew 12:33-35](#), [Matthew 21:43](#), [Luke 6:43-45](#), [Luke 7:33-35](#) – also [John 7:22-24](#)).

Conflict #04: Paul calling for obedience to human authorities vs Jesus encouraging the transcendence thereof ...

In alignment with the analysis of the conflict mentioned on the previous page, it can come as no surprise that **Paul** – despite many of his bold proclamations to the contrary (a la Romans 12:2's “Do not be conformed to this world” and Galatians 5:1's “For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and submit never again to a yoke of slavery”) – was from beginning to end nothing more than a de facto agent of the ruling class. Indeed, the first time we see Paul he is passively witnessing (and then openly approving of) the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58-8:1) before going on thereafter to do the dirty work of the Pharisee rulers (see him “ravaging the church” in Acts 8:3 and “breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord” in Acts 9:1-2). Consistent to form, even after his supposed conversion on the Road to Damascus in Acts 9, a close examination of the Scriptures shows Paul to regularly receive favor &/or assistance from the local authorities (often leaders of the Gentile communities in which he preached – see Acts 13:12, Acts 13:48, Acts 14:18, Acts 15:3-4, Acts 16:4, Acts 16:38-40, Acts 17:8, Acts 17:15, Acts 17:22-34, Acts 18:7-11, Acts 18:12-17, Acts 18:18-20, Acts 19:9-10, Acts 19:35-41, & Acts 20:36-38) – doing so all the way up until essentially the end of his life, when he openly appeals to the mercy of the Roman Emperor (ironically just before his eventual execution at the hands thereof – see Acts 25:10-11). With this all in mind, it can come as no surprise to read Paul's admonition to his Roman followers – a summons to subservience penned at the conclusion of his ministry and very near to the end of his days: “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment ... So do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God's servant for your good. And yet if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for authority does not bear the sword in vain. Rather, it is the servant of God that executes wrath on the wrongdoer.” (Romans 13:1-4)

Again in stark contrast, **Jesus'** entire ministry was predicated upon encouraging his followers to fully transcend all human authorities – both those political as well as those religious. For starters, his ministry from start to finish was designed to intentionally and quite radically amend (and thereby “purify” or “complete”) the 613 active Jewish Laws – or *mitzvot* – of his day (see Matthew 5:17-18, where the Greek word commonly translated as “fulfilled” is *plerosai*/Strong's #4137 – a Greek term which does not mean “to support” or “to uphold” or “to affirm”, but rather means “to hone” or “to perfect” or “to make whole”). Indeed, where the Law demanded a priestly mediator for the common Jew to communicate with God, Jesus claimed that “for all who knock the door will be opened” (see Matthew 7:7-11). Indeed, where the prevalent religious authorities (often Jesus' primary nemesis, the Pharisees) felt that the Law was to be inflexibly obeyed, Jesus boldly proclaimed that “new wine is not to be put into old wineskins” (Matthew 9:16-17) and that “every scribe prepared for the Kingdom of Heaven brings out



of his treasure both what is old and what is new” (Matthew 13:52). Indeed, where the average Jew looked to the Pharisees as religious role-models, Jesus loudly announced that true worship has nothing to do with such piousness – that we are instead to “do whatever they teach, but not to do as they do” (Matthew 23:2-3), and that we like they should “clean first the inside of our cup so that the outside might thereafter become clean.” (Matthew 23:25-28)

In truth, in the Gospel of [Matthew](#) alone we see *Jesus* courageously constraining (and sometimes even completely annulling) Old Testament regulations that were obviously outdated (essentially making the Law more lenient, and thereby more reasonable – a la dampening the “eye for an eye” rule of [Exodus 21:23-24](#) via [Matthew 5:38-41](#), supplanting [Leviticus 4:27](#)'s requirement to give sin offerings & [Leviticus 19:17](#)'s requirement related to reproving sinners via [Matthew 6:14-15](#), openly violating – and thereby annulling – [Leviticus 13:44-45](#)'s law against associating with lepers via [Matthew 8:3](#), devaluing the importance of [Deuteronomy 21:23](#)'s burial regulations via [Matthew 8:22](#), negating all Old Testament laws – among them those found in [Numbers 28:3](#), [Exodus 30:7-9](#), [Exodus 12:6-10](#), & [Exodus 13:2](#) – related to Temple sacrifices via [Matthew 9:12-13](#), strongly alluding to overtly violating – and thereby rejecting – [Deuteronomy 10:20](#)'s regulation against associating with sinners via [Matthew 11:19](#), seemingly dishonoring current teachers of the Torah – an act prohibited by [Leviticus 19:32](#) – via [Matthew 11:25](#), effectively neutering [Leviticus 11](#)'s laws related to appropriately honoring the Sabbath via [Matthew 12:1](#), dramatically diminishing the potency of all Old Testament regulations related to blasphemy – including those found in [Deuteronomy 18:20](#), [Deuteronomy 21:22](#), [Leviticus 22:32](#), [Exodus 20:6](#) & [Exodus 22:27](#) – via [Matthew 12:31](#), seemingly negating [Exodus 30:13](#)'s regulations related to taxation via [Matthew 17:24-27](#), trivializing all Old Testament laws related to marriage – including those found in [Genesis 1:28](#), [Deuteronomy 7:3](#) & [Deuteronomy 22:13](#) – via [Matthew 19:10](#), and seemingly nullifying [Leviticus 19:30](#)'s call to ever revere the Temple via [Matthew 21:12-13](#)) ...

But that's not all. Again, only looking at the Gospel of [Matthew](#), we can also witness dozens of verses that show Jesus actually *expanding* the Law to reflect its truer intent – effectively making it more absolute, and thus far more challenging to fulfill than traditionally demanded by the religious leaders of his day. Examples thereof include his expansion of the Old Testament laws against murder (see [Exodus 20:13](#) & [Deuteronomy 5:17](#)) via [Matthew 5:21-22](#), his broadening of [Leviticus 25:17](#)'s law against slander via [Matthew 5:22](#), his intensifying the Old Testament laws against adultery (see [Exodus 20:14](#), [Deuteronomy 5:18](#) & [Leviticus 18:20](#)) via [Matthew 5:27-28](#), his deepening of [Deuteronomy 24:1-4](#)'s laws related to divorce via [Matthew 5:31-32](#)³² (see also [Matthew 19:3-9](#)), his expanding the Old Testament laws related to swearing oaths (see [Leviticus 19:12](#), [Numbers 30:2-3](#) & [Deuteronomy 10:20](#)) via [Matthew 5:33-37](#), his dramatic purification of [Leviticus 19:18](#)'s “love your neighbor” via [Matthew 5:43-44](#), his inflation of the Old Testament regulations related to tithing (see [Exodus 23:19](#), [Deuteronomy 18:4](#) & [Deuteronomy 18:26](#)) via [Matthew 6:1-4](#), his intensification of [Exodus 23:25](#)'s rules related to prayer via [Matthew 6:5-8](#), his crystallization of [Exodus 20:13](#)'s law against giving false testimony via [Matthew 12:35-37](#), his expansion of the Old Testament edicts related to honoring one's mother and father (see [Exodus 20:12](#), [Exodus 21:17](#), [Deuteronomy 5:16](#) & [Leviticus 19:3](#)) via [Matthew 12:48-50](#) (see also [Matthew 15:1-6](#)), his radical broadening of the Old Testament's rules & regulations related to sexual intercourse (see [Leviticus 18](#) & [Deuteronomy 22](#)) via [Matthew 19:11-12](#), his dramatic heightening of the absoluteness of the Ten Commandments (see [Exodus 20:12-16](#) & [Deuteronomy 5:16-20](#)) via [Matthew 19:16-20](#) (also [Matthew 22:37-40](#)³³) – as well as his expansion of the law in [Deuteronomy 15:7-8](#) requiring giving to those in need via [Matthew 19:21](#), his enhancement of the Old Testament regulations related to not coveting (see [Exodus 20:14](#) & [Deuteronomy 5:18](#)) via [Matthew 20:24-28](#), and his elevation of [Exodus 30:32](#)'s law related to holy anointings via [Matthew 26:6-13](#).

“I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, an hour is coming when those who would kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God. They will do this because they have known neither the Father nor me.” ~ Jesus Christ (John 16:1-3)

32 NOTE that the phrase “except on the grounds of unchastity” in this passage is fully absent in the parallel verses of [Mark 10:11-12](#) & [Luke 16:18](#) – noting as well that almost all scholars agree that [Mark](#) was the first Gospel written, and that the authors of [Matthew](#) & [Luke](#) copied and/or amended large portions of that primary tome thereafter.

33 Here we see Jesus executing said intensification by using the Shema of [Deuteronomy 6:5-7](#) and the “Love your neighbor” edict of [Leviticus 19:18](#) to simultaneously summarize and expand the Ten Commandments.

