

Pauline Christianity, What is it?

Pauline Christianity is a term applied to what some perceive as the religious teaching unique to Paul's writings and distinct from the gospel of Jesus. That is, Jesus taught one thing, and Paul taught something completely different. Those who believe in a separate Pauline Christianity believe that the Christianity of today has little to do with Jesus' teachings; rather, it is the product of Paul's conjecture of those teachings, all of them many years after Jesus walked the ground.

Some believe that the New Testament is a unified whole: that the Gospels present a compilation of the life and work of Jesus the Messiah; that Paul's Epistles explain what he thought to be the meaning and scope of Jesus' work and how to apply it to daily living. For example, (Mathew 28) narrates the story of Jesus' resurrection, and in Paul's (1 Corinthians 15) he attempts to explain the significance of the resurrection. (Mark 15:38) claims the temple veil being torn in two when Jesus died; in (Hebrews 10:11-23) Paul attempts to explain the import of that event. Paul's opinions have become a Gospel message even though he never met Jesus, except by an unsubstantiated claim.

However, those who believe in a "Pauline Christianity" believe in a different story:

Jesus, a great teacher, considered himself to be the long-awaited Messiah for the Israelites. He believed that God would overthrow Rome and bring His kingdom to earth. In preparation for this, Jesus taught a message of unconditional love, tolerance, and non-judgmental acceptance of everyone. Alas, Jesus' mission of inaugurating a new earthly age failed when the Romans crucified him.

Jesus' followers, believing that God had raised their rabbi from the dead, continued to meet in Jerusalem under the leadership of James, Jesus' brother. Their intention was to await the still-coming kingdom and continue observing Jesus' brand of enlightened Israelism. But along came Saul of Tarsus, who faked a conversion in order to infiltrate the church. Peter and James and others who had actually known Jesus were suspicious of Saul, who had never met Jesus.

Then Saul, who started calling himself "Paul," had a stroke of genius. He artfully combined traditional Hebrew ideas with those of pagan Greek philosophy, creating a new religion that could appeal to both Israelites and Gentiles. He began preaching that Jesus was actually God, that Jesus' death was linked to the Israelite system of sacrifice that one could be saved by simply believing and that the Mosaic law became obsolete. Paul's zealous missionary activity and persuasive writings took his new "gospel" around the Roman Empire. The Jerusalem Church, including Peter and James, disowned Paul as a heretic and cult leader.

After the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Israelite Church lost authority, but the Gentile Church founded by Paul increased its influence. One of Paul's fervent followers wrote the book of Acts, which gave Paul legendary status with its glowing portrayal of him as the hero of the church. Later, four unknown writers gathered scraps of information about Jesus and wrote books they called "Matthew," "Mark," "Luke," and "John"—but Paul's theology, already dominant in the church, tainted the writers' perspective. Thus, Paul's religion won out over Jesus' religion.

In short, Paul was a charlatan, an evangelical huckster who succeeded in twisting Jesus' message of love into something Jesus himself would never recognize. It was Paul, not Jesus, who originated most of the "Christian belief" of today from his writings that are mostly conjecture.

Commonly, those who hold to the above also believe the following:

1) Jesus was not divine. He never claimed to be God (YHWH), but claimed to be “the son of man” over 69 times, never said he was God the son. Yahshua never intended to start a new religion, but to announce the Kingdom of Yahweh, (Matt. 5:17; 23) to First Century Israel in Palestine.

2) The Greek NT Bible is not an inspired book (no one claims that it is) and it is riddled with contradictions. None of NT Bible, except possibly the book of James, was written by anyone who knew Jesus. There are fragments of Jesus’ teachings in the Gospels, but it is difficult to discern what he really said. All of it is hearsay, since all were written many years after the execution of Jesus, and no one knows who wrote the Gospels

3) Paul “conversion” was either a personal hallucinogenic experience or an outright fraud. The three places in the NT that talk about the conversion of Paul do not agree. His claims to be an apostle were attempts to further his own authority in the church, and appear to be self appointed, not chosen by the 11 Apostles,

4) Pauline theological “inventions” include a) the deity of Jesus; b) salvation by grace through faith; c) salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus to please God; d) the sinless nature of Jesus; e) the concept of original sin; and f) the Holy Spirit. None of these “new doctrines” were accepted by Jesus’ true followers, because none can be found taught in the Hebrew Bible.

5) The Gnostic Gospels may be closer to the truth about Jesus than are the traditional four accepted (by Constantine Roman) approved Gospels of the compiled Catholic Bible.

Those that deny the concept of “Pauline Christianity” also represent the belief that not all written in the Bible is the inspired word of YHWH the Almighty of the Hebrew Bible, even though some of it could be when there is such a claim. They believe Jesus was a prophet to First Century Israel that he taught the coming/presence of the “Kingdom of Heaven” but deny his divinity, his Jesus’ atonement, and consider the trinity as being contrary to what is taught in the Bible.

Note: Some of this information comes from the following website:
Some of it has been revised, and information added by AOYCascade.com
<http://Gotquestions.org/Pauline-Christianity.html>

The article is close to the Beliefs about Paul/Saul by the Assembly of Yahweh, Cascade, by for a complete Statement of our belief, see <http://aoycascade.com/Documents/Statementofbelief.pdf>

Presented for information and study purposes
Assembly of Yahweh, Cascade