

PAUL THE USURPER

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INTRODUCTION

I note that Christian preachers and teachers love quoting Paul of Tarsus as a religious authority.

Why? Why not quote the ultimate authority, Jesus of Nazareth?

I am given to ask of such teachers: Do you believe Jesus' gospel teachings? Do you believe they apply to us today? Or do you believe Paul is the author of and authority on the gospel?

Do you elevate Paul's teachings above those of Jesus as regards their applicability to us? By what authority?

Christian preachers seem to have elected the apostle Paul as the spokesperson for the gospel.

This seems strange in view of the fact that Jesus said all that he needed to say about the gospel before he left this world, and that he did not appoint Paul as his official mouthpiece for the next 2000 years.

In his letters Paul elevated himself to the position of supreme authority over the gospel. Since his view of the gospel differed so markedly from Jesus' view, the broad adherence to Paul's views by Christian churches amounts to a colossal derailing of the actual gospel that Jesus taught.

For nearly 2000 years, Christians have preached a religion *about* Jesus instead of the religion *of* Jesus. We can summarize the religion of Jesus in the simple "gospel of the Kingdom of God" that Jesus taught and lived. Since Satan schemed to thwart Jesus' mission to this world and Paul actually succeeded in distracting 78 generations from the real gospel, one could rightly assert that Paul functioned as the servant of Satan.

And *that* is why I write this article. I intend to set the record straight. I shall show that Paul became a usurper and false prophet of the most insidious kind. But first, let us attend to the genuine gospel to which Jesus devoted the last four years of his life on earth.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS

And what of the plan of salvation and gospel of and by Jesus?

Mat 6:14 **For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:**

Mat 6:15 **But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

Clearly, regardless of what you *believe*, if you forgive others the Father will forgive you, and if you don't he won't. Can you get into Heaven if the Father has not forgiven you? According to Jesus, even though you believe Jesus died on the cross to save you from your sins, if you don't forgive others who have sinned against you, you will not receive the Father's forgiveness. Thus, Paul's atonement doctrine, which I will discuss later, becomes meaningless in the face of not forgiving others of their sins against you.

Luk 10:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Luk 10:26 He said unto him, **What is written in the law? how readest thou?**

Luk 10:27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

Luk 10:28 And he said unto him, **Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.**

Obviously, if you love God and love your fellow humans, you will have eternal life. In the face of this truth, how can the belief that Jesus died on the cross as a human sacrifice to atone for sins provide any survival value? The gospel and the plan of salvation Jesus preached throughout his four-year public ministry did not include the atonement doctrine. But it did include love.

Joh 13:34 **A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.**

Joh 13:35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

This commandment has such great importance that the Father sent Jesus to this world to give it to us. Loving others also means serving others. Loving has no meaning unless one does something to show that love. The religion of Jesus and the gospel he taught impose *action* upon his followers. One cannot remain idle and participate in the religion of Jesus. We know that we must love and serve others to consider ourselves followers of Jesus.

Mat 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Luk 9:48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

Joh 13:14 If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

Joh 13:15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Joh 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

Joh 13:17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Following the commandments of Jesus has critical importance to gaining eternal life and a high status in Heaven. The main commandments he gave required accepting the Fatherhood of God, loving God as a Heavenly Father, being loyal to his will, and living God's love by delivering unselfish loving service to others. And he simplified the process by telling people that to get started, they needed only to believe him and accept his authority.

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

This passage means one must believe Jesus in order to have everlasting life. Believing in Jesus means believing his existence, his authority, and his words. Notice this does not say believe in Paul.

Bottom line, the real gospel (good news) consists in the fact that one's wholehearted embrace of one's sonship to the Universal Father, characterized by loving others as brothers and delivering unselfish, loving service to them, gives one an eternal destiny in company with the Father.

JESUS' WARNING ABOUT FALSE PROPHETS

Jesus knew people like Paul would come along to derail his gospel. And so, he warned his followers to beware of them.

Mat 7:15 **Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.**

Mat 24:11 **And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.**

Mat 24:24 **For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.**

Mar 13:22 **For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect.**

Luk 6:26 **Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.**

HOW PAUL USURPED THE GOSPEL AUTHORITY

Paul ignored the Gospel Jesus taught (if indeed Paul even knew its tenets) in order to teach his own erroneous ideas about the Gospel, and then he CURSED anyone (and that would include Jesus) who taught a gospel different from his contrived "gospel".