Essentially, **Jesus** made his ministry about showing his listeners & followers that the Law was not to be blindly followed, nor was it to be abjectly replaced. Rather it was to be transcended by “maxing it out” – by making life a mission not of obedience or revolution, but of perfectly selfless Love; a Love that was always within his hearers' power to actualize, and thus a Salvation (that ever comes therewith – see [Matthew 7:21](#), [Matthew 18:3-4](#), [Matthew 24:12-14](#), [Luke 6:46-49](#), [John 13:15-17](#), & [John 13:34](#)) that was always within their grasp (a la his claim that “the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact will do even greater works than these” in [John 14:12](#), his statement “on that day you will know that I am in my Father, and that you are in me, and that I am in you” in [John 14:20](#), and his promise that “if you ask anything of the Father *in my name*, He will give it to you” in [John 16:23](#)³⁴ – see also [Matthew 7:7](#), [Matthew 17:19-21](#), [Matthew 18:19](#), [Matthew 21:22](#), [Mark 11:24](#), [Luke 11:9](#), [John 14:13](#), & [John 15:7](#)). This is why **Jesus** always stoutly stood up to his Pharisee critics & scribal challengers (see [Matthew 9:11-13](#), [Matthew 10:16-18](#), [Matthew 12:1-8](#), [Matthew 12:24-32](#), [Matthew 12:38-42](#), [Matthew 15:1-9](#), [Matthew 16:1-4](#), [Matthew 19:3-9](#), [Matthew 21:15-16](#), [Matthew 21:23-27](#), [Matthew 21:43-45](#), [Matthew 22:15-22](#), [Matthew 22:23-33](#), [Matthew 22:34-40](#), [Mark 2:16-17](#), [Mark 2:23-28](#), [Mark 3:22-27](#), [Mark 6:3-4](#), [Mark 7:1-8](#), [Mark 8:11-12](#), [Mark 10:2-9](#), [Mark 11:27-33](#), [Mark 12:9-12](#), [Mark 12:13-17](#), [Mark 12:18-27](#), [Luke 5:17-23](#), [Luke 5:30-31](#), [Luke 6:1-5](#), [Luke 7:39-50](#), [Luke 10:25-28](#), [Luke 11:37-54](#), [Luke 13:14-17](#), [Luke 13:31-35](#), [Luke 14:1-6](#), [Luke 15:1-7](#), [Luke 16:14-17](#), [Luke 17:20-21](#), [Luke 19:37-40](#), [Luke 20:1-8](#), [Luke 20:17-19](#), [Luke 20:27-40](#), [John 3:1-10](#), [John 5:19-47](#), [John 6:41-51](#), [John 7:14-24](#), [John 8:1-11](#), [John 8:33-58](#), [John 9:40-41](#), [John 10:23-30](#), & [John 10:31-38](#)), this is why **Jesus** arranged to symbolically (and indeed quite brazenly) reflect the prophecy of [Zechariah 9:9](#) by “triumphantly” entering Jerusalem during the Festival of Booths riding on the back of a donkey (see [Matthew 21:1-11](#), [Mark 11:1-11](#), [Luke 19:29-44](#), & [John 12:12-19](#)), this is why **Jesus** intentionally (and quite melodramatically) overturned the money-changing tables in the Temple and freed all the animals imprisoned therein (see [Matthew 21:12-13](#), [Mark 11:15-17](#), & [Luke 19:45-46](#) – also [John 2:13-16](#); in all likelihood describing a separate table-tossing event entirely), this is why **Jesus** was boldly silent whenever challenged by Jewish & Roman authorities alike (see [Matthew 26:62-63](#), [Matthew 27:12-14](#), [Mark 14:60-61](#), [Mark 15:3-5](#), [Luke 23:8-9](#), & [John 19:8-9](#)), this is why **Jesus** courageously simplified the Ten Commandments – making them simultaneously more potent and easier for the common folk to enliven (see [Matthew 22:37-40](#), [Mark 12:29-31](#), & especially [Luke 10:27-28](#)'s “do this and you shall Live”), this is why **Jesus** told his challengers – with an obvious sense of sarcasm – to “give to the Emperor the things that are the Emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (see [Matthew 22:20-21](#), [Mark 12:17](#), & [Luke 20:25](#)) as well as why he – with just as much intentional insincerity – told a similar tester to collect his Temple tax from the mouth of a first-caught fish (and this, immediately after having proclaimed that “the children are free” from the same obligation – see [Matthew 17:24-27](#)). Finally, and most importantly of all, this is why **Jesus** went out of his way to repeatedly remind his listeners that the “Spirit of Truth” – their source of true power and the foundation for their potential Salvation – was always their own and ever resided within them (see [John 14:12-26](#), [John 15:26](#), & [John 16:7-14](#) et al).

“And then Peter and the apostles answered – saying: ‘We must obey God instead of any mere human authority.’” ~ Acts 5:29

*“And I tell you you are Peter, and on **this** rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will never prevail against it.” ~ Jesus (Matthew 16:18)*

34 It is important to realize here that the verses that have Jesus uttering the phrase “*in my name*” would have been spoken by Jesus as “b’sheme”, which is Aramaic for “with my sound” or “in harmony with my way of being.” As such, in harmony with his other self-deprecating statements (see [Mark 10:18](#), [John 5:41](#), [John 7:16](#), [John 8:50-54](#), [John 12:44](#) et al), here Jesus is **not** calling to be honored or worshiped, but is rather summoning his listeners to actively *emulate* his teachings. And this interpretation happens to be in full alignment with the actual meaning of his actual name – with the Hebrew *Yehoshua* meaning “God is a saving guide”, the Aramaic *Yeshua* meaning “he offers salvation” (see also [Matthew 1:21](#)), and [Matthew 1:22-23](#)'s *Emmanuel* meaning “God is with(in) us.” Note as well that *Yeshua* might also be a reflection of the past tense of the Hebrew word *t’shuva*, a word that means “to change completely” – a meaning fully in alignment with the Greek word translated as “repent” in the biblical texts (see [Matthew 4:17](#), [Mark 1:16](#) & [Luke 5:32](#) et al); a word that meant not “to admit wrongdoing” but rather “to fully and actively alter one's way of being.”

Conflict #05: Paul believing God to live in heaven “up above” vs Jesus knowing GOD to reside in Heaven within ...

Another major (and extremely important) area of disagreement between Paul and Jesus has to do with how the two view the nature of God and what they believe about the location of Heaven. While **Paul** quite clearly believes that God is an independent spiritual entity who exists above and often away from human beings (e.g. **Romans 14:9**, where he claims that God – via Christ – is “Lord of both the dead and the living” – see also **1 Corinthians 2:11** & **2 Corinthians 1:10**), **Jesus** just as clearly believes that God (or at the very least the divine portion thereof that is relevant to human existence – a portion he calls “the **Father**” in **Matthew 5:48**, **Matthew 18:10**, **John 10:29-38**, & **John 14:10-11** et al; “the **Advocate**” or “the **Spirit of Truth**” in **John 14**; “the **Word**” in **Matthew 13:19-23** & **John 14:24**; “the **Son of Man**”³⁵ in **Matthew 8:20**, **Matthew 9:6**, **Matthew 12:8**, **Matthew 13:37-42**, **Matthew 16:27-28**³⁶, **Mark 10:45**, **John 1:51**, **John 5:26-27**³⁷, **John 8:28**, & **John 12:34-36**; and even “the **Son of God**”³⁸ in **Matthew 5:9**, **Luke 6:35**, **John 1:12-13**, **John 5:19**, & **John 14:13** et al) lives *within* each & every one of us during every moment of our lifetimes (see **Luke 20:38**, where Jesus explains that “[God] is **not** God of the dead, but [rather solely] of the living”). Indeed, this explains why Jesus says “your Father knows what you need before you ask him” (**Matthew 6:8**) and “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit” (**John 4:24**); why he says “they are *all* to be taught by God” (**John 6:45**), and even why he told the young rich man that “for mortals it is impossible, and yet for God all things are possible.” (see **Matthew 19:24-26**, **Mark 10:27**, & **Luke 18:27**)

35 NOTE that the phrase “the Son of Man” was a traditional Semitic idiom denoting either humanity as a whole or a particular individual's ego-suppressed True Self. Admittedly, in very few cases the phrase does seem to refer to a singular Messiah-type figure, with the most well-known of these being found in **Daniel 7:13-14**. Of course, an oft-overlooked point with regards to this particular Old Testament reference is an all-important one: namely, that the things the Messiah figure is rewarded with in verse 14 of **Daniel 7** are *the very things that Jesus himself rejects* when tempted with them *by Satan* in **Matthew 4:1-11** ... This remarkable distinction is made even more so when the reader realizes that all the self-specific “Son of Man” references Jesus uses to foreshadow the end of his ministry infer not that he will be rewarded (a la the messianic “Son of Man” in **Daniel 7:13-14**) but rather that he will be rejected and abused and vilified. (see **Matthew 20:17-19**, **Matthew 25:31**, **Mark 8:31-32**, **Mark 10:32-34**, & **Luke 18:31-34**)

36 This particular reference is especially illustrative of the fact that “Son of Man” is indeed rarely used by Jesus to refer solely to himself, if for no other reason than **A**) he quite clearly states therein that “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom”, **B**) Jesus has quite clearly not yet returned via **Revelation's** “2nd Coming”, and **C**) every single witness to him making the claim in question has already long since died. As such, either Jesus is mistaken when mentioning the return of the “the Son of Man” in this passage, or he is not talking about himself. Of course, this seemingly obvious contradiction falls fully away when we choose to view this and all similar verses (see also **Matthew 24:30**, **Matthew 25:31-32**, **Matthew 26:64**, **Mark 8:38-9:1**, **Mark 14:62**, & **Luke 9:26-27** et al) in a different light – a light that shows them to be describing Jesus' fundamental belief that we *all* contain “the Son of Man” within us, and that we can *all* be “born anew” therewith (a la **John 3:3-9**) whenever we choose to act accordingly.

37 This is another solid proof that Jesus is here most certainly **not** referring to himself as “the Son of Man” – seeing as how this passage states plainly that “For just as the Father has life in Himself, so too has He granted the Son to have life in himself; and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man”, and we then see Jesus – just a few chapters later in the same Gospel – plainly stating “**I judge no one.**” (**John 8:15**) In other words, if the Father has given authority to the Son of Man to judge, and Jesus judges no one, then Jesus cannot be the Son of Man.

38 The phrase “Son of God” actually meant nothing more than “righteous man” in many Biblical passages (see **Sirach 4:10**, **Wisdom of Solomon 2:17-18**, & **Jubilees 1:24-25** et al), and it can be safely believed that Jesus almost always intended it to be read this way as well (see **John 10:34**, **John 13:5**, **John 13:17**, & **John 14:12** et al). Indeed, the Scriptures themselves show Jesus repeatedly refusing to allow others to ascribe this title exclusively to himself – sternly rebuking both demons (see **Mark 5:7**, **Luke 4:11**, **Luke 4:35**, & **Luke 8:28** et al) and even his own disciples (see **Matthew 16:20**, **Mark 8:30**, & **Luke 9:20-21** et al) whenever they errantly did so ... Also, please **note** that while some would claim that **Mark 14:61-62** shows Jesus to anoint himself as the one & only “Son of God”, this is not actually the case; first & foremost because of the evidence mentioned in Note 36 above that directly reflects **Mark 14:62**, and secondly because Jesus does not say *eimi* in this passage (“I am”) but rather *ego eimi* (namely “I, I am” – or better stated: “I am the essence of the Divine”). Indeed in both **Matthew 4:1-10** & **Luke 4:1-13** it is quite clearly seen that Jesus expressly rejects any notion that he is the one & only Son of God. Likewise, the reader would do well to **note** that all the baptismal references in the Gospels do not describe Jesus being anointed “from above”, but rather him blossoming spiritually “from Heaven” *from within*. (see **Matthew 3:17**, **Mark 1:11**, **Mark 9:7**, **Luke 3:22**, & **Luke 9:35**)

