



The Apostle's Legacy
in Early Christianity

AFTER PAUL

James W. Aageson

After Paul

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BAYLOR UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Waco, Texas 76798

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Cover and book design by Kasey McBeath

Cover art: Saint Paul. Detail of the mosaic in Arian Baptistery. Ravenna, Italy,
Wikimedia Commons

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Ageson, James W., 1947- author.

Title: After Paul : the apostle's legacy in early Christianity / James W.
Ageson.

Description: Waco : Baylor University Press, 2023. | Includes
bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "Traces the reception
and development of Pauline thought in the early church"-- Provided by
publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023006330 (print) | LCCN 2023006331 (ebook) | ISBN
9781481318693 (hardback) | ISBN 9781481318723 (pdf) | ISBN 9781481318716
(epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Paul, the Apostle, Saint. | Paul, the Apostle,
Saint--Theology. | Church history--Primitive and early church, ca.
30-600.

Classification: LCC BS2651 .A34 2023 (print) | LCC BS2651 (ebook) | DDC
227/.06--dc23/eng/20230509

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023006330>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023006331>

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper with a minimum of thirty
percent recycled content.

In Memoriam

Laura and Eugene Ageson

Helene and Donald Taylor

Ella and Asmund Ageson

Lydia and Henry Miller

We stand with humility on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. We remember them, honor their legacies, and hope that we may be worthy of the many gifts they have given us. This book is offered in their memories with gratitude.

Dr. Terry Fretheim

1936–2020

Dr. Robert Jewett

1933–2020

Dr. Larry J. Alderink

1940–2022

With deep and abiding gratitude for their lives, scholarly curiosity, personal generosity, mentorship, and above all their friendship to me and so many others. May their contributions to the study of the Old and New Testaments and history of religions live on among their intellectual heirs, and may their memories continue to inspire those of us who labor in the scholarly vineyard.

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Preface

How have Pauline thought and Pauline tradition been reinterpreted, reused, reframed, and reconstructed in the first centuries of Christianity? This is the question at the heart of *After Paul: The Apostle's Legacy in Early Christianity*. If the question of Paul's metamorphosis broadly conceived is the underlying and animating question for us, it is insufficient simply to focus on Paul or on his legacy in the Greco-Roman world. We need a bifocal look at Paul with the reference points being both how Paul transformed his own thinking and later how Paul and his thought were transformed by others in the church. The methodological proposal here is that the modern approach needs to be attentive to three superimposed levels of analysis. First, the topics, themes, and ideas represented in the various aspects of his legacy will be investigated, which in this book are indicated most directly by the titles and subheadings of the respective chapters. Second, the most significant lines of development that thread their way through Paul's legacy will be identified and examined. These are (1) *tradition, canon, and Scripture*; (2) *unity and diversity*; (3) *the Church's institutional development*; (4) *the character of the truth*; (5) *Paul's legacy and empire*; (6) *the relationship between Judaism and the early church*; (7) *sexuality, marriage, and the place of women*; (8) *asceticism*. Third, we need to consider what we have identified as *location and legacy*, *ecclesiology and opposition*, and *function and formation*. Each of the figures and materials examined in these chapters represents certain identifiable contexts, whether they are geographical, ecclesiological, theological, institutional, reflective, or performative. These contexts shape the way Paul's legacy or legacies take form. While each of the chapters deals with its own topics, themes, and arguments, these various lines

of development are woven throughout them. By beginning each chapter with a Pauline point of entry into its discussion, we are able to see more clearly the continuity and discontinuity between Paul and Pauline tradition as the historical Paul became a figure of memory and remembrance, and was framed and reframed. This is at the heart of Paul's legacy as it developed and changed over time in the early church, and on that question this project seeks to make a contribution, including to those readers who may not be directly familiar with the origin and development of Paul's legacy in early Christianity or with contemporary scholarship on these issues.