Gal 1:8 **But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.**

Gal 1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

It is unfortunate that no one of sufficient power was around 1950 years ago to set the record straight for this errant, arrogant, self-styled "authority" on the so-called gospel. He was an ardent Christian killer before his conversion, and just as ardently a misleader and usurper of authority afterward. I shall explain why.

Nothing in scripture, other than the words of Paul himself, proves that Paul somehow miraculously knew what the gospel was. All we know is that he was blinded on the road to Damascus and told to get further instructions in Damascus. We are never told what those instructions were. We know from Paul's account that he went to Arabia.

Gal 1:17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Most likely he went to Philadelphia (present-day Amman Jordan) in Arabia to meet with the followers of a real Apostle, Andrew. It is important to note that the converted synagogue of Philadelphia church was the only one of seven churches that had been fully loyal to Jesus, The other six had been founded by Paul.

To the Church in Philadelphia

Rev 3:7 **And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;**

Rev 3:8 **I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.**

Rev 3:9 **Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.**

Rev 3:10 **Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.**

There are those who say that the Philadelphia mentioned was in Asia minor. It wasn't. It was the last place Jesus visited on a preaching tour, and the likely place to which Andrew, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus fled when persecutions began not too long after the ascension of Jesus and Peter's Pentecostal sermon.

Andrew had been the apostolic leader, and so naturally Paul would seek him out. Since Andrew was level-headed and consummately devoted to the gospel, the instructions in Damascus were for Paul to seek him out and learn the gospel first-hand from the leader of Jesus' apostles, or his replacement. By this time Andrew himself had ventured to his martyrdom in Thrace.

Although scripture makes no mention of this, it is highly likely that the head of John the Baptist's apostles met up with Andrew in Philadelphia and helped Andrew reform the synagogue there into a new church of Jesus' gospel.

We read nothing of John's apostles in the synoptic gospel accounts because they operated in Idumea, south of Judea, possibly headquartered at the southern end of the Dead Sea. John's apostles had joined up with Jesus after their master's death, and the two apostolic heads must often have been in communication for the purpose of resolving problems common to both in dealing with their respective groups. So it is natural that they should join in Philadelphia before the persecutions started in earnest.

One indication that the church in Philadelphia differed with Paul on religious philosophy is the fact that it is never mentioned in Paul's writings (only in the book of Revelation). Another is the fact that it was still going strong when, less than 600 years later, the followers of Muhammad overran it, and that before then, Muhammad had learned of the "real" gospel from Philadelphia missionaries of the closest trade-route "church" to Medina and Mecca.

That teaching is likely why Muhammad was so incensed with the Christian idea that Jesus and Mary were part of the trinity, which differed with the more down-to-earth gospel Jesus had taught.

Given Paul's domineering nature, he seems to have rejected the gospel Andrew's followers imparted to him. He returned to Damascus for three years, probably formulating his own version of the gospel, then went to see Peter for more satisfaction, denying he had met with any other apostle.

Gal 1:17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Gal 1:18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

Gal 1:19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Paul evolved a personal theology and religious philosophy, a stew comprised of elements of Judaism, Mithraism, and the Greek philosophy of Plato and Philo, as well as the teachings of Jesus. However, it focused on the atonement doctrine (codified in the book of Hebrews) and was woefully short on the specific teachings of Jesus about salvation.

Although Paul taught love (Rom 13:8), he neglected to mention that the death and resurrection of Jesus had nothing to do with the plan of salvation Jesus outlined in the passages above.

JESUS' ABHORRENCE OF SACRIFICE

In fact, Jesus had shown an abhorrence for the practice of sacrifices, going so far as showing it had no efficacy at all (compared to loving God), and drove out of the temple the sacrificial beasts and associated money changers.

Mar 12:33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Mar 11:15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

Joh 2:14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

Joh 2:15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

Jesus established the bread and wine ritual as a substitute for eating sacrificial meat. This was 1500 years after Moses had instituted the practice of ransom so fathers could avoid sacrificing first-born sons. And that was 500 years after Abraham had been all-too ready to murder his own first-born son in a pagan sacrificial ritual. Jesus tried his best to wean his followers from the ritual of human and animal sacrifice forever.