Indeed, this internal spiritual dynamic forms the hub of almost everything Jesus shares in the Gospels – especially the Gospel of John, and understanding the same not only eliminates all contradiction & moral inconsistency within his teachings, but gives them far greater practical applicability as well. Consider the following quotes as evidence thereof: “Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. The Father loves the Son and shows him all that He himself is doing; and He will show him greater works than these ... Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he [or she] wishes. The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, so that all might choose to honor the Son in the same way they honor the Father” (John 5:19-23) ... “For just as the Father has life in Himself, so has He granted the Son to also have life” (John 5:26) ... “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father” (John 6:65)³⁹ ... “What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand ... Is it not written in your law that ‘you are gods’? If those to whom the word of God came were called ‘gods’ – and that Scripture cannot be annulled – how can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming merely because he says, ‘I am God’s Son’? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. And yet if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and that I am in the Father” (John 10:29-38) ... “The one who rejects me and does not actively embody [*lambanon*; Strong’s #2983] my word has a judge; for on his or her last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge. For I have not spoken on my own, but rather the Father who sent me has Himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to share” (John 12:48-49) ... “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him straight away” (John 13:31-32) ... “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.⁴⁰ If you know me, you will know my Father also” (John 14:6-7) ... “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? In truth the words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but rather [are from] the Father who dwells in me who does His works [through me]” (John 14:10) ... “If you love me, you will abide in my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever; this being the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees It nor knows It. You know It, because It abides with you, and it will live within you” (John 14:15-17) ... “In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will still see me. Because I live on, you also will live on. And on that day you will understand that I am in my Father, and that you are in me, and that I am in you” (John 14:19-20) ... “I have said all these things to you in figures of speech. And yet the hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father” (John 16:25) ... “The hour is coming, indeed it has already arrived, when you will be scattered – each to his own home, and you will abandon me. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is ever with me” (John 16:32)⁴¹ ... “The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, just as we are one – I in them and you in me; that they might become completely one.” (John 17:22-23)

“No one has ever seen God. And yet if we Love one another, then God lives in us, and His [perfect] Love is perfected in us.” ~ 1 John 4:12

39 NOTE that this is most certainly **not** an affirmation of the doctrine of spiritual predestination. Otherwise, the call to willingly choose self-sacrificial Love (the crux of Jesus' entire ministry – see Matthew 5:39-48, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 13:18-23, Matthew 18:21-22, Matthew 22:37-40, Matthew 24:12-14, Matthew 25:35-40, Luke 6:27-36, Luke 10:29-37, John 13:15-17, & John 15:12 et al) would have no place or role or meaning in the Scriptures.

40 The word commonly translated as “through” in this verse is the Greek term *dia* (Strong's #1223), a word that meant not “via” or “due to”, but rather “on account of” or “because of” or “in honor of” – definitions which are far more in harmony with Jesus' teachings in the Gospel of John, and indeed in all the other Gospels as well.

41 Important here is the realization that the word translated as “with” is the Greek term *meta* (Strong's #3326); a term that had *active* implications – denoting enlivenment much more than mere containment.

And yet the nature of God is not the only heavenly region where the theologies of Paul & Jesus differ, for indeed they also drastically diverge with regard to the nature of Heaven itself. Essentially, where **Paul** believes that Heaven exists elsewhere (see 1 Corinthians 5:19, 1 Corinthians 15:50, 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, & Philippians 1:22-24), **Jesus** teaches that the Kingdom of God is a Here&Now state of being that “resides” within us all (see Luke 17:20-21’s “The Kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they be able to say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘Look, there it is!’ For, in fact, the Kingdom of God is already *within* you”⁴² – also Matthew 19:13-14⁴³, Matthew 22:32, Matthew 24:26-28⁴⁴, Mark 4:30-32⁴⁵, Luke 11:20, Luke 17:22-24, John 3:3-8⁴⁶, & John 18:36⁴⁷). And where **Paul** believes that access to Heaven is coming at some apocalyptic moment in the future⁴⁸ (see Acts 17:31, Romans 8:18, 1 Corinthians 1:7, 1 Corinthians 15:23-26, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 2 Corinthians 4:14-17, Philippians 3:10-20, 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, & 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13), **Jesus** knows that the Kingdom of Heaven is accessed fully & immediately in every present moment – during every act of selfless kindness (see Matthew 7:21, Matthew 13:11-23, Matthew 18:3-4, Matthew 19:23-24⁴⁹, John 3:17-21⁵⁰, John 5:25-27, John 7:6, John 12:31, John 13:15-17, John 13:34-35, John 14:4, John 14:11-12+20, & John 15:12-13 et al).

“He is not the God of the dead but of the living ... Truly, my Father's mansion has many rooms ... You know the way to the place where I am going.” ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 22:32 & John 14:2-4)

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- 42 NOTE that the term commonly translated as “within” in this passage (often incorrectly written as “among”; falsely implying that Jesus is speaking of his own presence – an idea he expressly denounced throughout the Gospels) is the Greek word *entos* (Strong's #1787) – a word that did indeed primarily refer to something that was inside something else, as further evidenced by it also being used in precisely that context in Matthew 23:26, where Jesus tells the Pharisees to “first clean the *inside* of the cup, so that the outside might also become clean.”
- 43 NOTE that the verbs in this verse are all written in the present tense, denoting **not** that the Kingdom of Heaven will belong to very young children someday in the future, but rather that it already does so even now.
- 44 Please attend here as well to Luke 17:31-37, where Jesus also utters “Where the corpse is found, the vultures will gather” – a phrase that meant “Where there is smoke, there is fire”; essentially hearkening his listeners back to Luke 17:20-21 where he had just finished explaining to them that the Kingdom of Heaven resides *within*.
- 45 Regarding this passage, please NOTE first & foremost that it speaks in the present tense – that the Kingdom of God “*is like a mustard seed*”, second that the mustard bush herein mentioned was a thoroughly ubiquitous weed that was found nearly everywhere in that region of the world at the time, and third that the Kingdom of God here is equated with the *seed* – something that must be planted & nurtured *within* the Earth in order to later sprout and become a bush.
- 46 This infamous passage – the only time in the entire Bible where Jesus speaks directly to the concept of being “born again” – seems at first glance to infer that Heaven exists elsewhere (especially in the errant translations that have him calling for us to be “born from above”). Of course, in harmony with the rest of his teachings, Jesus is saying no such thing. Rather, he is simply explaining in delightfully cryptic terms that we must not only be born “of water” (i.e. physically) but also be reborn “of spirit” (i.e. via humble acts of selfless Love). Indeed, his mention of “the wind” in verse 8 – using exactly the same Greek word used to denote “the spirit” earlier in the same passage – makes it metaphorically clear that he is speaking of an active dynamic that exists only in the Here&Now.
- 47 While it is true that Jesus boldly states that “My Kingdom is not from this world” in this verse, it is just as true that the other Kingdom to which he is referring is not one that exists elsewhere, but rather one that exists internally.
- 48 While it is admittedly true that Mark 13:34-37 & Luke 19:11-12 both *seem* to have Jesus espousing a similar belief, in truth he is simply referring to each person's unknown moment of death in the former passage (and thereby encouraging them to engage in acts of selfless Love as soon and as courageously as possible in order to frequently enter his Kingdom of Heaven beforehand – see also the parable of *The Ten Bridesmaids* in Matthew 25:1-13 & John 9:4 et al) and reminding his listeners that Heaven cannot be accessed via any external apocalyptic event in the latter.
- 49 While some Christian theologians make a convenient distinction between “The Kingdom of Heaven” and “The Kingdom of God”, in this passage Jesus himself essentially equates the two.
- 50 There are several very important points of interest in this passage. First, the reader would do well to note that the term commonly translated as “through” in verse 17 is the Greek word *dia* (Strong's #1223), a term that does not mean “via” or “due to”, but rather “on account of” or “because of” – definitions far more in harmony with Jesus' teachings in the Gospel of John, and indeed in all the other Gospels as well. Second, the phrase “condemned *already*” in verse 18 grounds the described dynamic fully in the present moment. Third, verses 19-21 quite clearly denote that the salvation intimated comes only to those who actively engage The Way of Christ – those who choose to “do what is true.”



“I draw a great distinction between the Sermon on the Mount and the letters of Paul; the latter being but an adulterated (and in truth quite hollow) graft onto Christ's teachings; a thin gloss Paul applied that, no matter how much it was polished, remained fully apart from Christ's true teachings and experiences.” ~ via Mahatma Gandhi

Conflict #06: Paul believing God to be a meter of harsh punishment vs Jesus knowing GOD's Love to be truly unconditional ...

Another critical area of contention between Paul and Jesus is their wildly varying beliefs related to judgment and the over-arching nature of God. While **Paul** believes that “God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all” (Romans 2:16) and that “we will all stand before the judgment seat of God” (Romans 14:10 – see also 1 Corinthians 4:4, 1 Corinthians 5:13, 1 Corinthians 11:32), **Jesus** calmly & clearly refuted the same – exclaiming that “the Father judges no one” and “I judge no one” in the Gospel of John (via John 5:22 & John 8:15 – see also Luke 6:36, John 3:17, & John 12:47 et al) ... While **Paul** claimed that “only a remnant of [the children of Israel] will be saved” (Romans 9:27), **Jesus** made it clear that all who show mercy will receive mercy (Matthew 5:7) and that all who forgive will be forgiven (Matthew 6:14) ... While **Paul** callously proclaimed that “if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps he will not spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but kindness towards you, provided you continue in His kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off” (Romans 11:21-22) and that his followers were to “leave room for the wrath of God” (Romans 12:19 – see also 1 Corinthians 10:5, 2 Corinthians 4.4, & 1 Thessalonians 4:6), **Jesus** made it clear that his heavenly Father's Love was absolutely “perfect” (Matthew 5:48) – a Love that by its unconditional nature could not punish others in any way, shape, or form⁵¹ (see 1 John 4:18, as well as Matthew 5:45, Matthew 9:13, John 6:36, & John 6:45).

“The steadfast Love of the Lord never ceases, and His mercies never come to an end ... And what does the Lord require of you? Nothing but to do justice, to exude kindness, and to walk humbly with your God ... If we Love one another, then God lives within us and His Love is perfected in us ... God is Love, and as such those who abide in Love abide in God, and God abides in them ... Because as He is, so are we in this world.” ~ Lamentations 3:22,
Micah 6:8, & 1 John 4:12-17

Conflict #07: Paul believing God is the one who saves “the worthy” vs Jesus teaching that each of us must save ourselves ...

The topic of Salvation (most notably what is required to attain the same) has been debated by theologians and scholars for centuries past, and there are so many divergent biblical passages related to this theme that it will probably be argued by theologians and scholars for centuries to come. That having been said, one point that is beyond debate is the one that illuminates the fact that the views of Paul and the teachings of Jesus pertaining to Salvation do not at all harmonize – with **Paul's** theology being built upon attaining Salvation via a mental &/or verbal faith in Christ (see Romans 10:9-10 et al) that activates the “free gift” of God's grace (Romans 6:23), and **Jesus'** ministry being built upon the belief that Salvation was a blissful state of being only accessible to those who humbled themselves enough to actively Care for others (Matthew 18:3-4 & John 13:15-17) – especially the downtrodden in their communities (Matthew 25:35-40) &/or the enemies in their lives (Matthew 5:44-48).