The expression "Paul's *legacy*" implies more than the reception of his texts, his ideas, or his theology. It also implies more than the interpretative techniques or the references to Paul by early post-Paul writers. It refers to the wider impact, influence, and sway of the apostle in the first centuries of the church as well. It may be that his legacy is at work even when he is not mentioned or his epistles explicitly cited. The questions he addressed, his impulse toward theological reflection and argumentation, and his approach to pastoral and ethical concerns also undoubtedly influenced the future course of the Christ movement. This, too, would become part of his legacy. Determining these things, of course, can be very subtle, and for this reason it is sometimes considered beyond the methodological pale by scholars who think about Paul and the early church. However, it would be a mistake to exclude these possibilities from our consideration at the outset. Moreover, this terminology keeps the focus of attention squarely on Paul. Hence, I use the word *legacy* rather than the phrases reception history or patristic exegesis. It is also worth noting that at a recent Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting, three different sessions were devoted to early Christianity, and the titles and terminology of those sessions are revealing of the contemporary conversations: "*Redescribing Christian Origins*," "*Reinventing Christianity . . .*," ". . . *Reassessing the Categories of Heresy and Orthodoxy . . .*"

The upshot of this for the arguments that unfold in the following pages is that the terminology and language we use is critical and must be thought through with care, while at the same time recognizing that no language in these matters is ever entirely neutral. This is especially true in this book, where we repeatedly move back and forth between the "historical Paul" and the "post-Pauline" legacy where the terminology and language used in one case may be inappropriate in the other. I have tried to deal with this challenge with nuance and subtlety without overburdening the reader with cumbersome rhetoric and idiosyncratic vocabulary. While most of the materials discussed in the pages that follow come from the first two centuries after

Paul's death, chapters 6–8 include certain aspects of Paul's legacy that extend into the late third and fourth centuries. They are included to bring certain features of Paul's legacy that may have been latent or not fully matured in earlier periods to light, especially in view of the historical changes that took place in the fourth century.

This book is not and is not intended to be a history of the first centuries of Pauline Christianity. Likewise, it is not and is not intended to be an exhaustive account of everything that pertains to the early development of Paul's legacy. In fact, that may well be beyond the reach of any single volume. We may rather describe this book as methodologically conceptual and experimental. It will be noted that many of the books and much of the recent scholarly literature on Paul's legacy and the reception of his epistles in the early church is in the form of discrete essays, often in edited volumes devoted to the general topic of Paul in the second and third centuries. In these volumes, the editors, often with some difficulty, try to draw the diverse topics together into some kind of conceptual whole, or at least try to describe the state of scholarship on the issue of Paul's reception or developing legacy in the early church. This approach has many advantages. Narrow topics can be investigated and the relevant texts examined in some detail. But there are also problems with this state of affairs. Among them can be the problem of not seeing the forest for the trees. Furthermore, the audience for this work can be very small and the work off putting to wider audiences who are potentially interested in the general topic. With this in mind, this book seeks to plot connections and to identify relationships and patterns in the early development of Paul's legacy. It invites readers to lift their heads up from the furrow and hopefully, in responsible fashion, to see more broadly. This approach, of course, is not without risks. The material is vast, complex, and not always easy to interpret. Hence, being responsible to it can be challenging. Or despite our best efforts, the results may simply end up being superficial. But on the assumption that scholarship must periodically take such risks, this book is presented as an attempt to make connections, see relationships, and develop a theoretical context for understanding Paul's legacy in early Christianity.

Credits

James W. Aageson, review of *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* by Richard I. Pervo in the *Review of Biblical Literature*. Used with permission of the *Review of Biblical Literature* in the introduction.

James W. Aageson, review of *Paul and Ancient Views of Sexual Desire: Paul's Sexual Ethics in 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 7 and Romans 1* by J. Edward Ellis in the *Review of Biblical Literature*. Used with permission of the *Review of Biblical Literature* in chapter 6.