Mar 14:22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, **Take, eat: this is my body.**

Mar 14:23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them: and they all drank of it.

Mar 14:24 And he said unto them, **This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.**

Mar 14:25 **Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.**

PETER'S RELIGION ABOUT JESUS

Peter, forgetting the great commission orders to spread the Gospel he had received from Jesus just that morning before Jesus ascended into Heaven, spent the afternoon of Pentecost preaching about the "Risen Christ". He completely ignored the gospel Jesus had spent 4 years teaching.

Act 2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

Act 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

Act 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

THE FALSE GOSPEL: ACCORDING TO PAUL

Paul, following in Peter's footsteps, ignoring the advice of the followers of Andrew in Philadelphia, made the sacrificial death of Jesus the keystone of his doctrine and focal point of his conversion teachings.

1Co 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

Eph 2: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Heb 9: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

1Co 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

Eph 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

HOW PHONY WAS PAUL'S GOSPEL?

Paul's gospel certainly was phony. He seemed to add all kinds of things to it that were of his own invention. As just one of many examples, consider his phony "gospel" of uncircumcision. Circumcision had absolutely NOTHING to do with the gospel taught by Jesus.

Gal 2:7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

JOHN MARK KNEW THE GOSPEL AND REBUKED PAUL

We get a clear picture of how horrified the LOYAL followers of Jesus were upon discovering the truth. John Mark had hung out with Jesus and the apostles for upwards of three years when a young teenager. He was intimately familiar with all points of the gospel Jesus had preached throughout a four-year public ministry. He teamed up with Paul and Barnabas on Paul's first missionary tour. When he found out what Paul was actually preaching, he argued to no avail, and then refused to participate.

Act 15:38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

Act 15:39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

THE REAL AUTHOR OF AND AUTHORITY ON THE GOSPEL

Mark was right to contend prodigiously against Paul. The Father is the author of the gospel, and Jesus is our creator and the only authority on the gospel.

Joh 12:49 **For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.**

Joh 12:50 **And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.**

In the above passages, you have seen Paul declaring himself to be the authority on the gospel, condemning any other teacher, including the other apostles like Andrew who were actually loyal to the Gospel of Jesus. You have seen him ignore the gospel of love and forgiveness taught by Jesus, and adhere to the errant gospel of the "risen Christ" preached by Peter. You have seen the contrast between the phony gospel he taught and the real gospel Jesus taught.

PAUL'S TENDENCY TO GO OVERBOARD

We needn't wonder why Paul was such a usurper. First of all, he was prone to go way overboard. By his own admission he had persecuted Christians, and had even held the robes of Jews who had stoned Stephen.

Act 7:58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

Act 7:59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

Gal 1:13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

PAUL'S TENDENCY TO PREVARICATE

He also went overboard by lying when trying to convert people to his new cult about Jesus. Paul himself admitted he prevaricated in order to get people to believe his phony gospel, which he falsely claimed to be the "gospel of Christ". He claimed that the ends justifies the means, a concept totally opposite from Jesus' noble life and teachings. Yes, to Paul it was perfectly okay to lie to people about the gospel and to deceive them as to his intentions, just so he could convert them to his own personal religious beliefs.

1Co 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

1Co 9:17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

1Co 9:18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

1Co 9:19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

1Co 9:20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

1Co 9:21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

1Co 9:22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

1Co 9:23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

1Co 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

1Co 9:25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

1Co 9:26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

1Co 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

PAUL'S TENDENCY TOWARD EVIL

Should we feel surprised about this? Paul admitted that his readers could not trust him because he knowingly did evil things and failed to do good things.

Rom 7:19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

I will at least give Paul the benefit of the doubt. He had difficulty deciding between his loyalty to Judaism, his loyalty to Jesus, and his loyalty to his own ego. Under these pressures, he probably tried to do the best he could. And, because of his superior drive, ambition, legal training, and organizational ability, he became a great teacher.

PAUL'S ATONEMENT DOCTRINE LOGIC MELTDOWN

However, Christian preachers push the wrong gospel when they push the one Paul engineered. Sure, Paul said many good and noble things, encouraging people to love one another. But he also demeaned women, demeaned homosexuals, and introduced a false plan of salvation. He felt so impressed by the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus that he created a false religion ABOUT Jesus, centered on a perverse mix of his divinity and the utterly illogical and pagan concept of his sacrificial death.