⁵¹ While some Christians claim that Mark 3:29's “whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” (Matthew 12:31 & Luke 12:10) shows that Jesus did in fact believe in a God of judgment, this is not necessarily the case. Indeed, if this interpretation were correct, it would directly contradict the vast majority of Jesus' other claims about the nature of his celestial Father. Instead, these conflicts can be easily dismissed by realizing that Jesus is not making a statement about God here at all, but is simply making a statement about the nature of forgiveness itself – namely, that whomever “blasphemes” (i.e. actively violates) the perfect Love of his or her Holy Spirit (by being unmerciful or uncaring or ungenerous or unkind towards others) cannot themselves know forgiveness; that the sense of peace that comes from receiving forgiveness can only be known by those who are choosing to forgive, those who are acting in alignment with the inclinations of their own internal Spirit of Truth.

Where **Paul** says that Salvation “depends not upon man's will or exertion, but solely upon God's mercy” and that God “has mercy upon whomever He wills, and hardens the heart of whomever He chooses” (see Romans 9:16-18 – see also Romans 8:28-30 & 2 Corinthians 1:10), **Jesus** counters quite clearly in saying “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7) and “if you understand [my teachings on humility and kindness], blessed are you who *do* them” (John 13:17) ... Where **Paul** claims that Salvation comes from worshiping Jesus Christ as the only Son of God (see Romans 3:21-26, Romans 5:17-21, Romans 10:9-10, & 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 et al), **Jesus** himself vehemently & repeatedly denies this same postulation (see Matthew 4:1-10, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 19:17, Mark 10:18, John 5:41, John 7:16, John 8:50-54, & John 12:44 et al) ... Where **Paul** states that Salvation is fully precluded for all “wrongdoers” (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-10), **Jesus** makes it quite clear that any & every kind of sinner is fully redeemed in each & every moment he or she chooses to selflessly Care for others (see Matthew 13:18-23, Matthew 24:12-14, Matthew 25:35-40, Luke 7:47, Luke 9:23, Luke 10:25-28, Luke 10:29-37, John 13:15-17, & John 15:12 et al) ... Where **Paul** proclaims that Salvation is a one-time event that must be waited for (see Romans 8:23 et al), **Jesus** makes it clear that Salvation is to be repeatedly renewed throughout one's lifetime (see Matthew 7:21, Matthew 13:18-23, Matthew 24:12-13⁵², Luke 9:23, Luke 17:20-21, John 3:8, & John 13:15-17 et al) ... Where **Paul** boasts that Salvation is only for the privileged few (see Romans 9:27 & 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 et al), **Jesus** announces that Salvation is for one and all – for every single person who chooses to recognize the selfless Spirit within by acting accordingly (see Matthew 5:7, Matthew 19:29-30, Mark 9:35, Luke 14:10-11, Luke 14:21-24⁵³, John 1:12-13⁵⁴, John 3:21, John 5:25-29, John 8:12, John 13:15-17, & John 15:7-12 et al).



*“The night is far gone,
and the day is at hand.”*
~ Paul (Romans 13:12)

*“See that you are not led astray. For others will come in my
name saying: 'The time is at hand.' Do not follow them.”*
~ Jesus Christ (Luke 21:8)

52 Here, the King James Version of Matthew 24:13 proves to be by far the most accurate (or at the very least the one most in alignment with the rest of Jesus' ministry) in that it translates the Greek word *sosethetai* (Strong's #4982) in its present tense form (“*shall* be saved”) instead of its future tense form (“will be saved”).

53 Some theologians &/or Christian believers might argue that this passage shows Jesus condemning “those who were invited” to his metaphorical banquet, and yet what this passage actually denotes is the fact that those who were originally invited *themselves* turned down the offer to sit and partake thereof; that this is the reason they will not be able to “taste [his] supper” – that everyone, even the most undesirable of undesirables; nay, *especially* the most undesirable of undesirables, will have a place at the table if he or she chooses to sup there.

54 This passage in John 1 (indeed all of the Gospel of John) can be best understood when coupled with the truths shared in John 11:25 (“Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live”) and John 14:12 (“The one who believes in me will also *do* the works that I do”).

Conflict #08: Paul equating the “Gospel” with Jesus' resurrection vs Jesus defining his “Gospel” as Salvation via Love ...

Another highly pivotal discrepancy between the writings of Paul and the teachings of Jesus Christ centers upon their theologies starkly divergent centers – namely, the very different ways the two defined and preached the foundational essence of their ministries; what the biblical manuscripts call “the gospel”⁵⁵ ... On the one hand, **Paul** announces his own unique “gospel” (see Romans 2:16, Romans 16:25, 1 Corinthians 4:15-16, 1 Corinthians 15:1, Galatians 1:6-7, Philippians 3:17, & 1 Thessalonians 1:6) – namely, the message **A**) that Jesus Christ was/is the Messiah (see Acts 13:32-33, Acts 18:28, Romans 8:3, & Galatians 4:4)⁵⁶, **B**) that Jesus Christ rose from the dead after his crucifixion (see Acts 13:29-31, Acts 17:2-3, Acts 17:30-31, Romans 1:4, Romans 7:4, & 1 Corinthians 15:3-4), and **C**) that anyone who worships Jesus Christ as the only Son of God will be granted eternal salvation in heaven after their bodily death (see Acts 13:38-39 – where Paul states “Let it be known to you therefore, my brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; that by Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the Law of Moses”, see Romans 10:9-10 – where Paul states that “if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved”, and see 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 – where Paul states that “in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ” – see also Romans 6:5, 1 Corinthians 8:6, 1 Corinthians 10:4, & Philippians 3:10-11 et al).

On the other hand, the Gospel of **Jesus** Christ expressed a very different message indeed. Yes, first & foremost it is fair to admit that the “good news” mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels was often described in terms that were vague at best (as “the good news of the Kingdom” in Matthew 4:23 & Matthew 9:35, as “the good news of the Kingdom of God”⁵⁷ in Luke 4:43 & Luke 8:1 & Luke 16:16, as “the good news of God” in Mark 1:14-15⁵⁸, as “the good news of Jesus Christ” in Mark 1:1⁵⁹, as “this good news” in Matthew 26:13 & Mark 14:9⁶⁰, and simply as “the good news” in Mark 16:15⁶¹, Mark 8:35, Mark 10:29, Mark 13:10-13⁶², Luke 4:18⁶³, Luke 7:22, Luke 9:6, & Luke 20:1).

55 The term “gospel” is primarily found in the three synoptic works of Matthew, Mark, & Luke – and either reflects the Greek words *euaggelion* (Strong's #2098, when spoken of directly as a noun) or *euaggelizo* (Strong's #2097, when being announced as a verb). It is sometimes translated as “good news” in various verses, owing to its more literal translation from the Greek (*eu* = “good” + *angelos* = “messenger” + *ion* or *izo*, suffixes). Historically this term was used during the time of the Roman Empire to herald the establishment of a new kingdom (e.g. often whenever a military engagement came to an end) and allow all those who had been conquered to pledge allegiance to the new ruler and thereby be spared. In this context, the initial words of Mark (the first Gospel penned) are dramatically striking, announcing “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ” – thereby proclaiming Jesus' legitimacy as a ruler of the day and implying that he had in some way conquered the Roman Empire. In Old English the term was originally written “godspel” (again, for “good news”), and yet was changed for whatever reason to the “gospel” we read today.

56 Aside from these more direct references thereto, Paul also subtly alludes to his belief in Jesus as divine; doing so by speaking of him while directly alluding to Old Testament verses that spoke of or referred to God (see Romans 10:13 – where he alludes to Joel 12:32, 1 Corinthians 1:31 & 2 Corinthians 10:17 – where he alludes to Jeremiah 9:24, 1 Corinthians 2:16 – where he alludes to Isaiah 40:3, and 1 Corinthians 10:26 – where he alludes to Psalm 24:1).

57 And remember what Jesus said later in the Gospel of Luke about the nature of his “Kingdom of God” – namely, that it resided *within* us (see Luke 17:20-21).

58 NOTE the very similar language used both here and in Matthew 10:7 – namely, “the time is fulfilled” in the former and “the Kingdom of Heaven is even now at hand” in the latter.

59 NOTE that the Greek manuscripts of this particular verse conclude with “*a* Son of God”, not “*the* Son of God.”

60 Both verses refer to the courageous generosity of women (possibly the same woman) anointing Jesus with oil.

61 This is the first penned mention of The Great Commission (see also Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 24:47, & John 20:21).

62 NOTE that the words “the one who endures to the end will be saved” in verse 13 directly reflect the extremely important similar passage in Matthew 24:12-14 mentioned at the top of the following page.

63 This is the only time that Jesus is seen publicly reading from the Hebrew Bible in the Gospels, importantly – and appropriately – doing so to “bring good news to the poor.”

Fortunately for all those interested (Christians and non-Christians alike), there are two other instances in the Bible where Jesus speaks to the nature of *his Gospel* – two instances where he actually did so with remarkably clear specificity. The first of these two mentions is found in [Matthew 10:7](#), where the NRSV Bible has him telling his disciples, “As you go forth, proclaim [this] Good News: the Kingdom of Heaven is even now at hand.”⁶⁴ As such, this verse shows that the first portion of Jesus' two-part Gospel is his contention that his followers are to focus not on the future but rather on the Here&Now – essentially the truly good news that “The Kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they be able to say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘Look, there it is!’ For, in fact, the Kingdom of God is [already] *within you*” (Luke 17:20-21 – the only instance in the entire New Testament where Jesus speaks both specifically and non-metaphorically about Heaven). Even more importantly, the second facet of Jesus' Gospel is delineated in [Matthew 24:12-14](#), where Jesus describes how his followers (and indeed, the rest of humanity as well) could attain entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven of which he so often spoke – saying, “the Love of many will grow cold, and yet the one who endures [in Love] to the end shall be saved. And *this* Good News of the Kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations.” (see also Luke 6:46-49)

So in essence then, it can now be readily & clearly seen that whereas **Paul's** “gospel” concentrated on tempting his adherents into “saving” themselves by worshiping Jesus as the Messiah (the one & only Son of God – a status Jesus repeatedly denied & indeed firmly decried), **Jesus'** very different “Good News” encouraged his followers to live fully blissful lives by selflessly Caring for others. Indeed, as has been touched on previously, **Paul** was undeniably a man of faith⁶⁵ – believing without a doubt that Jesus was the incarnate resurrected Son of God (see [Acts 9:20](#), [Acts 17:18](#), [Acts 24:21](#), [Romans 1:1-4](#), [1 Corinthians 2:1-2](#), [2 Corinthians 4:5-6](#), & [Colossians 3:1](#)), that Jesus was the Messiah and as such the one true source of spiritual salvation (see [Acts 9:22](#), [Acts 18:5](#), [Acts 18:28](#), [Acts 19:17](#), [Acts 28:30-31](#), & [Colossians 2:8-9](#) et al), and that the only individuals who had access to said salvation were those who worshiped Jesus Christ faith-fully – those who believed with their hearts and professed with their mouths that Jesus was the Heaven-sent Savior of all those who adored him accordingly. For Paul, that faith in Jesus' divinity was enough for salvation, and indeed that faith was the only viable path thereto (see [Acts 16:29-31](#), [Acts 28:23](#), [Romans 3:21-25](#), [Romans 4:5](#), [Romans 5:1-11](#), [Romans 5:17-18](#), [Romans 6:4-5](#), [Romans 7:22-25](#), [Romans 8:1-11](#), [Romans 10:9-10](#), [Romans 14:8-9](#), & [2 Corinthians 5:14-15](#)) ...

