1

Introduction

Imagine a hypothetical meeting between Paul and the authors of the four Gospels. Would they agree on the significance of the life of Jesus? Granted, each of the Gospel writers had access to different traditions about Jesus, and each one shaped the story of Jesus so as to highlight certain aspects of his life. But, at the end of the day, it is clear that they each thought that what Jesus said and did was important. Did Paul?

The question arises because Paul and Jesus sound so very different from each other. To some extent this is understandable: Jesus ministered primarily in rural Galilee among Aramaic-speaking peasants, whereas Paul related to Greek-speaking residents of major Greco-Roman cities. Also, Paul saw great importance in something that was still in the future for Jesus—namely, Jesus' own death and resurrection. But even taking these factors into account, we wonder why Paul makes so little explicit reference to Jesus' words or deeds. Based on his letters, he certainly does not appear on the surface to see himself as a typical disciple of a Jewish rabbi who is committed to spreading his master's teaching. The apparent difference between Jesus and Paul has led many—at both scholarly and popular levels—to question whether these two men in fact shared the same faith.

In what follows I intend to address this question by arguing that, even though Paul rarely cites Jesus, he was profoundly shaped by Jesus. That is to say, Paul shared certain core convictions with Jesus that distinguished both of them from their Jewish and Greco-Roman milieux. The argument will be essentially historical in nature. I am not interested in showing the role each person plays within a consistent theological framework, but rather with examining Jesus and Paul as

historical people, and seeing to what extent it is reasonable to believe that the latter was dependent on the former.

In this chapter I will do three things: survey how the relationship between Jesus and Paul has been explained since the middle of the nineteenth century, set forth how I intend to move the debate forward, and explain how I view the New Testament writings as source documents for historical investigation.

Literature Review

A number of useful surveys of the Jesus-Paul debate are available.[1] My purpose here is to identify the salient issues in the debate, and to describe some of the more recent developments.

A Radical Break between Jesus and Paul

The critical question of Paul's relationship to Jesus began in the nineteenth century with the rise of historical criticism.[2] F. C. Baur—known for his division of early Christianity into Pauline and Petrine parties[3]—laid the foundations for the debate by arguing that whereas Jesus challenged people with the moral demands of the kingdom of God, Paul focused on the person of Jesus himself and on his achievement on the cross for the sake of humanity.[4] A wide-ranging debate, however, was not triggered until 1894 when Hans Hinrich Wendt

1. The most useful surveys are Furnish, "Jesus-Paul Debate," 17–50; Dungan, *Sayings of Jesus*, xvii–xxix; Barclay, "Jesus and Paul," 492–503; Fraser, *Jesus and Paul*, 11–32; and Simmons, *Theology of Inclusion*, 8–33. Other surveys can be found in Keegan, "Paul," 450–84; and Riesner, "Paulus," 347–65.

2. Setting the stage from the previous century was H. S. Reimarus, who distinguished between "what the apostles present in their writings from what Jesus himself actually said and taught during his lifetime" (cited in Kümmel, *New Testament*, 89). Also significant, as an indicator of opinion outside the theological community, is F. Nietzsche, who disliked Paul for inventing his own gospel: "The life, example, teachings, death, meaning, and rights of the whole evangel—nothing was left after this hatred-inspired counterfeiter realized what he and he alone could use. *Not* reality, *not* the historical truth! . . . Basically, he had no use whatsoever for the life of the redeemer" (Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, 38–39).

3. Baur, "Christuspartei," 61–206.

4. Baur, *Vorlesungen*, 123–24; see translated excerpts in Kümmel, *New Testament*, 142.

argued that Paul had taken Jesus' message of piety based on the fatherhood of God and had transformed it, according to his own Pharisaic presuppositions, into a universal religion that emphasized a distinctive means of salvation. And in suggesting that Jesus' message was the more powerful of the two, Wendt implied that the church ought to go back past Paul to Jesus.[5] William Wrede added fuel to the fire by arguing that in moving from the religion of Jesus, which called people to yield their whole selves to God, to the theology of Paul, which stressed the importance of believing in the acts of God—"the incarnation, death, and resurrection of a celestial being"—Paul became "the second founder of Christianity."[6] Wilhelm Heitmüller, observing that even if Paul cites some sayings of Jesus, he does not cite them *as* sayings of Jesus, suggested that the difference between Jesus and Paul was due to the latter's involvement in the Hellenistic Christian community that had distanced itself somewhat from the Palestinian community.[7] This prepared the way for Wilhelm Bousset and others in the history of religions school to explore other ways in which Paul may have been shaped by Hellenism, with particular attention being given to mystery religions, from which, Bousset argued, Paul derived his view of a mystical union with Christ.[8] Finally, Albert Schweitzer suggested that Paul's mysticism came not from mystery religions but from Jewish apocalyptic: when Paul saw that Jesus' expectation for the kingdom had failed to materialize, he reinterpreted that expectation so that believers would now enter into a mystical relationship with Christ and thereby enter into an entirely new reality.[9]

Responses to the Radical Perspective

In response to these views, those who have defended a line of continuity between Jesus and Paul have done so in one of three ways.

5. Wendt, "Lehre des Paulus," 1–78.

6. Wrede, *Paul*, 163, 179. For a contemporary expression of a similar view, see Crossan, *Birth of Christianity*, 407–17, who, in discussing the development of the traditions of the early church, speaks of the sayings of the historical Jesus forming what he calls a "Life Tradition," whereas the preaching of Paul that focuses on Jesus' death and resurrection forms a "Death Tradition."

7. Heitmüller, "Problem," 321–22, 330.

8. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*.

9. Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 98–99, 109–14, 141, 269–72, 334.

Continuity with Development

The first kind of response has been to argue that the difference in Paul is not a diversion from the teaching of Jesus, but rather a development of it. The person most often associated with this view is Adolf von Harnack who argued that in freeing Christianity from Judaism, and transforming Jesus' message of the fatherhood of God into a universal religion, Paul showed that he "was the one who understood the Master and continued his work."[10] Johannes Weiss further argued that Paul's dependence on Jesus is evident in the transformation that he experienced: his new understanding of the Messiah came as a result of reflection, not on his Jewish heritage, but on "the human personality of Jesus."[11] Paul's experience of the grace of God, his perception of the fatherhood of God, and his understanding of Christian ethics, are all inspired by the earthly Jesus.[12] Arnold Meyer gave expression to a view that would become standard within liberal Protestant theology: the central point of Paul's gospel—that Christ died for our sins—stems from Jesus not because this is what Jesus preached, but because it is an interpretation of Jesus' death in light of the forgiving love that characterized his life; that is to say, Paul's gospel was in keeping with "the Spirit of Jesus."[13] Thus, Meyer could say, on the one hand, that "[o]ur religion in its essence is derived from Christ" while, on the other, that Paul "though not the sole founder was still the principal founder of that form of Christianity which alone proved capable of subduing the wide world to Christ."[14]

Consistent in Theology

The second way in which scholars sought to defend Paul's dependence on Jesus was to look for a line of continuity in their theology.