James W. Aageson, "Genesis in the Deutero-Pauline Epistles," in *Genesis in the New Testament*, ed. Maarten J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012). Used with permission of T&T Clark, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, in chapter 6.

James W. Aageson, *Windows on Early Christianity: Uncommon Stories, Striking Images, Critical Perspectives* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2016). Used with permission of Cascade Books, an imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, in chapters 3 and 4. www.wipfandstock.com.

James W. Aageson, "'Control' in Pauline Language and Culture: A Study of Rom 6," *NTS* 42 (1996): 75–89. Cited and used in general terms with permission in chapter 3.

The Octagonal Floor Mosaic from Philippi in chapter 7 is from Berthold Werner with no changes. The file is licensed under Creative Commons (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>). <https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Philippi>.

Abbreviations

Biblical Books

Old Testament

Gen	Genesis	Eccl	Ecclesiastes
Exod	Exodus	Song	Song of Solomon
Lev	Leviticus	Cant	Canticles
Num	Numbers	Wis	Wisdom
Deut	Deuteronomy	Sir	Sirach
Josh	Joshua	Isa	Isaiah
Judg	Judges	Jer	Jeremiah
Ruth	Ruth	Lam	Lamentations
1 Sam	1 Samuel	Bar	Baruch
2 Sam	2 Samuel	Ezek	Ezekiel
1 Kgs	1 Kings	Dan	Daniel
2 Kgs	2 Kings	Hos	Hosea
1 Chr	1 Chronicles	Joel	Joel
2 Chr	2 Chronicles	Amos	Amos
Ezra	Ezra	Obad	Obadiah
Neh	Nehemiah	Jonah	Jonah
Tob	Tobit	Mic	Micah
Jdt	Judith	Nah	Nahum
Esth	Esther	Hab	Habakkuk
1 Macc	1 Maccabees	Zeph	Zephaniah
2 Macc	2 Maccabees	Hag	Haggai
Job	Job	Zech	Zechariah
Ps/Pss	Psalms	Mal	Malachi
Prov	Proverbs		

New Testament

Matt	Matthew	1 Tim	1 Timothy
Mark	Mark	2 Tim	2 Timothy
Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Phlm	Philemon
Acts	Acts	Heb	Hebrews
Rom	Romans	Jas	James
1 Cor	1 Corinthians	1 Pet	1 Peter
2 Cor	2 Corinthians	2 Pet	2 Peter
Gal	Galatians	1 John	1 John
Eph	Ephesians	2 John	2 John
Phil	Philippians	3 John	3 John
Col	Colossians	Jude	Jude
1 Thess	1 Thessalonians	Rev	Revelation
2 Thess	2 Thessalonians		

Apostolic Fathers

Barn.	Barnabas
1–2 Clem.	1–2 Clement
Did.	Didache
Diogn.	Diognetus
Ign. Eph.	Ignatius, <i>To the Ephesians</i>
Ign. Magn.	Ignatius, <i>To the Magnesians</i>
Ign. Smyrn.	Ignatius, <i>To the Smyrnaeans</i>
Ign. Phld.	Ignatius, <i>To the Philadelphians</i>
Ign. Rom.	Ignatius, <i>To the Romans</i>
Ign. Trall.	Ignatius, <i>To the Trallians</i>
Ign. Pol.	Ignatius, <i>To Polycarp</i>
Mart. Pol.	Martyrdom of Polycarp
Pol. Phil.	Polycarp, <i>To the Philippians</i>

Apocrypha

AP&T	Acts of Paul and Thecla
------	-------------------------

Church Fathers

Clement of Alexandria	
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromateis / Miscellanies</i>
Eusebius	
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica / Ecclesiastical History</i>
Irenaeus	
<i>Haer.</i>	<i>Adversus haereses / Against Heresies</i>
Origen	
<i>Cels.</i>	<i>Contra Celsum / Against Celsus</i>