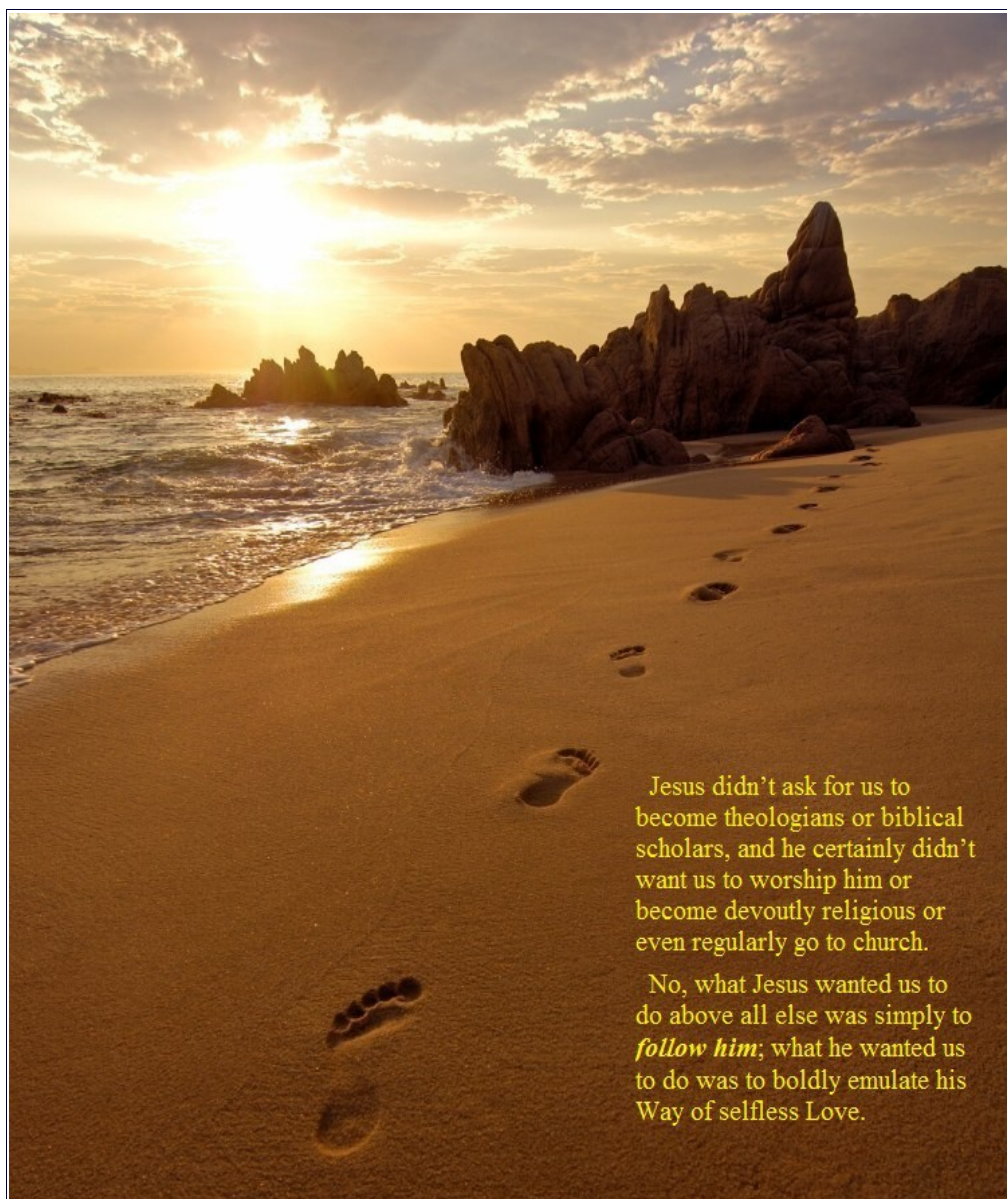
Of course, **Jesus** would have none of such nonsense, renouncing any hint of his own special divinity at every turn (see [Mark 10:18](#), [John 5:41](#), [John 7:16](#), [John 8:50-54](#), & [John 12:44](#) et al). He repeatedly told his followers that they possessed just as much divine potential as he did (see [Matthew 5:9](#), [Matthew 5:44-48](#), [John 10:34-35](#), [John 14:12](#), & [John 14:20](#) et al), he rebuked disciples and demons alike whenever they claimed that he was the Messiah – the one and only Son of God (see [Matthew 16:20](#), [Mark 5:7](#), [Mark 8:30](#), [Luke 4:35](#), [Luke 8:28](#) & [Luke 9:20-21](#) et al), and he rejected all temptations to public reverence or personal leadership (see [Matthew 20:28](#), [Matthew 23:12](#), [Mark 10:44-45](#), [Luke 22:24-27](#), & [John 13:12-15](#) et al) – including calls from his followers to become king (a la [John 6:15](#)), announcements from regional leaders that he *was* a king (a la [Luke 23:3](#)), and even promises of immortality & unlimited royal power⁶⁶ from Satan himself (see [Matthew 4:1-11](#) & [Luke 4:1-13](#)).

64 It is admittedly true that neither the majority of the ancient manuscripts nor the King James Version of the Bible contain the words “*this/the Good News*” in this verse, and yet this does not make the NRSV (or any other similar translations) inaccurate for inserting them. Indeed, the very same Greek word translated as “proclaim” (*kerusso*, here conjugated as *keryssete* – Strong's #2784) is also found in [Matthew 4:17's](#) “Jesus began to proclaim: Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand”, [Matthew 4:23's](#) “Jesus went throughout Galilee ... proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom”, & [Matthew 9:35's](#) “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages ... proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom” – all verses relaying a similar message, all in similar contexts.

65 And this, despite his unusual (and seemingly contradictory) statement in [Galatians 5:6](#) that “the only thing that counts is faith enlivened by Love”, with the word translated here as “enlivened” being the Greek term *energoumene* (Strong's #1754 – often translated as “working”) – a term that is without question one that describes operation, activity, & accomplishment, not mere thought or feeling.

66 Interestingly, the very same gifts that were awarded to & received by the messianic “Son of Man” in [Daniel 7:13-14](#).

Finally, and in full harmony with the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the Good News as *he* defined it and shared it during *his* ministry, the Scriptures show that *Jesus* wanted others to worship God by emulating his selfless Way of Living and his humble Way of Loving – stating quite plainly that his followers were to “Let your light shine before others so that they might see your good works and give glory to your Father in Heaven” (Matthew 5:16)⁶⁷, and “Love your God with all your heart ... [and] Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30-31 – see also Matthew 22:35-40), and “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and *enliven* it” (Luke 8:21)⁶⁸; that his listeners were to “do just as I have done for you ... If you understand these things, blessed are you while you do them” (John 13:15-17 – see also John 3:16-21), and “just as I have Loved you, so shall you Love one another. By this will others know that you are my disciples: when you show Love for one another” (John 13:34-35), and “Abide in me just as I abide in you ... My Father is glorified by this: that you bear much fruit and [thereby] become my disciples” (John 15:4-8), and “Keep my commandments ... [and] this is my commandment: that you Love one another just as I have Loved you.” (John 14:15 + John 15:12)



67 It can be helpful to remember that – for Jesus at least – “Heaven” was an *internal* essence (see Luke 17:20-21).

68 The word appropriately translated here as “enliven” is the Greek term *poiountes* (see Strong's #4160).

Conflict #09: Paul professing obedience to Jesus for salvation of self vs Jesus desiring service to God via sacrificing for others ...

