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THE 444: The Messiah

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The "Christ" in Paul's Letters

What are the distinctions of the portrayals of the Christ in the Pauline epistles?

The Pauline epistles, or Paul's letters, are a collection of first-century CE writings written by the Apostle Paul to different Christian communities. Paul depicts Jesus Christ in numerous ways throughout these writings, revealing his idea of Jesus' role in salvation and the Christian faith.

Paul emphasizes Christ's position as the rescuer of humanity. Jesus provides redemption to everybody in Paul's writings. Paul also claims that Christ reconciled all humanity to God through his death and resurrection. In Romans 8: 15, he emphasizes Christ's divinity by calling him the "Son of God" and the "Lord" throughout his writings (Novenson 206). Paul's emphasis on Christ's divinity sets him apart from other Jewish teachers of his day, who viewed Jesus as a prophet or teacher.

Rom 9:5.7 is the only Pauline text where "messiah" is generally accepted. On behalf of his Jewish relatives, Paul expresses "deep agony and persistent sadness" in Rom 9:1-5 (Novenson 149). Paul's anguish matches his people's tragedy, which is that they have "stumbled" in God's eyes despite their many blessings. Similarly, his view of Christ, which prioritized faith above deeds, differed from other Jewish beliefs of his day.

Paul emphasizes Christ's death and resurrection in his description of him. In his writings, Paul claims that Christ's death and resurrection have radically changed humanity's relationship

with God. In 2 Cor 5:14-15, Paul's writings show that Christ's death and resurrection defeated sin and death, giving Christians new life (Novenson 164). Comparatively, Paul's picture of Christ stresses Christ's return, and in his writings, Paul claims that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead and establish his reign on earth. This focus on Christ's return shows Paul's eschatological view of Christ and redemption history.

What is their relation to Acts and the Gospels?

Paul's epistles are closely related to the Gospels and Acts. They are part of the New Testament canon and the Gospels and Acts, providing essential insights into Christian doctrine and early Christian society. The Pauline epistles diverge from the Gospels' view of Jesus' life and teachings. The Pauline epistles explain Jesus' meaning, while the Gospels record his life, ministry, death, and resurrection (Novenson 172). Paul's writings highlight Christ's divinity, humanity-saving function, and Christians' redemption through his death and resurrection. The Gospels include these concepts, but the Pauline epistles expand on them.

The Pauline epistles, and Acts give distinct viewpoints on the early Christian society and Christianity's expansion. Acts recount the apostles' work and the church's expansion in Jerusalem and abroad (Murray). Additionally, the early Christian community is seen more personally and theologically in Paul's writings since it shows Paul's missionary achievements and failures, his faith, and his relationships with other early Christians. The Pauline epistles and Acts give a complete picture of early Christianity.

Pauline's epistles show the variety of early Christian thinking and practice, like the Gospels and Acts. The Gospels and Acts center on Jewish followers of Jesus, whereas the Pauline epistles provide non-Jewish followers' viewpoints (Murray). However, both writings

show how early Christian groups negotiated cultural, sociological, and theological obstacles and formed a new religious identity that transcended conventional bounds.

The Holy Spirit's effect on the early Christian community is evident in the Pauline epistles, Gospels, and Acts. The Holy Spirit drives the gospel's spread, inspires Christian teaching and practice, and empowers spiritually (Murray). These scriptures provide a complete picture of the early Christian community and its Holy Spirit-based relationship with God.

The Pauline epistles are deeply tied to the Gospels and Acts and provide light on Christian doctrine and early Christian society. They provide differing views of Jesus' life and teachings, the early church's rise, early Christian thinking and practice, and the Holy Spirit's involvement in Christianity (Murray). These works build a rich, intricate tapestry of Christian thinking and practice that shapes millions of people's religion today.

What are the parallels between Paul's letters (e.g., Roman and Galatians)?

Paul wrote Romans and Galatians for distinct Christian groups. Paul's intention to visit the community is shown in both writings, and both have a large theological part in the center of the letter, followed by practical Christian living advice.

Romans and Galatians discuss salvation and justification through faith. Paul claims redemption comes through trust in Christ, not law keeping. He also highlights the oneness of Jews and Gentiles in Christ and living by the Spirit rather than the body (Savoy). In both writings, Paul emphasizes Christ's position as the rescuer of humankind and the need for Christians to be "in Christ" to achieve salvation.

Romans and Galatians stress trust and grace in the Christian life. Paul claims that redemption comes through trust in Christ, and God's mercy is freely offered to believers. He stresses the Holy Spirit as the source of strength for Christian living and the mechanism by

which Christians are linked with Christ (Novenson 142). The importance of Christ's crucifixion is another similarity between these two texts. For instance, in Romans 5:8-11 Paul says that God reconciled humankind to himself through the cross and that only faith in the crucified and rising Christ can save Christians.

In terms of difference, Romans is more methodical in its treatment of theological topics, whereas Galatians is more focused on correcting communal mistakes. Additionally, Romans emphasizes the universality of redemption through Christ, whereas Galatians stresses the equality of Gentile and Jewish believers.

Works Cited

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