

## Paul the Jewish Theologian Book Review

Young, Brad H. Paul the Jewish Theologian. Available from: VitalSource Bookshelf, Baker Publishing Group, 1995. Pages 184, price \$17.99.

Brad H. Young is an American scholar of Judaism and the New Testament, He is best known for writing books that give a clear understanding of the New Testament. He has written Jesus the Jewish Theologian and Meet the Rabbis: The Rabbinic thought and teaching of Jesus. Young is also an expert in Second Temple Judaism and the Jewish background of the New Testament. He has conducted extensive research on the Dead Sea Scrolls and has published articles on the subject in academic journals. In the First chapter Young gives an introduction that demonstrates that Paul was Jewish and that his understanding of the gospel was shaped by his Jewish background. He discusses his background on Paul being a pharisee and also the education that he has on the famous rabbi Gamaliel. Then Young goes on to talk about Paul's encounter with Jesus on the Road of Damascus and, that this experience that he had did not cause him to abandon Jewish identity but to transform it.

Chapter two touches base on Paul's Jewish Background and exploring the world of Judaism that Paul lived in. He discusses the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the rise of Jewish sects such as the pharisees, Sadducees, and essence. He also shows Paul's view of salvation through believing in Jesus and by his grace. In chapter three Young Discusses Paul's view of the Messiah and God and he also talks about the concepts that the Jewish Background has. He identifies that Paul's view on God is rooted in the Jewish Monotheism, but that Paul saw Jesus as the unique Son of God who shared in the divine nature.

The theme in chapter four is the kingdom of God in Paul's theology, He argues that the concept of the kingdom of God was central to Jewish thought in the Second Temple period and that Paul saw Jesus as the one who had brought about the kingdom. Young examines Paul's use of the phrase "in Christ" to describe the believer's relationship to the kingdom of God, showing how Paul saw the community of believers as the embodiment of the kingdom. Young also explores Paul's use of the phrase "righteousness of God," arguing that it refers to God's saving action in the world rather than to a moral quality possessed by God. In Chapter five it talks about the gospel message and the law. Paul saw that the law was defining sin and keeping order, but the law didn't line up with salvation. Paul believed the only way to be saved and to die from sin was to have faith and receive salvation in Christ.

In chapter six Paul saw that the long-awaited Jewish Messiah had come to fulfill the promises of the Hebrew scriptures and that not only was he the savior of the Jews, but he was the savior of the gentiles as well. He expressed that it is important for both the Jews and the Gentiles to have faith in Jesus. In chapter seven it dives deeper into Paul's relationship with the law, and he thinks that the law is important and that it brings tradition, but Paul also expresses that following the law doesn't bring salvation. There are several key issues that are discussed such as the relationship between faith and works. Another thing that is brought up is justification and the role of circumcision in Jewish identity. This information helps examine why Paul was a pharisee at first and it explains what Paul's relationship with Christ was like, which was distorted.

Moving on to chapter eight it talks about Paul explaining the role of what the Holy spirit does, for Paul the Holy spirit was not an abstract concept. Paul describes the Holy spirit as a gift, a seal, and a guide that leads to salvation. He describes the holy spirit as someone who encourages and empowers believers to live a life of faith and obedience to Christ. Paul saw the

holy spirit as a source of strength and guidance. Young examined how Paul described the Holy spirit which is that the Holy spirit enabled us to have joy, happiness, and peace.

Chapter nine focuses on the Body of Christ and the people of Israel. The relationship with the church or in other words the body of Christ and the people of Israel. Paul saw the church as an extension of Israel with the gentiles being incorporated by faith. This chapter also talks about the challenges that Paul faced with reconciling the Jews and the gentiles that were within the early church. Lastly, chapter ten discusses how Paul saw Jesus, Paul recognized that Jesus was fulfilling Jewish prophecy. Many Jews rejected that Jesus was the Messiah and Paul was one of them but now he believes that faith in Jesus was the only way to be justified before God.

A book that is similar to Paul the Theologian is a book called "Paul and the Faithfulness of God". This book is a comprehensive study of the apostle Paul and his theology, and it seeks to understand Paul's thought within the context of his Jewish background and the cultural and historical circumstances of his time. Like "Paul the Jewish Theologian," "Paul and the Faithfulness of God" provides a deeper understanding of Paul's Jewish roots and how they influenced his thinking, and it explores Paul's emphasis on the faithfulness of God and the implications of that for his theology. Both books seek to situate Paul's teachings in their historical and cultural context, and they offer fresh insights into Paul's thought that can deepen our understanding of his message.

I recommend reading the book because 'Paul the Jewish Theologian' is a meticulously researched and thought-provoking exploration of the Jewish roots of the Apostle Paul's theology. Drawing on extensive knowledge of Jewish traditions and language, Young argues convincingly that Paul's ideas and language cannot be fully understood without taking into account his Jewish heritage. This book offers a fresh perspective on one of the most important figures in Christian

history and is an essential read for anyone interested in the intersection between Judaism and Christianity. Although the content may be challenging for some readers, the book is written in a clear and accessible style that makes it an excellent resource for both scholars and general readers.