To comprehend this breakdown in logic, consider the sense of a wise and loving Heavenly Father ordering the death of his perfect, divine, unique son, a being nearly the Father's equal, to atone for the puny sins of his other children. What about the commandment not to kill? What about the sense of justice and fairness? Since when did it become fair to demand the sacrifice of a perfect son to atone for the sins of imperfect sons? And what is sacrifice, anyway, other than the attempt to bribe God so he won't punish the sacrificer for sins, and an effort to buy God's favor and respect, all in a scheme for religious organizations to make money and enslave parishioners? After all, God himself certainly has no use for a sacrificial offering.

How can this an atoning sacrifice take effect with a wise and loving Heavenly Father who is no respecter of persons?

Astoundingly, conventional fundamentalist Christian preachers would have us believe that the sacrifice is necessary because we have a sin nature and cannot otherwise have relationship with God. And they propound this right after leading congregations in the Lord's Prayer, the prayer directly to the Heavenly Father that Jesus taught his followers. Implicitly, sacrifices insult the Father. They don't appease him.

JESUS DEMOLISHED THE ATONEMENT DOCTRINE

Jesus and others before and after him demolished that effete argument repeatedly by showing how the spirit of God is within us. Aside from yearning to do his will, we could not possibly have a closer relationship with him. And we need no sacrifice to enable that relationship.

Luk 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, **The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:**

Luk 17:21 **Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.**

Mat 10:20 **For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.**

Joh 17:21 **That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**

Joh 17:22 **And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:**

Joh 17:23 **I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.**

CHRISTIAN PREACHERS FOLLOW PAUL IN BEING FALSE PROPHETS

Christians who preach Paul's false gospel are the self-same false prophets Jesus warned his followers not to heed. They preach a phony gospel that Paul invented out of thin air and that he had no authority to teach.

I do not now wonder *whether*, for it is inevitable, but rather *when* Christian preachers will wake up and start becoming loyal to the Gospel of Jesus and not the false and unauthorized teachings of the false prophet Paul.

TIME FOR A REAL GOSPEL REVIVAL

It is time for Christian preachers to start quoting Jesus, not Paul, and to being loyal to the actual, real gospel Jesus taught. Otherwise, how shall they fulfill the Great Commission? If they actually believe the false gospel of Paul, how shall they believe the true gospel of Jesus? And if they believe not the true gospel of Jesus, are not they themselves damned?

Mar 16:15 And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**

Mar 16:16 **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**

Jesus' gospel of love, forgiveness, and service is simple, clean, and pure. Anyone can read it for himself, without needing the wrong opinions of the preachers who have browbeat them from birth to accept Paul's false doctrines.

Paul, who invented his own cult and plan of salvation, and preachers of today who promote that cult and plan of salvation, are, wittingly or not, serving Satan in the derailing of the gospel Jesus commanded his followers to teach.

Paul was indeed a striking figure on the backdrop of history, and one of the most magnificent teachers the world has ever known. But his letters have no more right to be in the bible than does this article. They are, after all just his letters with just his opinions in them. In the final analysis, no one can tell the gospel better than Jesus already has.

It takes courage to face a truth as hard as the one I have presented here. It took me years to escape the death-grip of my fundamentalist Christian upbringing and start facing the truths Jesus taught in his simple gospel. Just as I was, most Christians are afraid that they will burn in hell for abandoning the ridiculous and illogical atonement doctrine that Paul invented. Perhaps some will begin to see the light as a result of this article.

I do not have much hope for Christian preachers, however. They have a vested interest in keeping their flocks ignorant and in the dark. They earn their livings by telling lies, dressed up as truth. They seem to love telling people they will burn in hell if they don't accept Jesus as Lord and believe in the sacrificial death of Jesus. And they never bother telling their congregations that Jesus taught neither of those as principles of the gospel.

When faced with the bombast and specious reasoning of Christian preachers, try to remember that our view of the truth will always be partial and incomplete, and that the truth can always withstand honest investigation. Then do your best to share the gospel Jesus taught with others around you by *living it*, as Jesus did.

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