Tertullian

<i>Bapt.</i>	<i>De baptismo / Baptism</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De fuga in persecutione / Flight in Persecution</i>
<i>Marc.</i>	<i>Adversus Marcionem / Against Marcion</i>
<i>Paen.</i>	<i>De paenitentia / Repentance</i>
<i>Praescr.</i>	<i>De praescriptione haereticorum / Prescription against Heretics</i>
<i>Scorp.</i>	<i>Scorpiace / Antidote for the Scorpion's Sting</i>

Secondary References

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ANF	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers</i> . Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 1885–1887. 10 vols. Repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
AThR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ConBNT	Coniectanea Neotestamentica: New Testament Series
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
ECL	Early Christianity and Its Literature
ExAud	<i>Ex Auditu</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
J ECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JFSR	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of New Testament Supplement Series
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LPS	Library of Pauline Studies
LQR	<i>Lexington Quarterly Review</i>
LTP	<i>Laval théologique et philosophique</i>
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to <i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTC	The New Testament in Context
NTL	New Testament Library
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
PBR	<i>Patristic and Byzantine Review</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>

<i>RelSRev</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SecCent</i>	<i>Second Century</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
ThH	Théologie historique
<i>TransRev</i>	<i>Translation Review</i>
VC	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
VCSup	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i> , Supplements
WGRW	Writings from the Greco-Roman World
WGRWSup	Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series
WUANT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WW	<i>Word and World</i>

Introduction

An Overview of Paul's Legacy

Paul and Religion

From the beginning of my work on late second temple Judaism, the New Testament (especially Paul and his letters), and the history of the early church (especially Paul's legacy), one question has consistently sparked my interest. How have early Jewish and early church groups (and individuals) reinterpreted their foundational traditions and texts and in turn transformed themselves over time into something new? This has animated both my writing and my teaching. The specific form of this larger question that informs this study is, how have Pauline thought and Pauline tradition been reinterpreted or reconstructed and in the process come to be something new and different?¹ To address this question, one needs to have at minimum a general notion or theory of what religion is and how it operates.² In other words, no matter the extent to which religions are psychological phenomena or symbolic systems or represent a series of theological claims or manifest ritual practices, they are also social constructs. They are not fixed and unchanging. Although it may be true that some general features of religions, for example, Christology in Christianity, Torah in Judaism, and

¹ See the conclusion below, 225–29.

² For example, to follow the arguments of Emil Durkheim as opposed to Sigmund Freud or to follow the claims of Paul Tillich as opposed to Clifford Geertz or Pascal Boyer will have a profound effect on how we understand the development of these religious traditions and their various religious subsets. See Jeppe Sinding Jensen, *What Is Religion?* (Durham: Routledge, 2014), 2–6; and also Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), especially the subsection entitled “The Function of Religion in Sociocultural Systems,” 25–29.

Qur'an in Islam, persist across time, it is also the case that they are reinterpreted, rethought, and reframed in each new age, each new controversy, each new context. This also suggests that some sense of what constitutes religion, at least in general terms, is critical for making sense of how religious expressions, ideas, practices, and memories develop over time;³ and in this case, the ways Paul's legacy is formed and re-formed.

This is made even more complicated by the fact that the way we in the twenty-first century think about the phenomenon we call religion is very different from the way the ancients in the Mediterranean world thought about it. We in the West are influenced by developments in Christianity and Islam in which religion is an overarching abstraction separated from a particular ethnic group or limited to a specific regional location (in the case of later Judaism, this may be true as well). For us what connects people with a common religious affiliation from different ethnic groups and different regions of the world is a set of ideas, symbols, memories, beliefs, and practices that identify the group. It is not necessarily physical proximity, cultic location, similarity of culture, ethnic identity, common family, or tribal tradition. Once Christianity and ultimately Islam grew beyond their places of origin into more global phenomena, a more expanded concept of religion began to emerge to account for these wider realities of life, practice, and belief. Hence, we call them religions in the more modern and to us familiar sense.