And finally we come to the most important discrepancy of all – the not-so-well-known truth that, while **Paul's** theology primarily encouraged his followers to attain individual reward &/or personal benefit via faith, **Jesus** lived and proclaimed a ministry that fundamentally encouraged his adherents to actively sacrifice their own wealth & comfort & safety for the benefit of others. **Paul** said that “everyone who believes is set free” (Acts 13:39), and yet **Jesus** stated that “if you understand [my teachings on love & generosity] ... blessed are you while you enliven them” (John 13:15-17) ... **Paul** made it clear that for him salvation “depends on faith, in order that the promise might rest on grace” (Romans 4:16 – see also Romans 9:32, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Galatians 2:16, & Philippians 3:9), and yet **Jesus** focused solely on a Salvation that could only be activated by works of selfless Love (see Matthew 5:39-48, Luke 6:27-36, Matthew 25:35-40 et al), never by faithfully worshiping him – calmly explaining that “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who *do the will of my Father*” (Matthew 7:21) ... **Paul** said whatever he had to say to “save” as many listeners as possible (a la 1 Corinthians 9:22’s “I have become all things to all people, that I might save some”); tempting them unabashedly by dangling the spiritual benefits they would receive if they but believed as he did (see Romans 4:23-25, Romans 5:10, Romans 7:4, Romans 8:18, Romans 8:24-25, 1 Corinthians 1:8-9, 2 Corinthians 1:10, Galatians 3:14, & Galatians 6:7-8). **Jesus**, on the other hand, professed a Gospel that was grounded in acts of humble selflessness (see Matthew 24:12-14); one that was built upon a foundation of willing self-sacrifice for others. Indeed, Jesus very first post-baptismal act in the Gospels is a self-sacrificial one, refusing Satan’s offer of immortality and absolute power (see Matthew 4:1-11 & Luke 4:1-13). Thereafter, his teachings were consistently & liberally sprinkled with bold calls to humble self-sacrifice – telling his followers that “the merciful ... will receive mercy” (Matthew 5:7 – see also Luke 6:36 & Luke 10:29-37), and that they were to “turn the other cheek” when struck (Matthew 5:39), to “give to everyone who begs” (Matthew 5:42), to “Love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44), to “bless those who curse you” (Luke 6:28), and to “do good to those who hate you” (Luke 6:27). As far as Jesus was concerned, alms were to be donated anonymously (Matthew 6:2-4), prayers were to be offered secretly (Matthew 6:5-6), and fasting was to be done joyfully (Matthew 6:16-18). Stolen goods were not to be reclaimed (Luke 6:30), the injured were asked to forgive their transgressors “seventy times seven times”⁶⁹ (Matthew 18:21-22 – see also Luke 6:37, as well as Jesus’ parable of *The Prodigal Son* in Luke 15:11-32), and everyone was encouraged to give beyond personal limits of comfort or convenience (see *The Widow’s Mite* in Mark 12:41-44 & Luke 21:1-4, where the hero of Jesus’ tale is the woman who “out of her poverty gave all she had to live on”). Whenever a banquet was attended, his followers were inspired to “sit down at the lowest place” at the table (see Luke 14:7-11 – also Matthew 23:12’s & Luke 14:11’s “All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted”) and whenever a banquet was given for others, all givers thereof were exhorted to “invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind” instead of the pious or the privileged or the popular (see Luke 14:12-14 – also Matthew 25:35-40). Over & over & over again throughout his ministry Jesus rallied his listeners to be the “last” rather than the “first” (see Matthew 19:30, Matthew 20:16, Mark 9:35, Mark 10:31, & Luke 13:30) and “not to be served but to serve” (see Matthew 20:26-28, Mark 10:34-35, Luke 18:20-22, & Luke 22:25-27). Jesus told his listeners in no uncertain terms that they must “deny themselves, pick up your cross daily, and follow me” in order to be considered true adherents of his Way (see Luke 9:23-24 – also Matthew 10:28, Matthew 16:24-26, Mark 8:34, & Luke 14:27), and that “those who want to save their life will lose it, while those who give their life for the sake of my Gospel will find it.” (Mark 8:35 – also Matthew 16:25, Luke 9:24, & John 12:25)

69 The seventy mentioned in this passage reflects back upon the 70 nations of humanity mentioned in Genesis 10, while the seven hearkens to the Judaic numeric symbolism for fullness or completeness. In other words, Jesus is saying here that his listeners are to forgive *everyone* in their lives and that they are to do so fully and *without limit* or condition. Intriguingly, this verse flips the context of the only other time this particular numeric value is mentioned in the entire Bible – Genesis 4:24, where Cain is said to be “avenged” by the same amount.

Even the parable of *The Sower* in the Gospel of Luke (the parable that forms the foundation for all Jesus' other parables – see Mark 4:13) intimates a call to willing self-sacrifice with the words: “But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit *with patient endurance*” (via Luke 8:15 – especially potent when coupled with Luke 19:27-28's “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and also your neighbor as yourself ... Do this, and you shall live”⁷⁰).

And yet Jesus was much more than a mere preacher of The Way of joyful self-sacrifice, for he actively embodied his beliefs about selfless Love just as consistently and just as powerfully as he spoke them (“Even though you might not believe me, believe [my] works” ~ John 10:38). When hordes of demanding strangers repeatedly pressed in upon him, Jesus exuded a heartfelt “compassion” for them (see Matthew 9:36, Matthew 14:14, Matthew 15:32, & Matthew 20:34 et al) and even summoned them to himself in times when he was surely annoyed or frustrated or depressed or even exhausted (“Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” ~ Matthew 11:28 – see also Mark 10:14, John 5:40, John 7:37, John 10:10, & John 15:11). Even though it made him ritually “unclean” in the eyes of his society's strict religious conventions, he gently touched lepers (a la Matthew 8:3, Mark 1:40-42, Luke 5:12-13, Luke 14:1-4, & Luke 17:11-19 – and this, despite the law established by Leviticus 13 & Leviticus 5:3) and was openly kind to menstruating women who touched him without his permission (a la Matthew 9:20-22, Mark 5:24-34, & Luke 8:43-48 – and this, despite the law established by Leviticus 15:25). Even though it was staunchly frowned upon by the masses, Jesus was kind to tax collectors and “sinners” (see Matthew 9:10, Mark 2:15-17, Luke 5:29-32, & Luke 15:1-2 – also John 8:1-11) and openly associated with Canaanites & Samaritans (see Matthew 15:22-28, Luke 17:15-16, & John 4:1-26). He gave up his relationships with friends and family members (see Matthew 10:37, Matthew 12:48-49, Mark 3:33-34, & Luke 8:20-21 – often being sternly scorned by the same as a result; see Matthew 13:57, Mark 6:4, Luke 4:24, & John 4:44) to travel the land as a meandering mendicant – an itinerant preacher who encouraged his followers to “give up all [their] possessions” (Luke 14:33 – see also Matthew 19:20-26, Mark 10:21, Luke 12:32-34, & Luke 16:13-15 et al), who had no money to his name (see Acts 2:44-45, Luke 8:1-3, John 12:6, & John 13:39), and who maintained no home of his own (see Matthew 8:20, Luke 4:43, & Luke 9:58). Indeed, even in his darkest hour he openly placed the will of God over his own desires (see Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:36, & Luke 22:42) and, most importantly of all, he purposefully arranged for his own crucifixion (see Matthew 16:21-23, Matthew 27:42, Mark 8:31-33, Mark 15:31, Luke 18:31-34, Luke 23:35, & John 10:17-18 et al) – by far the most powerful method possible to communicate his Way of willingly self-sacrificial Love.⁷¹

*“I have set you an example,
that you might do for others
as I have done for you”
~ Jesus (John 13:15)*



70 Even this passage, Jesus' crystallization of the 10 Commandments (also found in Matthew 22:37-40 & Mark 12:30-31), implies a profound call to self-sacrifice, seeing as how the only time in his biblical ministry that he specifically defines the “neighbors” we are to Love he does so by equating them with our enemies (via the parable of *The Good Samaritan* in Luke 10:29-37, where the hero of the tale is a Samaritan – a cultural enemy of the Jews of Jesus' day – who “shows mercy”, something that only be done to one who has wronged or harmed us.

71 As mentioned previously, if one reads the New Testament texts carefully, it is easy to see that Jesus “[knew] all that was to happen to him” (John 18:4) – namely, that he in all probability pre-planned his own crucifixion. He repeatedly told his disciples ahead of time that he was going to be “handed over to the chief priests” to then “rise again after three days” (Matthew 20:17-19 – see also Mark 9:30-32, Luke 9:22, Luke 9:44, John 12:27 et al), he regularly showed that he had pre-organized the event (see Matthew 21:1-9, Matthew 21:17, Matthew 26:18, Mark 11:11, Luke 9:52, Luke 10:1, Luke 19:5, John 7:10 et al), and frequently noted that he was doing everything purposefully “so that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (see Matthew 26:54-56, Luke 24:44, John 12:23-34, John 17:12, John 18:11 et al) ... For additional proof of this postulation, see Part 2 (which begins at page 35) of my book *Exhuming Easter*, readable online at the following link: <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/55687577/exhuming-easter-complete-3rd-edition>

“Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do ... My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples ... [and] by this everyone will know that you are my disciples: when you show Love for one another ... And in fact this is my commandment: that you Love one another just as I have Loved you. And no one has greater Love than this: to lay down one’s life for [another] ... In truth, if you understand these things, blessed are you while you enliven them.”

~ Jesus Christ (via John 14:12, John 15:8, John 13:35, John 15:12-13, & John 13:15-17)

Paul: an apostle of delightful irony ...

I would offer that there is little that is more entertaining (or more important) than catching religious zealots in well-laid traps laid to expose their moral contradictions &/or their ethical hypocrisies (see much of [Matthew 12](#) and almost all of [Matthew 23](#), where Jesus boldly revels in doing just that). Of course, there is little that is more amusing than watching those same zealots create their own snares and then fall awkwardly therein – and this, without needing any outside bait or coaxing. And such is often the case regarding the aggressive rantings found in the biblical epistles of Paul, the self-proclaimed “apostle of Jesus Christ” ... As examples thereof, consider the obvious (if not also somewhat disturbing) irony encapsulated within the following passages, passages that reflect far more accurately the character of Paul himself than they did any of his listeners:

“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie – and worshiped the creature rather than the Creator.” ~ Romans 1:24-25

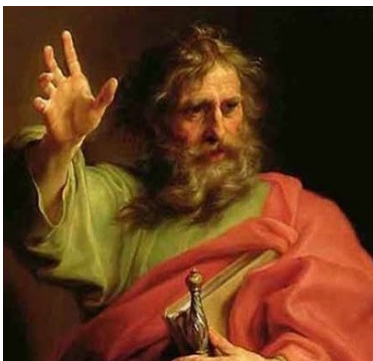
“But if you call yourself a Jew ... and boast of your relation to God, and claim to know His will and to be able to determine what is best ... And if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, and a teacher of children ... You then, who teach others, will you not teach yourself?” ~ Romans 2:17-20

“I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause dissensions and offenses, in opposition to the teaching that you have learned. Avoid them, for such people do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but rather their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery deceive the hearts of the simple-minded.” ~ Romans 16:17-18

“And what I do I will continue to do, in order to deny those who wish to be recognized as our equals ... For such boasters are false apostles, deceitful workers disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. As such it is not strange when his minions also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness ... And yet their end will match their deeds.” ~ 2 Corinthians 11:12-15

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you and are instead turning to a different gospel. Not that there is another gospel, of course, and yet there are some who are confusing you and wishing to pervert the Gospel of Christ.” ~ Galatians 1:6-7