Following the lead of Heitmüller, Rudolf Bultmann assumed that Paul was shaped by the Hellenistic wing of the church and consequently was not influenced, either directly or indirectly, by the histori-

10. Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* 176.
11. Weiss, *Paul and Jesus*, 31.
12. Ibid., 92–96, 118.
13. Meyer, *Jesus or Paul?* 103.
14. Ibid., 28.

cal Jesus.[15] According to Bultmann, the importance of Jesus lay not in his teaching of new ideas about God, in a new morality, in his example of living, or in his achievements, but rather in his call for people to make a decision for God. And through his preaching of the cross Paul evoked this same encounter with God by challenging people to submit themselves to God.[16] But even if the details of Jesus' life were not important to Paul, Bultmann still found a number of commonalities between the two: an eschatology of the two ages; an emphasis on love, with a focus on one's intentions rather than merely on outward actions; the identification of the ultimate sin being that of boasting; the call to live sacrificially, to give up what one has for the sake of the kingdom, to live "as though not";[17] and a view of God's grace that is freely available to all, but that at the same time must not be taken for granted.[18]

Werner Kümmel tried to give a balanced assessment of both similarities and differences: (i) both Jesus and Paul speak of God's graciousness and his judgment; (ii) both declare that the era of the law has come to an end, although Paul goes further in stating that the purpose of the law was to promote sin; (iii) while Paul grounds his message of salvation not in Jesus' call to repentance or in his fellowship with sinners, but rather in his death and resurrection, the core of both of their messages is "that God has done the utmost to save men from perdition"; (iv) while there are significant differences in Christology, the differences are reduced when we see that Paul's christological categories express "the conviction that God himself achieves his eschatological salvation in Jesus Christ," which is essentially the same as Jesus' claim "that God's eschatological kingdom became reality in [his own] teaching and working"; (v) the practices of baptism and the Lord's Supper connect the participants with "the salvation event initiated by Jesus"; (vi) with regard to the church, the idea of being incorporated into the body of Christ meant for Paul "participation in God's eschatological saving work that is begun in Christ"; (vii) Paul does see humanity "as farther removed from God than does Jesus," but this does not result in

15. Bultmann, "Significance," 220–23.

16. Ibid., 235–46. Both Fuchs, *Zur Frage*, and Jüngel, *Paulus und Jesus*, develop this view further by describing the preaching of both Jesus and Paul as a "speech-event" (*Sprachereignis*) in which people encounter the gracious invitation of God.

17. 1 Cor 7:29–31.

18. Bultmann, "Jesus and Paul," 183–201.

a conflict between the respective cores of Jesus' and Paul's messages; and (viii) the one fundamental difference is that whereas Jesus understood himself as both messenger and agent of the kingdom of God, Paul saw himself only as messenger and as servant of his Lord—hence his focus on Christology rather than on the kingdom of God.[19]

Evidence of the Jesus Tradition in Paul

The third form of response to the arguments of Baur and Wrede came in the form of attempts to detect evidence of the Jesus tradition in Paul's letters. The name most associated with this project is Alfred Resch who claimed to have identified 925 allusions in Paul's letters to sayings of Jesus.[20] For most, however, Resch's compilation was an example of "parallelomania,"[21] and did not persuade many who doubted Paul's dependence on Jesus to begin with.

Recent Developments

With the advent, in the 1970s, of renewed confidence in historical Jesus studies,[22] together with the emergence of new perspectives on Paul,[23] investigation of the relationship between Jesus and Paul received some fresh impetus. Some indications of this renewed interest include: a 1984 Festschrift for Francis Wright Beare entitled *From Jesus to Paul*;[24] a series of seminars under the title "Paulus und Jesus" held at

19. Kümmel, *Theology*, 244–54, citations from pp. 251, 252, and 253.

20. Resch, *Der Paulinismus*. In addition, Resch claimed another 133 allusions in Ephesians, 100 in the Pastoral Epistles, and 64 in the Pauline speeches of Acts.

21. Although Sandmel, "Parallelomania," 1–13, does not specifically refer to Resch, his warning against making exaggerated and uncritical claims with regard to verbal parallels in early Jewish and Christian literature is appropriate here.

22. See the account of the development of historical Jesus studies in, for example, Wright, *Jesus*, 3–124.

23. Two perspectives in particular ought to be mentioned here: (i) the shift from interpreting Paul primarily in Hellenistic terms, to seeing him against a Jewish background (see below, pp. 231); and (ii) the watershed work of Sanders—*Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977)—which argues that the Judaism of the first century was not a legalistic system devoid of grace, and that therefore Paul's gospel of grace and his critique of the law (assuming he did not misunderstand Judaism) needed to be reassessed.

24. Richardson and Hurd, eds., *From Jesus to Paul*.

the annual meetings of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas from 1984–1988,[25] followed shortly thereafter by a volume of essays edited by Alexander Wedderburn that sought to describe the current state of scholarship on the Jesus-Paul question;[26] a 1990 collection of several previously-published articles by James Dunn that, taken together, argue for a connection between Jesus and Paul based on the Jewish law;[27] a popular level book by Victor Paul Furnish discussing the issues involved;[28] a substantial volume by David Wenham, published in 1995, exploring both verbal and thematic connections;[29] a colloquium held at Truett Theological Seminary in 2004 at which six scholars explored new ways to relate Paul to Jesus;[30] and several doctoral dissertations—of particular note are those by David Dungan,[31] Biörn Fjärstedt,[32] Michael Thompson,[33] William Simmons,[34] and Maureen Yeung[35]—in addition to numerous journal articles.

The dissertations by Dungan and Fjärstedt in the 1970s, both focusing on 1 Corinthians, led to a renewed interest in finding echoes of the Jesus tradition in Paul. In the subsequent two decades, several articles and books were written arguing for or against specific verbal links between Paul and Jesus, sometimes with suggestions of blocks of tradition with which Paul may have been familiar. Those participating in this debate can generally be classified into one of three groups—minimalists, moderates, and maximalists—depending on how much Jesus tradition they thought could be found in Paul. For example:

25. The topics covered were: Fundamental Problems in the Relationship of Paul to the Jesus Tradition (1984); Law and the Will of God in Paul and Jesus (1985); The Material Correspondence between Jesus and Paul in Proclamation and Practice (1986); Imitation of Christ and Pauline Christology (1987); and History, Historicity and the Historical Jesus in the Christology of Paul (1988); see Wedderburn, "Preface," *Paul and Jesus*, 7.

26. Wedderburn, ed., *Paul and Jesus*.

27. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law*. Some of these papers were presented at the SNTS *Paulus und Jesus* seminars.

28. Furnish, *Jesus*.

29. Wenham, *Paul*.

30. Still, ed., *Jesus and Paul Reconnected*.

31. Dungan, *Sayings of Jesus*.

32. Fjärstedt, *Synoptic Tradition*.

33. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*.

