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### The “Christ” in Paul’s (disputed?) Letters

Paul’s disputed letters refer to the letters in the New Testament that are universally accepted as being written by Paul. Of the thirteen letters that are attributed to Paul, seven are considered disputed. One of the most prominent themes in Paul’s letters, both disputed and undisputed is the centrality of Christ. Christ is mentioned countless times in each of these letters, and his death and resurrection. In 1 Timothy and Titus, two of Paul’s disputed letters, Christ is celebrated as the savior of all humanity. It is noted these letters focus more on morality and the organization of the early church than on theology. Christ is still present in these letters but primarily as the object of faith and the source of salvation. His role is seen as more external than in other letters of Paul.

The letter to the Ephesians, another disputed letter presents Christ as the ultimate reconciler. He brings together all things in heaven and on earth, and through his death and resurrection he has broken down the barriers between Jew and Gentile creating a new Christian identity that transcends traditional religious and cultural boundaries. Here, Christ is presented as force rather than a specific person uniting all of humanity. In 2 Thessalonians, Christ is presented as the one who will return and bring justice to the world. This letter focuses on the end times and

the judgement that will come upon the earth when Christ returns. While Christ's role is prominent in this letter, it bears some notable differences from the other letters that are more theological, and it is not clear whether this letter is from Paul.

Ephesians 1-6 is a book of the New Testament that is written in letter form. It is addressed to the church of Ephesus, located in modern-day Turkey. The book is written by the Apostle Paul while he was in prison, and it is believed to have been written around AD 62. The book contains a wealth of knowledge and teachings that are still relevant to the modern world. These themes, also contains many practical teachings on how to live as a Christian. Paul encourages the Ephesians to live a life of righteousness, to avoid immorality, and to use their gifts to serve others. He also gives advice on how to have healthy relationships with others including instructions for husbands and wives, parents and children and employers and employees. These teachings are still relevant today, as Christians continue to strive to live a life that is pleasing to God.

M. Novenson's "Christ Phrases in Paul," a chapter from his book *Christ Among the Messiahs*, explores the phrase "Christ" as used by Paul in his New Testament writings. Novenson's analysis of "Christ" in Paul's writings provides valuable insight into the complex theological landscape of early Christianity. By seeing "Christ" as a title rather than a name, we gain a deeper understanding of the divine agents working to bring salvation and the role that Jesus played in that network. By situating "Christ" within the larger Jewish messianic tradition, Novenson helps us see how early Christians handled the complexities of their faith and worked to make sense of Jesus' life and teachings.