This is not how most ancients themselves would have thought about these emerging phenomena, but it is probably fair to say that the seeds for this later development were being sown already in the first-century Roman world as people from one part of the empire were relocated voluntarily or involuntarily to other regions. Some of these people were simply absorbed into the larger Roman culture with its many gods, temples, and practices, whereas others undoubtedly took their distinctive traditions, beliefs, practices, and collective memories with them. What this meant is that they needed some other way of maintaining their group, its identity, practices, and beliefs. In response to these changed circumstances, it is perhaps likely that an expanded concept of religion began to emerge even then among diaspora Jewish groups and perhaps other ethnic groups as well. However, it was a far cry from anything that we today might identify as a discrete notion of religion.⁴ Within two centuries

³ For discussions of memory see 23n1, 24–25n2, and 25n3 below.

⁴ Paula Fredriksen puts it this way: "Is Paul talking here about 'religion,' about 'social practice,' or about 'ethnicity'? Posing the question puts the answer: Paul at one and the same time speaks to all of these categories. And this is so because these categories, in his period, intimately correspond. In other words, the distinctions that we as Western twenty-first century people draw between 'religion,' 'ethnicity,' and 'traditional behaviors' . . . measure

after Paul, perceptions of the Christ movement as a religion (and Pauline tradition as part of it) had begun to take shape. New ideas were being expressed and new connections made. We might even say that one of the remarkable achievements of the early centuries of the church was the construction of ideas, practices, and social systems that came to represent it as a transportable religious phenomenon.⁵

Luke (in Acts), Marcion (at least as represented by his opponents), and Irenaeus constructed views of the early church that in their own ways integrated Paul into the heart of what Christianity was thought to be. Irenaeus, writing late in the second century, was not the first to construct a theological history of Christian beginnings—both Luke and Marcion predated him—but he was the first to put at the core of early Christianity the documents that were to become part of the New Testament: the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Pauline Letters including the Pastoral Epistles.⁶ In so doing, he would place the Paul of the New Testament at the center of early Christian history,⁷ and we might even say that this was his attempt to understand early Christianity as a religion.⁸ Within several decades following the death of Jesus, the church produced thinkers and writers who set about constructing views of

the difference and distance between Paul's day and our own, a difference compounded by the complexities of translation. Our Western, post-Enlightenment culture defines 'religion' as something personal, private, and largely propositional—we 'believe in' or 'believe that,' which are mental operations" (*Paul: The Pagans' Apostle* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2017], 58).

⁵ We might include this question of religion, both ancient and modern, among the important hermeneutical considerations for the study of Paul's legacy identified by Schröter, Buttica, and Dettwiler in their introduction to the volume they edited, *Receptions of Paul in Early Christianity: The Person of Paul and His Writings through the Eyes of His Early Interpreters* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 11. To see how this was developing ecclesologically in different early church communities, we need to look no further than the so-called apostolic fathers, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Augustine. See also the discussion of Paul and empire below, 139–40. Here we see still other features of the church's development as a religion in contrast to Roman imperial religions.

⁶ Christopher Mount, "Paul's Place in Early Christianity," in *Paul and the Heritage of Israel: Paul's Claim upon Israel's Legacy in Luke and Acts in Light of the Pauline Letters*, ed. David Moessner, Daniel Marguerat, Mikeal Parsons, and Michael Wolter, LNTS 452 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 93.

⁷ Mount, "Paul's Place in Early Christianity," 96.