34. Simmons, "Jesus and Paul"; revised and published as *Theology of Inclusion*.

35. Yeung, *Faith in Jesus and Paul*.

(i) Nikolaus Walter,[36] Frans Neirynck,[37] and Christopher Tuckett[38] each challenge the legitimacy of specific claims that Paul was influenced by the Jesus tradition; (ii) Dale Allison,[39] James Dunn,[40] and Victor Paul Furnish[41] accept a limited number of Pauline allusions to Jesus; and (iii) Seyoon Kim,[42] Michael Thompson,[43] and David Wenham[44] all argue that there are extensive examples of echoes of Jesus' sayings in Paul's writings.

A parallel line of inquiry has focused on Paul's knowledge of the story of Jesus' life. Furnish acknowledges a very limited list of details that Paul knew about Jesus,[45] whereas Wenham is more optimistic in finding evidence that Paul was familiar with numerous aspects of Jesus' life.[46]

Alongside this renewed interest in Paul's knowledge of the Jesus tradition, attempts have been made to find other kinds of connections between Jesus and Paul. First, some have emphasized the *significance* of the story of Jesus. Larry Hurtado, for example, argues that in the hymn in Phil 2:5–11, Paul portrays Jesus as an example to follow: the words δοῦλος, ταπεινόω, and ὑπήκοος, used to describe Jesus in verses 7–8, recall Paul's description both of himself and of the Christian life, and recall a key theme in the story of Jesus.[47] Christian Wolff argues that Paul saw his own experience of deprivation, his renunciation of marriage, his humble service, and his suffering persecution, as concrete examples in which he imitated the life of Jesus.[48] And Alexander Wedderburn suggests that the story of Jesus was for Paul a myth that functioned on a theoretical level in developing an other-worldly per-

36. Walter, "Paul," 51–80.
37. Neirynck, "Paul," 265–321.
38. Tuckett, "Paul," 376–81; idem., "Synoptic Tradition," 160–82.
39. Allison, "Pauline Epistles," 1–32.
40. Dunn, "Jesus Tradition in Paul," 155–78.
41. Furnish, *Jesus according to Paul*, 40–65.
42. Kim, "Jesus," 474–92.
43. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*.
44. Wenham, *Paul*.
45. Furnish, *Jesus according to Paul*, 19–39.
46. Wenham, *Paul*, chap. 8; idem., "Story of Jesus," 297–311.
47. Hurtado, "Jesus' Death," 413–33.
48. Wolff, "Humility," 145–60.

spective of Jesus—"Christ had to be like this to do what he did; he needed to be amongst other things a universal representative of all humanity, and so his nature was described in such terms as would set out this all-inclusive role"—and on a practical level in instructing believers on how to live.[49]

Second, some scholars have drawn *missiological* connections between Jesus and Paul. Seán Freyne suggests that Jesus and Paul shared a similar vision with regard to the restoration of Israel that focused on national geographic expansion rather than on the setting up of religious or social boundaries designed to separate the people of God from outsiders.[50] Other studies have developed along similar lines, focusing on the role of the Hellenists in shaping Paul's perspective and in possibly serving as a bridge between him and Jesus. Charles Scobie argues that Paul's sense of the present being the time of fulfillment of the prophetic hope for the ingathering of the nations goes back to elements in Jesus' ministry and is developed by the missional activity of the Hellenists.[51] Building on the view of Heikki Räisänen that the Hellenists had accommodated Gentile converts by not requiring circumcision,[52] Wedderburn and William Simmons propose that justification for this circumcision-free gospel Paul promoted so strongly was found in Jesus' practice of welcoming outcasts: "what Paul stated systematically, Jesus had already lived, in his attitudes and in his activities."[53] And John Barclay reflects on this same situation and suggests that Jesus and Paul share a radical understanding of the grace of God: "Both enact and express a paradigm of God's grace that is simultaneously welcoming to the lost outsider and deeply challenging to the insider."[54]

Third, attempts have been made to find connections between Jesus and Paul by using *sociological* categories. Dunn makes the point that, from a sociological perspective, the early church would have

49. Wedderburn, "Paul and the Story of Jesus," 161–89, citation from p. 187.

50. Freyne, "Jesus-Paul Debate," 143–63.

51. Scobie, "Jesus or Paul," 47–60.

52. Räisänen, "The 'Hellenists,'" 149–202; an earlier draft of this article was presented at the Jesus and Paul Seminar of the SNTS meeting in Trondheim in 1985. Cf. Dunn, "Mark 2.1–3.6," 10–36.

53. Wedderburn, "Similarity and Continuity," 117–43, citation from p. 131; cf. Simmons, *Theology of Inclusion*.

54. Barclay, "Caustic Grace," 1–17.

needed traditions in order to form its own identity and to distinguish itself from other movements.[55] Bruce Longenecker has suggested there may be continuity in terms of caring for the poor.[56] And Scott Bartchy argues that both Jesus and Paul challenge values associated with patriarchy: they reject patriarchal authority and domination; they create communities based on sibling-like kinship rather than on blood relations; and they redefine honor and power, placing the emphasis on service rather than on competition.[57]

Assessment

This survey is by no means complete, but it does give a sense of the shape the debate has taken and of some more recent lines of development. Although first written forty-five years ago, Furnish's assessment of the Jesus-Paul debate is still worth repeating.[58] He suggested that three firm conclusions could be drawn from the research at that time, each of which leads to further questions. First, Paul reveals relatively little of the life and teachings of Jesus. Why is this? Second, the attempt to identify parallels between Paul and the Gospels will not solve the problem of the relationship between Paul and Jesus. However, we can still ask whether there are "material correspondences"[59] that can be detected between Jesus and Paul. And third, attention needs to be given to the broader context of the development of early Christianity and not be limited only to the two figures of Paul and Jesus. How did the various Jewish and Greco-Roman milieux shape the messages of Jesus and Paul? And finally, Furnish notes that a fundamental question will always be, "what accounts for the distinctive features of Paul's gospel?"[60]

55. Dunn, *Theology*, 185–89; cf. Scroggs, "Earliest Christian Communities," 1–23, who argues that the early church functioned as a religious sect, and who shows how several of the Jesus traditions would have addressed specific issues concerning the life and identity of the sect.