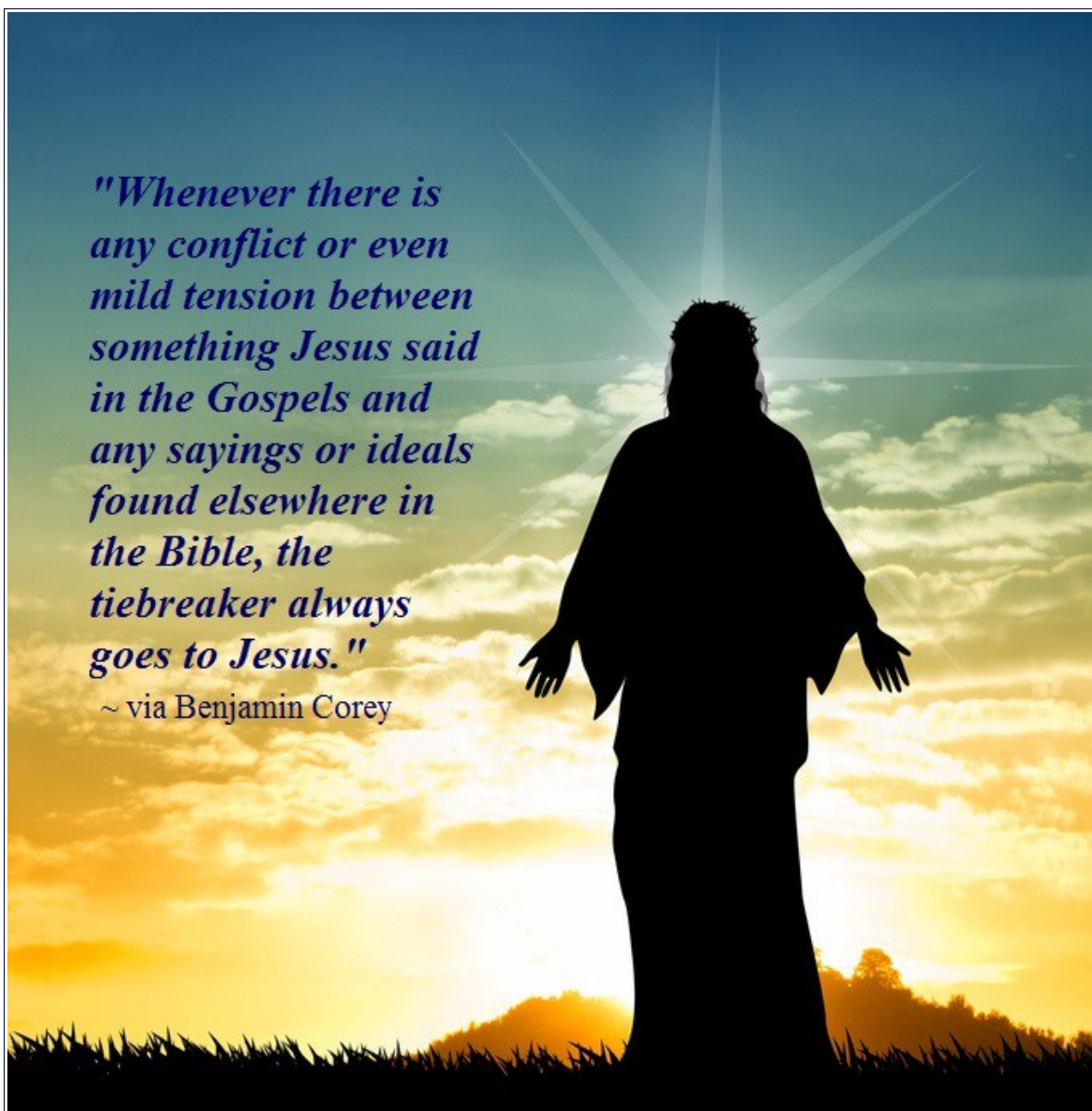
“Am I seeking human approval or God’s approval? Am I merely trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.” ~ Galatians 1:10



“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy or empty deceit – according to human tradition or the elemental spirits of the Universe, and not according to Christ.” ~ Colossians 2:8

“The primary purpose of the book of [Acts](#) was to minimize the undeniable conflict between Paul and the leaders of the Jerusalem Church; mostly James and Peter. The work was well done; with the author rescuing Christianity from the imputation of being the individual creation of Paul, and instead giving it the respectable pedigree of a doctrine that to this day still carries the authority of the Church; a doctrine disguised as one that is continuous in spirit with the original teachings of Jesus and the spiritual tenets of the earliest followers thereof. And yet, for all these efforts, the truth of the matter is not hard to recover – if one but earnestly examines the New Testament with an eye to its blatant tell-tale inconsistencies and confusions, rather than with a determination to gloss over those difficulties in the interest of harmonizing them into a more comfortable (and indeed a more comforting) orthodox interpretation.” ~ inspired by Hyam Maccoby

*“Paul is the one in the Bible who theologized Christ almost completely out of Christianity ...
... Watch out for him.” ~ via Robert Frost*



"Whenever there is any conflict or even mild tension between something Jesus said in the Gospels and any sayings or ideals found elsewhere in the Bible, the tiebreaker always goes to Jesus."

~ via Benjamin Corey

"There is, on the one hand, the abrogation of an earlier commandment, because it was weak and ineffectual ... There is, on the other hand, the introduction of a better hope through which we approach God ... Accordingly, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant ... He has obtained a more excellent ministry, and thus is the mediator of the better covenant ... If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second ... So in speaking of a new covenant, he has made the first one obsolete, and what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear." ~ Hebrews 7:18-22 & 8:6-13

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; and that foundation is Jesus Christ ... So be imitators of me, [but only] as I am of Christ ... For we do not proclaim ourselves, but proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as slaves for Jesus' sake" ~ Paul of Tarsus (1 Corinthians 3:11, 1 Corinthians 11:1, & 2 Corinthians 4:5)

"Everyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God; whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son" ~ 2 John 1:9



"May I have your attention please: No one is coming to save you. Indeed, you have been given your current life to save yourself -- by lessening the burdens of your enemies &/or enhancing the Joy of strangers ... Acting accordingly is the only way into my Kingdom of Heaven, and acting accordingly is both 100% your choice & 100% your responsibility ... P.S. Good luck with that."

*~ **GOD*** (Matt 7:21, Luke 17:20-21, John 3:21, John 13:15-17, Matt 24:12-14 et al)

Conclusion: Returning to The Way of Christ ... (bringing Jesus' original New Beginning to its rightful End)

For starters, it is important for the reader to understand that this treatise is **not** meant to be a criticism of Paul himself. Yes, his letters clearly show him to be a man deluded by an incredibly potent psychological elixir – namely, being born into a life of unfair privilege while simultaneously harboring a disturbingly low level of self-esteem. This combination tempted him to commit atrocious acts of violent injustice upon the innocent and create a life which engendered such intense levels of internal shame and guilt that he ultimately developed a unique theology to compensate for the same – a theology that begins in an unwashable “original sin” and ends in a faith-activated & grace-granted spiritual redemption that was completely unearned by the “saved” and fully unjust towards the “unworthy.” And yet despite the patent dysfunction with which he operated and the blatant injustices his religion perpetrated (and still perpetrates to this day), it bears noting that I have immense respect for the sincerity of Paul's zeal and the passion with which he enlivened the same, as well as an enormous compassion for how obviously lost he felt during his obviously tortured life ...

Secondly, it is just as important to note that this tome is **not** meant to be a denouncement of Christianity, the modern-day religion founded upon and sustained by the teachings Paul. Yes, it is true that Paulinist dogma does encourage its Christian adherents to bow down to what amounts to nothing less than a celestial dictatorship⁷² (no matter how “loving” or “kind” its tyrant might well be) and to worship Jesus himself in a manner that is nothing short of idolatry.⁷³ And yet that having been said, all those who have chosen to be “**humble as a toddler**” (see [Matthew 18:3-4](#)) must admit that such conservative believers *might* very well be correct in their assessment of the Divine.⁷⁴

72 Though some Christians like to claim that the condemned have every opportunity to bow down to Jesus before their bodily death – and thus in effect choose their own damnation when they don't, this argument borders on the ludicrous. Yes, it is true that anyone staunchly adhering to The Way of Christ (e.g. the true “saints” of all the world's religions – including Christianity) would indeed choose Hell over Heaven – if for no other reason than they, as pure adherents of Jesus' selfless Way, would want nothing more on their deathbed than to go to Hell and do whatever they could to ease the suffering there – no other humans (other than clinically diagnosed sadomasochists, of course) would do so. Indeed, almost every single human being longs to reside in Heaven after he or she dies, and yet according to Paul's “gospel” (again, see [Romans 10:9-10](#) & [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#)) almost all of them will be denied that halcyon reward, and this simply because they didn't “come to Christ” in an appropriate fashion &/or at the appropriate time. Is this benevolence? Is this anything even faintly resembling the “perfect Love” of which Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount (see [Matthew 5](#))? Is this punishment even remotely just? Of course not! And I would humbly offer that any human being at all in tune with his or her conscience (the “Advocate within” a la [John 14:20-26](#)) knows this to be true.

73 Again, this is a contention vehemently affirmed by Jesus himself throughout the Gospels (see [Matthew 19:17](#), [Mark 10:18](#), [Luke 18:19](#), [John 5:41](#), [John 7:16](#), [John 8:50-54](#), [John 12:44](#), & [John 14:28](#) et al).

74 Of course, if these “evangelical fundamentalists” are indeed correct, then their choice to abide in such a doctrine and worship such a God ironically precludes them from entering the “Kingdom of Heaven” that Jesus himself announces in the Gospels. Simply stated, as long as one is primarily concerned about his or her own salvation in the hereafter (instead of reaching out selflessly to Care for others come what may) and as long as one arrogantly believes that he or she has exclusive access to God's Will &/or the “correct” interpretation of Scripture, then – even though entrance into Paul's believed-in postmortem Paradise might indeed be granted him or her -- there will be no entrance into the “Kingdom of Heaven” that Jesus came to offer his true followers; a state of perfect bliss that exists in every present moment of this current lifetime (see [Matthew 10:7](#) & [Luke 17:20-21](#) et al); a Kingdom that can only be accessed by those who set aside their selfish arrogance (see [Matthew 18:3-4](#) & [Matthew 23:12](#)) in favor of humbly & courageously walking The Way of selfless LOVE – by those who choose to make their lives about caring for and serving others instead of themselves (see [John 13:15-17](#), [John 14:15](#), & [John 15:12](#) et al); especially the downtrodden in their communities (a la [Matthew 25:35-40](#)) &/or the enemies in their midst (a la [Matthew 5:44-48](#) & [Luke 10:29-37](#)).

