

Session #5—'Paul' versus 'Paul' on the Fate of Israel

- Although 13 letters are attributed to Paul in the NT, the author of Acts never makes mention of any of them.
- Neither does Acts invoke Paul's typical vocabulary or ideas (no "justification by grace through faith," etc.).
- Acts is largely responsible for establishing the tradition of the "Twelve Apostles." But according to Acts, Paul could not be an apostle, because he was not a follower and companion of Jesus during his lifetime. According to Paul, however, not only was he an "apostle," but there were apparently many other apostles as well, including women.
- Throughout Luke and Acts, Roman officials routinely question or even put Jesus or his followers on trial and invariably judge them to be innocent and no threat to the peace, implying strongly that Rome is no threat at all to the Jesus Movement. How convenient, since Acts ends with Paul preaching freely in Rome (albeit under house arrest).
- At the same time, Acts several times sharply accuses Jews of killing Jesus, not Rome: Acts 2:23, 36; 3:14-15; 7:52. Thus does Acts imply that Jews are "Christ killers." But FYI, crucifixion was Roman punishment, not Jewish. Rome killed Jesus, not Jews.
- Paul identifies himself as an "apostle of Jesus Christ to the gentiles." However, Acts portrays Paul repeatedly preaching first to Jews, but then turning to gentiles in frustration after the Jews reject his message. By the end of Acts, it appears that Paul has given up any hope that Jews will join the Jesus Movement. Only with gentiles is there hope for the future of the Jesus Movement. Thus does Acts pave the way for the development of Christian "supersessionism," or what we might call in today's language, "replacement theory."

Acts 13:46

Then both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you reject it and judge yourselves to be unworthy of eternal life, we are now turning to the gentiles.

Acts 18:5-6

5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus. 6 When they opposed and reviled him, in protest he shook the dust from his clothes and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the gentiles."

Galatians 3:28

There is no longer Jew or Greek...for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Romans 10:12

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all...

Romans 11:1-2

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

Romans 11:13-24

13 Now I am speaking to you gentiles. Inasmuch as I am an apostle to the gentiles, I celebrate my ministry 14 in order to make my own people jealous

Acts 28:23-31

23 After they had set a day to meet with him, they came to him at his lodgings in great numbers. From morning until evening he explained the matter to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets. 24 Some were convinced by what he had said, while others refused to believe. 25 So they disagreed with each other, and as they were leaving Paul made one further statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah,

26 'Go to this people and say,
You will indeed listen but never understand,
and you will indeed look but never perceive.

27 For this people's heart has grown dull,
and their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
otherwise they might look with their eyes
and listen with their ears
and understand with their heart and
turn—
and I would heal them.'

28 "Let it be known to you, then, that this salvation of God has been sent to the gentiles; they will listen."

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

and thus save some of them. 15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; and if the root is holy, then the branches also are holy.

17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted among the others to share the rich root of the olive tree, 18 do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember: you do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 That is true. They were broken off on account of unbelief, but you stand on account of belief. So do not become arrogant, but be afraid. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. 22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen but God's kindness toward you, if you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And even those of Israel, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. 24 For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.