56. Longenecker, "Good News," 37–65.

57. Bartchy, "Father," 35–47; idem., "Patriarchy," 68–78; cf. Bauckham, "Kingdom," 1–26.

58. Furnish, "Debate," 43–47; originally published in *BJRL* 47 (1964–65): 342–81.

59. Ibid., 46.

60. Ibid., 47–50, citation from p. 47.

Regarding his first conclusion, due to the lack of evidence, we may never be able to speak with confidence as to why Paul does not refer to the Jesus tradition in his letters.[61] It is doubtful that the reason Paul does not cite Jesus is simply because he did not witness the life of Jesus firsthand, since he does explicitly cite Jesus on a few occasions,[62] and on another occasion it seems he would have cited him if he had known a relevant saying.[63] It is significant to note, however, as Michael Thompson has shown, that Paul is no exception in regard to utilizing few citations of Jesus when compared with other New Testament writers and the Apostolic Fathers.[64] Regarding Furnish's second conclusion, I would agree that many of the parallels proposed are speculative and subjective; however, I would not agree that the effort to find verbal echoes of the Jesus tradition in Paul's writings has been fruitless. Indeed, it would be difficult to argue that Paul was fundamentally shaped by Jesus if we could not find *any* evidence in Paul of Jesus' sayings. Furthermore, some of the more recent proposals noted above to find theological, missiological, and sociological links between Jesus and Paul are significant in demonstrating Paul's dependence on Jesus. Regarding the third conclusion, some progress has been made since the mid-1960s concerning the development of the early church and the respective contexts in which to understand Jesus and Paul, and this will become evident in the following study.

A Way Forward

General Considerations

In order to move the Jesus-Paul debate forward, I suggest three things are needed. First, appreciation must be given to the profound developments in both historical Jesus and Pauline studies since Furnish wrote his assessment. A renaissance in historical Jesus research began about 1980 that has been characterized by a much more optimistic view of the possibility of speaking confidently of what Jesus said and did

61. Although, I will make some proposals in the Conclusions (see below, pp. 337–38).

62. 1 Cor 7:10–11; 9:14; cf. 11:23–25.

63. 1 Cor 7:25.

64. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 37–63; cf. Riesner, "Paulus," 356–59.

than had characterized scholarship earlier in the twentieth century. Scholars are now intent on understanding Jesus' aims: How did he view his own ministry? What was he attempting to achieve? And, most significantly, how are we to understand him within his Jewish context? Similarly, Pauline scholars have become much more interested in Paul's Jewishness and his continuing concern for Israel. For example, in his widely influential book, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, E. P. Sanders has argued, contrary to much scholarly and popular opinion, that the Judaism of the first century was not a legalistic system devoid of grace, and thus Paul's gospel of grace and his critique of the law either seriously misunderstand Judaism or they need to be radically reassessed. While some aspects of this "New Perspective" on Paul may be open to challenge, overall it represents a significant advance in Pauline studies. Taking account of these two developments will certainly open up new possibilities for the Jesus-Paul debate than were available prior to the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Second, the focus of attention needs to be on matters that were for Jesus and Paul of fundamental importance. This would address one of the frequent criticisms of many attempts to find connections between Jesus and Paul—namely, that they focus on peripheral matters, or at least on matters that seem not to be integrally related to the heart of each person's mission and mindset. Thompson, for example, argues that there are several references to the Jesus tradition in Rom 12–15 and so he concludes that "dominical teachings significantly influenced Paul."[65] He finds one probable allusion—"nothing is unclean in itself"[66]—in addition to numerous probable echoes: the injunction to "Bless those who persecute you,"[67] the fulfilling of the law by means of love,[68] the prohibition against judging,[69] the identification of the kingdom of God with righteousness, peace, and joy as opposed to food and drink,[70] the warning against placing a stumbling block in the way of a brother,[71] the admonition to render to everyone what they are due,[72]

65. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 238.
66. Rom 14:14; cf. Mark 7:15; Matt 15:11.
67. Rom 12:14; cf. Matt 5:44//Luke 6:28.
68. Rom 13:8–10; cf. Mark 12:28–34//Matt 22:34–40.
69. Rom 14:13a; cf. Matt 7:1//Luke 6:37a.
70. Rom 14:17; cf. Luke 14:12–24//Matt 22:1–10 and Matt 12:28//Luke 11:20.
71. Rom 14:13b; cf. Matt 18:6//Mark 9:42//Luke 17:2.
72. Rom 13:7; cf. Mark 12:17//Matt 22:21//Luke 20:25.

the forbidding of retaliation,[73] the exhortation to genuine love,[74] and the eschatological perspective.[75] While these are all very important teachings, they are generally paraenetic in nature and, I would argue, they do not encapsulate the distinctive core convictions of either Jesus or Paul. What leaves skeptics unconvinced of Paul's dependence on Jesus is that the heart of Paul's gospel and the heart of his mission do not seem to derive from the heart of Jesus' ministry. Attention, therefore, needs to focus on matters that were of fundamental importance for Jesus and Paul.

And third, while many topics could be investigated to try to find lines of connection between Jesus and Paul, I suggest it is important to engage those scholars who currently do not think Paul was dependent on Jesus, and to keep them at the table, as it were, for as long as possible.[76] To this end, I suggest for strategic reasons, that we step very carefully when dealing with certain contentious issues—particularly issues where scholars have entrenched positions on what can be reliably ascribed to Jesus. For example, in comparing Paul's letters to the Gospels, it is conceivable how connections between Jesus and Paul could be found around issues such as, say, the significance of Jesus' death, his identity, and eschatology. However, while such issues are certainly very important, the scholarly fault lines that run through the debates concerning them are such that it is doubtful whether any progress in the Jesus-Paul problem would be made if they were the focus of attention. At least if we deal with such issues, we will need to be well aware of where the contentious matters lie. Some may complain that this step is in tension with the second point I made above, and to some extent it may be. The tension will need to be faced, however, if we want to address issues that were central to both Jesus and Paul *and* to have our discussion engage those who seriously disagree.

73. Rom 12:17–19; cf. similar emphasis in the Sermon on the Mount/Plain.

74. Rom 12:9; cf. Jesus' warnings against hypocrisy.

75. Rom 13:11–12; cf. Matt 16:1–4; Luke 12:56; 19:41–44; Mark 13:33.

76. In 1994 Dunn, "Jesus tradition," 155, commented: "The largest consensus still maintains that Paul knew or cared little about the ministry of Jesus apart from his death and resurrection."

Specific Shape of the Argument

I intend to make the case that Paul was fundamentally shaped by certain perspectives that Jesus expressed in his ministry. This would fall into the quest for what Furnish called "material correspondences" between Jesus and Paul.[77] I will not necessarily be looking for common sayings, but for a common mindset[78]—that is, for issues on which Jesus and Paul shared a core commitment, even though they may have expressed their commitments differently.