Of course, this book has nothing to do with either of these traditional Christian contentions. No, the focus of this work is essentially singular – namely, exposing the simple fact that the religious theologies & spiritual beliefs of Paul of Tarsus and Jesus Christ are at odds with one another, and indeed are diametrically opposed. Where **Paul** claims that we humans are innately sinful and must be saved by a potentially wrathful God, **Jesus** reminds his listeners that we humans are all **Children of God** in waiting (via [John 10:34-35](#) & [John 14:12-20](#) et al), that God is the essence of perfectly unconditional Love (see [Matthew 5:48](#) + [1 John 4:18](#), [Matthew 18:21-22](#), [Luke 6:36](#), [Luke 15:11-32](#), & [John 5:22](#) et al), and that as such we are all the agents of our own salvation (see [Matthew 7:21](#), [Matthew 24:12-14](#), [Luke 10:25-28](#), & [John 13:15-17](#) et al). Where **Paul** claims that Jesus is the one & only Son of God and that he must be worshiped as such, **Jesus** loudly and repeatedly refutes the same.⁷⁵ Where **Paul** claims that Jesus will return in oft-wrathful judgment at some point in the future, **Jesus** quite clearly speaks of an awakening of the “**Son of Man**” (the divine essence that resides *within* each & every sentient being) at some point in our current lifetime.⁷⁶ Where **Paul** claims that spiritual salvation comes via mental and/or verbal professions of faith that allow for an entrance into heaven for eternity after we die, **Jesus** repeatedly and consistently explained that salvation comes only through humbly selfless acts of Love that allow us to enter *his Kingdom of Heaven* while we are still alive (see [Matthew 10:7](#), [Matthew 24:12-14](#), [Luke 17:20-21](#), & [John 13:15-17](#) et al). And finally, and for this treatise quite importantly, where **Paul** unabashedly claims to be a legitimate “apostle of Jesus Christ” (see [Romans 1:1](#), [1 Corinthians 1:1](#), [2 Corinthians 1:1](#), [Galatians 1:1](#), & [Colossians 1:1](#)), **Jesus** himself warned his listeners against following Paul or any other “false prophets” preaching similarly to him.⁷⁷

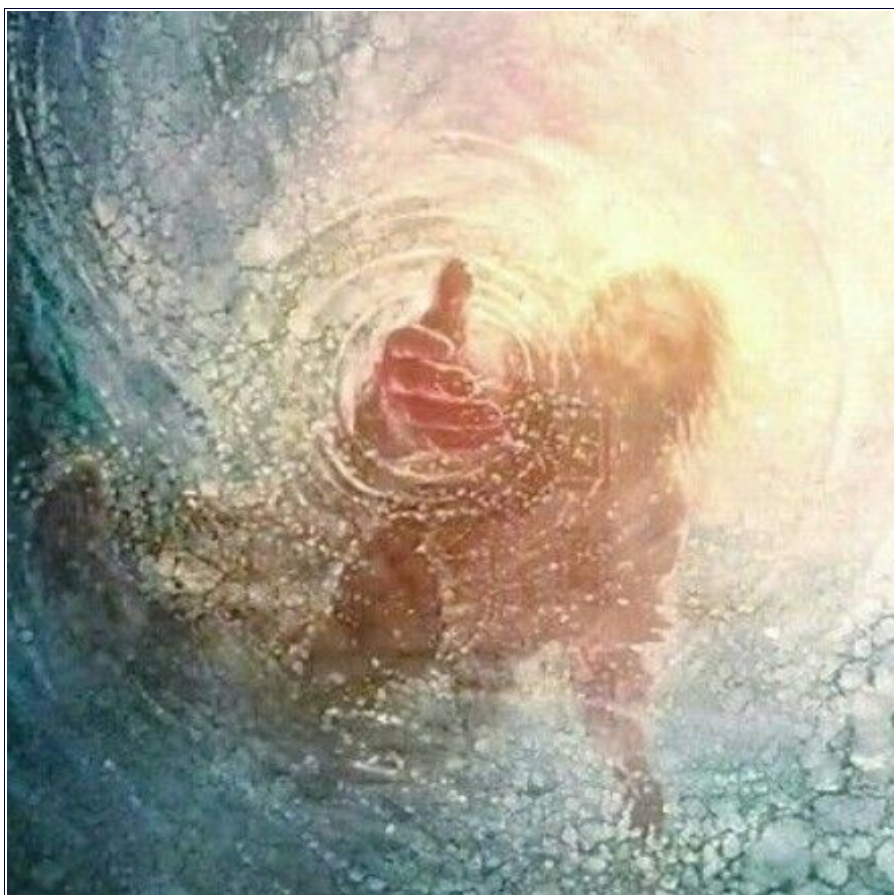
75 see [Matthew 19:17](#), [Mark 10:18](#), [Mark 13:32](#), [Luke 12:10](#), [Luke 18:17-19](#), [Luke 22:42-43](#), [Luke 23:46](#), [John 5:22](#), [John 5:30](#), [John 5:41](#), [John 7:16](#), [John 8:28](#), [John 8:42](#), [John 8:50-54](#), [John 10:29](#), [John 12:44-49](#), [John 14:10](#), [John 14:28-31](#), [John 16:26-27](#), [John 20:17](#), & [John 20:21](#) et al ... NOTE as well that, while it is indeed true that he says “the Father and I are one” in [John 10:30](#) and “I am in the Father and the Father is in me” in [John 14:11](#), Jesus also makes it frequently clear that a similarly innate divinity resides latently within each & every sentient being (see [John 14:12-26](#) & [1 John 2:15](#) et al).

76 This interpretation is possibly best evidenced by Jesus' words in [Matthew 16:28](#), where he openly says, “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom” (see also [Luke 21:27](#)), if for no other reason than **A**) every single witness to that claim is already long since dead and **B**) he himself has quite obviously not yet returned. Logically then, either Jesus is mistaken when mentioning the return of the “the Son of Man” in this passage, or he is not talking about himself. Of course, this potential contradiction falls completely away when we choose to view this and all similar verses (see [Matthew 24:30](#), [Matthew 25:31-32](#), [Matthew 26:64](#), [Mark 8:38-9:1](#), [Mark 14:62](#), & [Luke 9:26-27](#) et al) in a different light – a light that shows them to be describing Jesus' fundamental belief that we *all* contain “the Son of Man” within us, and that we can *all* be “born anew” therewith (a la [John 3:3-9](#)) whenever we choose to act accordingly.

77 In alignment with the edicts of [Deuteronomy 13:1-5](#) & [Deuteronomy 18:22](#), Jesus openly warns his followers of “false prophets [who] will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray even the elect” ([Matthew 24:24](#) – also [Mark 13:22-23](#)). In [Matthew 7:15-24](#) Jesus tells his listeners that they would be able to tell false prophets by the “bad fruit” that would come from the application of their teachings, especially those who – like Paul – performed “deeds of power in [his] name” and openly rejected the Law (see [Contrast #01](#) on page 50 and [Matthew 7:23](#) – where the Greek word in the ancient manuscripts is *anomia*/Strong's #458 – a word meaning “lawlessness” or “abrogators of the Law”); much akin to the sadness, fear, anger, discord & dissension that notably erupt whenever the condemnatory dogma of Paulinist Christianity takes root in any group or community. In addition, Jesus told his disciples to spread his Gospel throughout the entire world (see [Matthew 28:19](#), [Mark 16:15](#), & [Luke 22:27](#)) while Paul claimed that his (very different) gospel was primarily to be shared with Gentiles (see [Galatians 2:7](#)). And finally, aside from the fact that he clearly designated only 12 men to be his true apostles and never foretold of Paul at all during his ministry, Jesus made it quite clear that his disciples were to teach others to adhere to everything that he had already taught them (see [Matthew 7:21-24](#), [Matthew 16:18](#), & [Matthew 28:19-20](#) et al), whereafter Paul decided to invent his own unique gospel (see [Romans 10:9-10](#) & [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#) et al) and go forth to self-adoringly share only a minute portion of Jesus' Way alongside it (see [Romans 2:16](#), [1 Corinthians 4:16](#), [Galatians 1:24](#), [Philippians 1:7](#), & [1 Thessalonians 1:6](#)).

As such, now that the dichotomy between the teachings of Jesus Christ and the religion of Paul have been thoroughly exposed, a single fundamental choice remains – for Christians and non-Christians alike. For the latter, it must be decided whether or not to enliven the selfless Way of Christ (especially in your dealings with Paulinist Christians). And for the former, it must be decided whether you will continue to attend to the edicts of Paul's modern-day Christian church⁷⁸ *or* follow The Way of Jesus Christ (also especially in your dealings with Paulinist Christians), for truly, it is patently impossible to do both.

Amen ... Let the latter be so.



78 Yes, it is true that Jesus seemingly said “upon this rock I will build my church” to Peter in [Matthew 16:18](#), and yet the Greek word translated here a “church” is the Greek word *ekklesia* (Strong's #1577), a word that at the time referred to a “like-minded spiritual congregation” – i.e. in this instance those who actively followed Jesus' Way, **not** the modern-day religious institution that pilfered his title of Christ. And this makes sense when look to many of his other sayings in the Gospels – among them “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you” ([John 15:19](#)), “I have given them your Word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” ([John 17:14](#)), and “A new commandment I give to you, that you Love one another. Even as I have Loved you so should you also Love one another. **By this** all men will know that you are my disciples: when you show Love for one another” ([John 13:34-35](#)) ... Indeed, Jesus never once told any of his listeners to go forth and build churches. Instead, he told them over & over & over again to humble themselves by going into their communities to care for the downtrodden and be kind to their enemies. Indeed, what was the “rock” upon which Jesus' “church” was to be built in [Matthew 16](#)? What did Jesus tell Peter and his other disciples just before sternly ordering them to **not** tell anyone that he was the Messiah (see [Matthew 16:20](#))? It was the very same “rock” that founded the rest of his teachings on salvation throughout the Gospels – the “rock” that reminded his followers that only those who *serve* will be served; that only those who *do* the loving will of the all-Loving Father will enter the Kingdom of Heaven; that “whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven.” ([Matthew 16:19](#))

“I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with common sense, reason, logic, and intellect has also intended for us to fully forgo their use in favor of following a blinded faith ... Oftentimes the Bible in the hand of one man is worse than a whiskey bottle or a weapon in the hand of another. Indeed some men are so busy worrying about the next life that they've forgotten how to gracefully live in this one.” ~ via Galileo & Harper Lee

*“The body that is sown is perishable, but is raised imperishable.
It is sown in dishonor, but is raised in glory.
It is sown in weakness, but is raised in power”*
~ Paul of Tarsus (1 Corinthians 15:42-43)

*“Blessed are the humble, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven ...
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.”*
~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:3-5)

“I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have hidden these things from the wise & the clever and have revealed them instead to the youngest of children ... Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but rather only those who do the will of my Father in Heaven ... Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. For the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house and yet it did not fall, because it had been founded on stone ... Enter [such a house] through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, while the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life ... He who has ears to listen, let him hear.”

~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:25, Matthew 7:21-25, Matthew 7:13-14 & Matthew 11:15)



*“And I will take one from a thousand
and two from every ten thousand,
and they shall Become a single One.”*
~ Jesus (Gospel of Thomas 23)