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New Testament Literature

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Title-Paul the Jewish Theologian, Author- Brad H. Young, Pages -188, Cost- \$20.00, Year, Published - September 1, 1995, ISBN-10 - 0801048214, ISBN-13 - 978-0801048210

Bradford Humes Young, also known as Brad Young, is a professor of Biblical Literature in Judeo-Christian Studies at the Graduate Department of Oral Roberts University. He is also the founder and president of the Gospel Research Foundation, Inc. After receiving his B.A. from ORU, Young departed Tulsa for Israel.

Chapter One - Young notes in the introduction to Chapter 1 how the New Testament refers to Paul as a Pharisee who has come to faith. The remainder of the chapter discusses Paul's general persona. We're advised to look at and pay attention to what Paul had to say about himself. Due to his own denial of being a Pharisee, Paul was rejected by the early church. Eventually, he abandoned his Jewish roots to convert to Christianity. Paul was a Pharisee among Christians even though he always considered himself to be one.

Chapter Two- "Paul the Jewish Theologian" begins by pointing out that, in isolation, it may not be entirely accurate to say that Paul was a Jewish theologian. Young children discussing how Paul and Jesus generally led different lives, "Jesus was ordinary. Paul traveled extensively. Even though Jesus spoke plainly, it was usually to the Jews who were after him, unlike Paul who

spoke primarily to the Gentiles. The section concludes by inferring that Paul was actually a Jewish theologian who "was trying to bring Jews and non-Jews immovably together."

Chapter Three- This chapter examines how Paul's Jewish heritage and his encounter with Jesus Christ influenced his understanding of the gospel message. Young contends that Paul's understanding of Christ's death and resurrection reflected Jewish concepts of sacrifice and atonement and that Paul's gospel was based on Jewish messianic expectations. According to the author, Paul's gospel message was a fulfillment of Jewish expectations and prophecies rather than a break from Judaism.

Chapter Four - Young looks at Paul's interpretation of the Law and how Jewish believers live by it. He asserts that Paul saw the Law to be a gift from God that made clear his people's intentions. Even yet, it was powerless to bring about righteousness without trust in Christ. According to the author, Paul's focus on faith does not represent a rejection of the Law but rather a recognition that the only way to be virtuous is via faith in Jesus.

Chapter Five- In this chapter, it is examined how Paul's theology was influenced by his Jewish worldview. Young argues that Jewish ideas of covenant and election influenced Paul's perception of God's connection to the earth. He adds that Paul's understanding of the Spirit was influenced by Jewish ideas about the power and presence of God. The author contends that Paul's perception of the gospel message was framed by his Jewish worldview.

Chapter Six - Young investigates Paul's eschatology, or view of the last days. Paul's eschatology, he contends, was rooted in Jewish apocalyptic literature, and his view of the future echoed Jewish ideas of a final judgment and the regeneration of creation. According to the author, Paul's eschatology emphasizes how crucial Jesus Christ is to God's overall plan for the world.

Chapter Seven - This chapter examines Paul's relationship to the Jewish people and his understanding of Israel's role in God's plan. Young contends that Paul saw himself as a faithful Jew, and his mission to the Gentiles was not a rejection of Israel but a continuation of God's plan for his people. The author highlights Paul's deep concern for Israel's salvation and his conviction that God would keep his promises to his people.

Chapter Eight - Paul's relationship to the Torah, or Jewish Law, is examined by Young. He contends that Paul understood the Law to be a gift from God that made clear his people's will. However, without trust in Christ, it could not result in righteousness. Paul's perception of the Law's function in the lives of Jewish and Gentile Christians is examined, along with the difficulties this presented for the early Christian community.

Chapter Nine- Young investigates Paul's use of Jewish scripture in his works in this chapter. He contends that Paul used Jewish scripture to back up his claims and show how his gospel message and Jewish tradition are inseparable.

Chapter Ten- In this last chapter, Young reviews his results and makes the case that Paul's theology needs to be understood in the context of the Jewish people. He stresses that in order to completely comprehend Paul's writings and their significance for the formation of Christian theology, one must study Second Temple Judaism and Jewish tradition.

A Comparison of work that is similar to Paul the Jewish Theologian is Paul The Theologian by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. After reading Paul the Jewish Theologian I can see that the interpretation of Paul's writings by Dr. Young is informative and stimulating. He makes a compelling case that Paul's theology was strongly influenced by Jewish philosophy and that his teachings were primarily meant for a Jewish audience. This viewpoint casts doubt on several

conventional readings of Paul's letters and offers a new interpretation of his message. I would definitely recommend this to those who are considering on buying or is about to read this book.