In order to determine what issues might be appropriate for such investigation, I note, as a starting point, the three images that Richard Hays has proposed as being central to the New Testament[79]—community, cross, and new creation[80]—and that, he argues, express the fundamental story to which its writers bear witness, a story that he describes as follows:

> The God of Israel, the creator of the world, has acted (astoundingly) to rescue a lost and broken world through the death and resurrection of Jesus; the full scope of that rescue is not yet apparent, but God has created a community of witnesses to this good news, the church. While awaiting the grand conclusion of the story, the church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is called to reenact the loving obedience of Jesus Christ and thus to serve as a sign of God's redemptive purposes for the world.[81]

Hays proposes these three as better images than, say, love or liberation, in that they are more widespread in the New Testament

77. See above, p. 10.

78. By "mindset" I mean the particular set of beliefs and aims of a person. Wright, *New Testament*, 110, helpfully defines mindset as "the individual subset of, or variant on, the worldview held by the society or societies to which the individual belongs," and he further describes worldview as consisting of a combination of, and interaction among, stories, praxis, symbols, and answers to questions that would be fundamental in any society—specifically, the questions "who are we, where are we, what is wrong, and what is the solution?" (122–26). And in his *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 467–72, Wright adds a fifth question in light of the Jewish context: What time is it? Cf. Walsh and Middleton, *Transforming Vision*, 31–39.

79. It should be noted that Hays's survey of the New Testament literature does not include Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, James, 1 or 2 Peter, or Jude.

80. Hays, *Moral Vision*.

81. Ibid., 193.

and concrete, and thus are less susceptible to misuse.[82] "Community" speaks of God's purpose in redeeming and forming a covenant relationship with a corporate body as opposed to focusing only on individuals; "cross" points to the climax of Jesus' life and provides the paradigm for discipleship; and "new creation" expresses the power of the resurrection that has broken into this world and provides both a taste of the age to come and hope for full redemption. That these three images are widespread in the New Testament suggests that (i) they expressed matters that were of fundamental importance to early Christians; and

82. Ibid., 200–204. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, challenges Hays on this point and argues that love should be the focus of New Testament ethics. Rather than taking a canonical approach, as Hays does, Burridge begins with the historical Jesus and his double command to love God and neighbor, expressed both in Jesus' words and actions, and then traces this theme in Paul, the Gospels, and Acts. He contends that it is better to use love as a focus than community, cross, and new creation because "references to 'love' are many times more frequent," and he suggests that Hays derives his three images primarily from Paul "and then applies them briefly to the rest of the New Testament" (ibid., 54). While I would certainly not want to question the importance of love in the New Testament, I do not think Burridge has done justice to Hays's proposal. Burridge's comment that the three images come primarily from Paul is not an accurate assessment of Hays's survey where he demonstrates how community, cross, and new creation appear throughout the New Testament (Hays, *Moral Vision*, 60–157). But further, Hays argues (i) that the vocabulary of love is not prominent in Mark, Acts, Hebrews, or Revelation, suggesting that the "motif [of love] cannot serve as the common denominator for New Testament ethics" (ibid., 202); (ii) that love is more abstract than community, cross, and new creation, meaning that what is meant by love is brought into sharper focus by these latter three images; and (iii) that the importance of the previous point can be seen in popular discourse today where love "has lost its power of discrimination, having become a cover for all manner of vapid self-indulgence" (ibid.). Thus, the issue is not about the *importance* of love as a moral imperative, but about the *usefulness* of love as an image for synthesizing New Testament material and for conveying clearly the distinctive message of that material. I think Hays is right that the images of community, cross, and new creation do this better than love. And, although Hays uses a canonical approach, I hope to demonstrate that his images can usefully be employed in a historical analysis as well.

Cranfield, "Response," 171–72, agrees with Hays's images but suggests he should have also included the images of creation and of Jesus' lordship. While one can see how these additions may be important for theological discussions, I suspect they would not be helpful for historical ones: it would be difficult to show from what little Jesus and Paul say about creation that they held a view in common that was distinct from the views of other Jews; and with regard to Jesus' lordship, it is very controversial when trying to distinguish between Jesus' own view and the views of his followers after the resurrection.

(ii) they arose very early in the life of the church, before Christians began to disperse, perhaps even going back to Jesus himself.

But these three images are still too broad to be covered adequately in a study of this scope. Furthermore, in the previous section I noted that I wanted to choose topics carefully so as to avoid, as much as possible, major fault lines in scholarship. Thus, if we think of Hays's images as lenses through which we see central aspects of the early Christian movement, I intend to narrow the focus in each case by selecting only part of the field of vision. In particular: with regard to community, I will look at the *kind* of people Jesus and Paul associated with, and will draw a connection between Jesus' practice of having table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners and Paul's mission to the Gentiles. With the image of the cross, I will focus on ways in which both Jesus and Paul expressed the irony that dying leads to life. And with regard to the image of new creation, I will consider how Jesus and Paul thought of the time in which they lived as, to some extent, a realization of the hopes of Israel. In each case I will argue that Paul is dependent on Jesus. That these issues were for Jesus matters of core commitment is indicated by his perseverance in expressing them even in the face of opposition. That they were central also to Paul's mindset seems obvious enough: Paul sees himself as apostle to the Gentiles, he places significant emphasis on the cross, and his eschatological perspective shapes much of his teaching. I make no claim that these topics are all that could be discussed under the rubrics of community, cross, and new creation, or that there are not other profitable approaches; I only claim that these three topics were important to Jesus and Paul. And, with the apparent independence of these topics, it may strengthen the overall argument by pursuing three lines of inquiry instead of just one, in case one or two lines fail to convince.

In order to make such an argument, three things need to be established in each case: (i) the authenticity and significance of specific sayings or acts; (ii) a family resemblance between Jesus and Paul;[83] and

83. I recognize that "family resemblance" is a somewhat slippery term involving subjective evaluation. While some will find a resemblance between A, B, and C in Jesus and a, b, and c in Paul, others will not (see, for example, the debate between Allison, "Pauline Epistles," 1–32; and Neirynck, "Paul," 265–321, on Paul's use of the Jesus tradition). Subjectivity, however, cannot be avoided; it is the nature of historical investigation. But other aspects of my argument will seek to lessen the uncertainty in the subjective assessment.

(iii) a plausible explanation that shows why Jesus is the most likely source for Paul. Regarding the third point, depending on the evidence available, the emphasis may be on tracing the historical connection between Jesus and Paul, or on ruling out the possibility of other influences on Paul. My general procedure, therefore, will be, for each of the images, to establish the authenticity of the relevant aspect of Jesus' ministry, and then follow this with an argument that shows that a corresponding aspect in Paul likely derives from Jesus.

Use of Ancient Sources

Since I am developing a historical argument, a word on my use of source material is in order. Where I have used translations, I have generally followed widely accepted and available editions.[84] Since readers may not be familiar with ancient non-biblical sources, I have provided in Appendix A a brief description of each writing cited, together with its approximate date. Naturally, the study will draw heavily from the New Testament, and so a comment on this material is warranted.

With regard to Jesus, while we have no primary sources, we do have numerous ancient secondary sources—several accounts of the life of Jesus known as gospels, a few references elsewhere in the New Testament, plus a smattering of references in Jewish and pagan literature.[85] There is widespread agreement that the four canonical Gospels are the best source of historical information about Jesus, and within those Gospels other sources have been identified, the most important of which is Q—identified as the non-Markan material that Matthew and Luke have in common.[86] I share the majority view that the two-document hypothesis is the best solution to the source-critical problem of the Synoptic Gospels. For a number of reasons, however, I think caution needs to be exercised in building theories on Q. First, we need to realize that, while acknowledged by a large majority to be the best solution to the Synoptic Problem, the two-documentary hypothesis

84. See above p. xi.

85. For a full discussion of the sources, see Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 1:41–166; Charlesworth and Evans, "Jesus in the Agrapha," 479–533; and Evans, "Jesus in Non-Christian Sources," 443–78.

86. For convenience, the remainders of Matthew and Luke, after Mark and Q have been accounted for, are frequently referred to as M and L respectively. Some scholars also believe there was a signs source used by John.

is in fact not without its problems: for example, there are texts where Matthew and Luke agree with each other against Mark.[87] Second, while we may infer with some confidence that a document existed in the early church containing the material we have defined above as Q—consisting primarily of some of Jesus' sayings, but also including some narrative material,[88] one healing account,[89] and a few parables[90]—we may *not* infer with confidence what this document did *not* contain or that it existed in only one form. Based on both Matthew's and Luke's selective treatment of Mark,[91] we ought to assume that they treated Q in the same way,[92] and that therefore there was likely some material in the document Q that we do not know about. And third, while we may reasonably infer that if such a document existed, it would have been valued by a community of Christians, it does *not* follow that even if we knew the full contents of Q we could conclude that these Christians did not value anything that was not in Q—such as Jesus' death and resurrection.[93] Needless to say, I find the attempts to identify stages of development in Q—an original wisdom layer supplemented later by a prophetic and apocalyptic layer[94]—even more speculative.[95]

87. For a detailed discussion of the problems and the various solutions offered see Sanders and Davies, *Synoptic Gospels*, 67–119.

88. Jesus' temptation (Matt 4:1–11//Luke 4:1–13).

89. Healing the centurion's slave (Matt 7:28a; 8:5–10, 13//Luke 7:1–10).

90. Parables of the mustard seed and leaven (Matt 13:31–33//Luke 13:18–21), of the great banquet (Matt 22:2–10//Luke 14:16–24), of the lost sheep (Matt 18:12–14//Luke 15:4–7), and of the talents/pounds (Matt 25:14–20//Luke 19:12–27).

91. According to Sanders and Davies, *Synoptic Gospels*, 53, Matthew included about 90 percent of Mark while Luke included just over 50 percent.

92. Evans, "Authenticating," 6–10, illustrates the problem well by imagining a scenario in which we had only Matthew, Luke, and Q and tried to determine the contents of Mark. He notes that the resultant reconstruction would differ from our Gospel of Mark in a number of ways, one of the most significant being with regard to Mark's Christology: we would lack Mark's opening verse and the centurion's confession at the cross (Mark 15:39), and Jesus' affirmative and provoking response to the High Priest's question—"Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark 14:61)—would be somewhat muted.

93. Hurtado, "Jesus' Death," 416 n. 7, argues, based on the assumption that both Matthew and Luke used Q extensively, that Q circulated widely and that neither Matthew nor Luke had significant theological concerns with its content.

94. As, for example, in Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, and in Mack, *Lost Gospel*.

95. For example, see Horsley, "*Logoi Prophētōn*, 195–209, who argues that Q is better understood as being fundamentally prophetic in character.

Recently debate has also focused on whether the *Gospel of Thomas* represents another source for some of Jesus' sayings.[96] John Dominic Crossan, for example, is representative of those who take *Thomas* to be a collection of Jesus' sayings that pre-dates the canonical Gospels (Crossan places the earliest edition in the 50s CE), giving us a very early (and thus presumably more accurate) portrayal of Jesus.[97] Others, however, argue that *Thomas* is dependent on the canonical Gospels and therefore much later in origin. James Charlesworth and Craig Evans, for example, note that *Thomas* contains both (i) material that is distinctive to Matthew, Luke, and John, and (ii) redactional material from Matthew and Luke.[98] Furthermore, the earliest complete text of the *Gospel of Thomas*, which is part of the Nag Hammadi Library and has been dated ca. 400, clearly displays gnostic tendencies.[99] No doubt the debate will continue.[100] Caution, therefore, seems to be called for when using *Thomas* to establish sayings of Jesus, realizing that (i) it may, in some instances, contain a tradition independent to what we find in the Gospels, while in others it may be dependent on the canonical Gospels; and (ii) that the principal text we have has its own theological tendency. Thus, texts will need to be treated on a case by case basis.

Having identified the sources, however, it is noted that the Gospels do not always agree with each other, and so it is supposed that the Jesus tradition was shaped to some extent by the needs and perspectives of the early church, whether in the process of oral transmission (form criticism) or in the final composition of the Gospels themselves (redaction criticism). Consequently, so it is argued, the Gospels must be read critically in order to look beyond the Jesus of the early church and to discover the "real" Jesus of Nazareth. To this

96. For a survey of the debate, see Fallon and Cameron, "Gospel of Thomas," 4195–4251.

97. Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 427–28; see also Hedrick, "Thomas," 39–56; Patterson, "Thomas," 86–88.

98. Charlesworth and Evans, "Jesus in the Agrapha," 496–503. See also Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 1:123–39; Snodgrass, "Thomas," 19–38; Tuckett, "Thomas," 132–57.

99. Compare, for example, the opening words of the Nag Hammadi text—"These are the secret words"—with those from the earlier POx 654—"These are the words." See Blatz, "Introduction," 111–14.

100. Arguing in favor of *Thomas* being dependent on the Gospels are Tuckett, "Thomas," 132–57; and Snodgrass, "Thomas," 19–38; arguing for *Thomas'* independence are Hedrick, "Thomas," 39–56; and Patterson, "Thomas," 86–88.

end, scholars have developed a series of criteria in order to identify historically authentic elements within the Gospels. Gerd Theissen and Dagmar Winter have offered a helpful critique and reformulation of these criteria that avoids many of the problems in earlier formulations.[101] They propose a set of criteria that have in view a historically plausible portrayal of Jesus. Their criteria are divided into two sets: the first asks what we can plausibly infer about Jesus based on what we know of the historical effects of his life (or, perhaps better put, based on what we know that followed). Here they employ (i) the criterion of dissimilarity to the tendencies in the early church (or, as they put it, "opposition to traditional bias"),[102] and (ii) the criterion of coherence of independent sources (the sources being different documents or different forms or genres). Thus, a piece of tradition is more likely to be authentic if Christians repeated it even though it was in tension with Christian beliefs or practices, or if it appears in multiple sources or genres. The second set of criteria asks what we can plausibly infer about Jesus based on the fact that he was a first-century Jew and on what we know of first-century Palestine. Here the authors speak both of (i) the criterion of contextual appropriateness (the extent to which a specific Jesus tradition is explicable within a Jewish context) and (ii) the criterion of contextual distinctiveness (those aspects of Jesus that distinguished him from others but that are still explicable within a Jewish framework). Thus, a piece of tradition is more likely to be authentic if it is both explicable within and distinctive from the first-century Jewish context.

While Theissen and Winter's formulation is helpful, it should be noted that all such criteria are better suited for establishing authenticity than inauthenticity. That is, if an element in a Gospel fails the authenticity tests, then the criteria actually have no comment whatsoever on the historicity of that element. This point, as obvious as it may seem, has not always been recognized in historical Jesus research. While it may be true that a piece of tradition that stands in tension with the early church is more likely to be authentic than not, the converse does not necessarily follow: it does not follow that a tradition that is not in tension with the early church is not likely to be authentic. It is

101. Theissen and Winter, *Quest*.

102. See Holmén, "Double Dissimilarity," 47–80, for a critique of the criterion of dissimilarity with regard to first-century Judaism.

quite possible, for example, for the early church to have been shaped by something that Jesus said that, through the accidents of history, we happen to have recorded in only one Gospel. Claims of inauthenticity, I suggest, are based on prior judgments—judgments about the shape of Second Temple Judaism or of early Christianity; about what kinds of events are possible; about the theological purposes, and thus historical reliability, of the authors; and about the transmission process of the Jesus tradition in the early church. And often underlying all of this is an epistemology stemming from the Enlightenment that focuses on the knowledge of the individual, as opposed to the community, and that stresses the importance of the individual being able to verify all claims to knowledge him- or herself, and that therefore minimizes the role of testimony—trusting what someone else says.[103]

With regard to the theological perspective of the author, and the supposed influence this might have on his shaping of the tradition, we should note that in fact there is no "historical Jesus" devoid of someone's perspective. There are facts of Jesus' life that historians may study—words that Jesus said, things that he did—but any collection of those facts involves selection by a historian, and any statement about the significance of those facts involves an act of interpretation. Thus, any presentation of Jesus requires subjective judgment. This does not in itself discredit any particular portrayal of Jesus, canonical or otherwise; rather it removes the myth of historical neutrality and objectivity: a historical portrayal is someone stating an opinion based on selected evidence. All portrayals of Jesus will be guided to some extent or another by the motivations of the author.[104]

With regard to the question of the transmission process of the Jesus tradition, form criticism has had a dominant influence in shaping scholarly opinion about the historical value of the Gospels. In particular, form critics postulate a lengthy oral transmission process in

103. See Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 476; cf. Provan, "Knowing," 229–66.

104. It could be argued, for example, that the motivations of certain members of the Jesus Seminar to counter the influence of Christian fundamentalism in the United States, or to promote certain political or social issues, or to address the role of their nation as a world empire, might influence how they portray Jesus. In some cases their motivations might lead to new and valid insights, whereas in others they may create blinders. Thus, realizing that the writer of history has motivations does not for that reason invalidate his or her work; this is the nature of history. Understanding those motivations will, however, assist us in evaluating the work as history.

which the Jesus tradition was shaped by the needs of the early church, a church that had more interest in Jesus as the risen and reigning Lord than in Jesus as a historical person, with the result that the canonical Gospels are often viewed as a distortion of the historical Jesus. Thus, the prejudice seems to be that unless traditions can be shown to be authentic, they are probably not.

Richard Bauckham, however, has challenged this central tenet of form criticism, arguing that the Gospels are closer to eyewitness testimony than to oral tradition shaped by transmission through anonymous communities.[105] This fundamentally changes one's approach to the Gospels for it implies that the transmission of the Jesus tradition was formally controlled by specific people—that is, teachers—who personally remembered the events and by those who had been entrusted with this testimony.[106] Consequently, the general attitude that the Gospels are not authentic until proven otherwise is unjustified. This does not, however, imply a return to a naive reading of the Gospels. All testimony must be critically assessed, for witnesses can forget some details and exaggerate or elaborate on others; they can either filter out or emphasize some aspects of an event because of their own perspective or because of the changed situation in which they now find themselves; they can confuse or harmonize similar events; and they can at times imagine they remember things that did not in fact happen.[107] The differences among the Gospels, for example, must still be explained. Bauckham draws on Paul Ricoeur's view of critical realism with regard to the use of testimony in history where "there is a

105. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*. Important for Bauckham's argument is the distinction made by Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, between oral history and oral tradition, namely that the former has to do with the testimony of witnesses whereas the latter involves tradition older than the current generation. Bauckham argues that in the latter part of the first century, the Jesus tradition was still oral history because some eyewitnesses would still be living (important evidence for this is the presence of archaisms in the Gospels), and that the error of form critics is that they assumed too easily that the transmission of Jesus tradition had long been subject to the dynamics of oral tradition before the Evangelists received it. For critical interaction with Bauckham, see the articles in *JSHJ* 6, 2 (2008).

106. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, chap. 10–13, devotes considerable attention to defending a plausible scenario in which the transmission of tradition within the early church would have been controlled by specific eyewitnesses and teachers.

107. See ibid., chap. 13, for a discussion of the nature of eyewitness testimony.

dialectic of trust and critical assessment."[108] With regard to the Gospel differences, Bauckham offers five possible explanations: (i) Jesus reused, adapted, and developed his own material in different settings; (ii) the translation from Aramaic to Greek involved some flexibility; (iii) oral performance normally produces variation, particularly with regard to details considered to be of secondary importance; (iv) modifications were made in order to interpret the tradition in light of the post-Easter situation;[109] and (v) the Evangelists adapted material in order to integrate the Jesus tradition into their Gospel narratives.[110] Thus, there is still a place for critical assessment. However, in addition to the authenticity criteria outlined above we might add the following: unless there are good reasons for judging otherwise, if an ancient witness demonstrates the signs of reliability—internal consistency and consistency with other testimony—then it ought to be given the benefit of the doubt even in cases where the other criteria cannot be applied.[111]

The ultimate test, however, for all judgments of authenticity will be the creation of a historical hypothesis that makes sense of the various pieces of evidence. Like a scientist drawing a best-fit curve through a number of data points and then hypothesizing, in light of this data and other knowledge she has, on the relationship between the various

108. Ibid., 490.

109. On this point Bauckham writes: "Such changes, it should be noted, are entirely compatible with word-for-word memorization of, for example, aphorisms of Jesus, since the changes would be made quite deliberately to a known form of exact words. Such changes are also quite compatible with a formal process of transmission, since it would be authorized tradents who, from their own familiarity with the tradition, would be competent to make such changes" (ibid., 286).

110. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 286; Allison, *Historical Christ*, 61.

111. See also Marrou, "Conditions," 103–30, who writes: "[The historian] certainly should not confront the witnesses of the past with an attitude that is surly, fussy, or peevish, like some unpleasant policeman for whom anyone summoned to court is suspect, *a priori*, and regarded as guilty until there is proof to the contrary. . . . [Historical understanding] presupposes the existence of a broad basis of fraternal communion between the subject and the object, between historian and document. . . . How can we understand unless we have that attitude of mind which makes us connatural with others? It is this that enables us to feel their passions and re-conceive their ideas in the very light in which they were experienced—in short, it permits us to commune with them. Even the word 'sympathy' is insufficient in this respect. Between the historian and his object a friendship must be formed, or how else can the historian understand?" (pp. 103–4). Cf. Reiser, "Eschatology," 218–26.

elements under consideration, so also the historian must make sense of the evidence by creating a best-fit story. And the more explanatory power the hypothesis has, the more convincing it will be.[112]

With regard to Paul, we have both primary and secondary sources. Of the thirteen letters in the New Testament that bear his name, seven are widely considered to be authentic—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon—and these will serve as our primary source of information about Paul. However, there is a strong, albeit minority, opinion that Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, and/or Ephesians may also be authentic, and if not authentic, at least faithful in representing the views of Paul. Consequently, while it may not be wise to develop arguments based solely on material in these three letters, it would also be wise not to make claims about Paul that are radically at variance with them. The other three letters in the New Testament bearing Paul's name—1 and 2 Timothy and Titus—are widely considered not to have been written by Paul, and to have arisen from a significantly different situation; consequently, we will treat them as secondary sources for understanding Paul's thoughts and aims.

The book of Acts is also a secondary source for information about Paul. In principle, since Acts was written as a continuation of the third Gospel, it should be treated in similar fashion to how the Gospels are treated with regard to its historicity (see above). Thus, although we do not have parallel accounts to use for comparison purposes, as we do with the Gospels, we ought to imagine Luke to be using his sources and drafting his narrative of early Christianity in much the same way that he did for the life of Jesus. Scholarly debate on the historical character of Acts has, of course, ranged widely over the past two hundred years. Those following in the tradition of F. C. Baur—especially M. Dibelius, E. Haenchen, P. Vielhauer, and H. Conzelmann—have been skeptical of the historical value of Acts, arguing, for example, that Luke's theological or pastoral concerns were more important to him than historical accuracy. On the other hand, those following in the tradition of J. B. Lightfoot—especially W. M. Ramsay, F. F. Bruce, A. N. Sherwin-White, C. J. Hemer, and M. Hengel—have argued, based on the agreement between Acts and other sources concerning numerous

112. For further discussion on the process of critical realism, see Meyer, "Lonergan's 'Breakthrough,'" 147–56; Wright, *New Testament*, 32–46. Allison, *Historical Christ*, also makes an important contribution, arguing that historical fictions may still contain historical truth.

historical details, that theological and historical purposes are not necessarily at odds with each other.[113]

While not trying to settle this debate here, I note two issues that will be important for the use of Acts. The first has to do with its reliability with regard to its portrayal of Paul. Haenchen, for example, has argued that due to Luke's theological purposes, his portrayal of Paul is significantly different from what we find in his letters and can therefore not be trusted. He notes several points of contrast: Paul and Luke are both interested in the Gentile mission, but they differ on the justification of the gospel for the Gentiles; miracles play a more important role for Paul in Acts than they do in his letters; Paul seems to be more adept as an orator in Acts than he admits to himself; Paul insists that he is an apostle, whereas Luke seems to limit this term to the original Twelve; and there is a difference in the reasons Paul and Luke give for the Jewish opposition to Paul's preaching, with Paul focusing on matters around the law and Luke emphasizing the offense caused by proclaiming that Jesus had been raised from the dead.[114] Lightfoot, on the other hand, draws attention to numerous details in Acts that can be confirmed historically. In particular, he notes Luke's accuracy with regard to the titles of Roman provincial governors—whether a proconsul (ἀνθύπατος), a propraetor (ἀντιστράτηγος) or a legate (πρεσβυτής)—and this at a time when the form of administration in the provinces frequently changed.[115] The point is, that if Luke was accurate in these details, which seem fairly inconsequential, we ought to conclude that he both had access to and highly valued accurate information. As a practical way forward, then, I propose that evidence needs to be assessed on a case by case basis, giving Luke the benefit of the doubt unless there is reason to question his portrayal. Joseph Fitzmyer, in my opinion, expresses a fair judgment when he writes:

> [W]e have to admit that the Lucan story in Acts is a good example of a Hellenistic historical monograph. . . . That designation does not guarantee, of course, the historicity of every Lucan statement or episode, but it reveals that what is recounted in Acts is substantially more trustworthy from a historical point of view than not. To admit that, however, does not ab-

113. For details of the debate, see Gasque, *History*.

114. Haenchen, *Acts*, 112–16.

115. Lightfoot, "Discoveries," 291–302.

> solve one of the obligation of checking the historical value of every episode.[116]

The second issue involving the book of Acts concerns the historicity of its speeches. Early in the twentieth century, Martin Dibelius questioned their historical value.[117] But, while it is wise to consider seriously Luke's own contribution when reading the speeches he records, on the argument that ancient historians took significant license in such situations, complete historical skepticism is not justified. In this regard, Thucydides' explanation, in writing about the Peloponnesian War, is worth repeating:

> As to the speeches that were made by different men, either when they were about to begin the war or when they were already engaged therein, it has been difficult to recall with strict accuracy the words actually spoken, both for me as regards that which I myself heard, and for those who from various other sources have brought me reports. Therefore the speeches are given in the language in which, as it seemed to me, the several speakers would express, on the subjects under consideration, the sentiments most befitting the occasion, though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said. But as to the facts of the occurrences of the war, I have thought it my duty to give them, not as ascertained from any chance informant nor as seemed to me probable, but only after investigating with the greatest possible accuracy each detail, in the case both of the events in which I myself participated and of those regarding which I got my information from others.[118]

Thucydides' goal was to be as accurate as possible in recording the words of speeches and historical details, but he also felt at liberty to be creative in constructing speeches that gave the same sense as what was said, probably in summary form. Thus, the practice of ancient historians lay somewhere between literal dictation, on the one hand, and invention, on the other.[119] This suggests that it is inappropriate,

116. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 127; see also Barrett, *Acts*, 2:xl–xli.

117. Dibelius, "Speeches," 138–85; see further, Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews*, 51–52.

118. Thucydides 1.22.1–2 (Foster, LCL). For further discussion of the purpose and method of ancient historians in recording speeches, see Gempf, "Public Speaking," 259–303.

119. See further, Glasson, "Speeches," 165.

without specific argument, to suggest that Luke's speeches do not provide historically reliable information. Each speech will need to be considered on a case by case basis; but there is good reason to assume that if Luke shows himself to be generally reliable elsewhere, he should be given the benefit of the doubt in specific cases.

Conclusion

Having situated my approach within the context of the Jesus-Paul debate and explained the method by which I intend to proceed, and having indicated my general approach to the ancient sources, we are now ready to turn to the evidence to see to what extent we can demonstrate corresponding areas of core commitment between Jesus and Paul.