⁸ Christopher Mount also suggests this implicitly about Marcion and Luke: "Marcion connected Jesus and Paul through a canon of written texts set over against Judaism. The author of Luke-Acts, on the other hand, connected Jesus and Paul not through a canonical collection of texts but through a narrative placing Jesus, the twelve apostles, and Paul in a history of the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire. Both Marcion and the author of Luke-Acts construct the history of early Christianity as authoritative investigators into the

early Christian history and so also began to construct religious conceptions of Christianity, which in turn would become the foundation for still later forms of Christianity. Over time other early Christian thinkers such as Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Augustine also began to explicate and elaborate theologically what Christianity was as a belief system. Underneath all of this, there emerged an abstract notion of Christianity that was identifiable and that could be described in terms of its beliefs, traditions, texts, practices, and historical character.⁹

The social dimension of Paul's world is critical to understanding his life and legacy. Much of his thinking was shaped by the needs, concerns, and problems of the various groups with which he interacted. He functioned as a pastor, guide, and authority figure who sought to hold these small assemblies of people together in the face of problems, differences of perspective, personal frictions, and failed expectations. Likewise, following his death his legacy developed in the fledgling church as he and his letters were used to address a series of new issues facing the church in new and varied contexts: the changing roles and place of women, the nature of the church itself, new issues of unity and diversity, the formation of the Pauline canon, the relationship between scripture and tradition, asceticism, and the church's ongoing connection to Judaism. As an authority figure, his voice would now speak to different people in new and different contexts facing a host of new problems, and in that process his legacy would be established yet again for later generations of Christians. And in each of these contexts and with each of these issues, the sociology of what was happening in Christianity was critical to his developing reputation and legacy.

traditions of the apostles. Marcion used the tools of a literary critic; the author of Luke-Acts the tools of a historiographer" ("Paul's Place in Early Christianity," 100).

⁹ Likewise, in the golden age of Islam, the classical philosophical traditions of Neoplatonism and Aristotle were picked up by the likes of Avicenna (980–1037) and Averroes (1126–1198) who sought to work out some of the philosophical and theological implications of Islam. And by the fourteenth century the great North African Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun broke new ground as he advanced his understanding of history leading some to acclaim him the founder of social history and even sociology itself. In the later Talmudic traditions of Judaism, the rabbis, too, presented a thoroughgoing interpretation of Torah, and in so doing developed a deeply philosophical and hermeneutical understanding of Judaism that we can legitimately describe as religious. And in the process, they authorized a way of being Jewish. While none of these figures can be described as historians of religion in the modern sense, it is not hard to see them contributing to our understanding of religion. Whatever else Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are, they can also be described as systems of belief and practice represented by an identifiable sociohistorical group. And whether we acknowledge it or not, we are heirs of these thinkers and their ideas, and we are indebted to them for our notions of religion.

His religion was always in play, taking on new dimensions, whether in life or in death. Pauline religion was driven first by his own voice and personal energy and then later by the effort and energy of those who appealed to his letters and legacy for their own purposes. In both cases, the emerging religion of Paul and the emerging religion of the early church came together to shape the legacy of the Paul who lived on in the Christian community's memory.¹⁰ And both of these dimensions of Pauline religion incorporated his pastoral theology, his Christian practice, and his rootedness in the social reality of the emerging church. In the one, he was an active agent and in the other an indirect agent; but in life and in death, the Pauline presence lived on in the church.

Hence, Pauline religion broadly conceived is a framework of cultural symbols, texts, narratives, beliefs, and communities that were remembered, if not reinvented, over time. What began as a small movement within the wider world of first century Judaism became an expanding community and eventually grew into what we today call early Christianity. Paul and his legacy are an important subset of this larger phenomenon. The earliest Pauline presence in the Christ community represented a number of different threads running through the earliest church (e.g., faith and faithfulness, life in the Spirit, important roles for women, the rootedness of the church in Israel, attempts at maintaining church unity, eschatological expectations, and serious theological reflection about the nature of Christ and the church). These threads were woven together in the making of the church and then rewoven again and again as the church faced new situations and new contexts.

In these new situations, new questions and problems confronted the church, and with them came new interpretive lenses and frames of meaning. The church was not only growing, but it was confronting challenges that needed satisfying responses for it to adapt and survive as a community in the wider Roman Empire.¹¹ If we stand back and look retrospectively at the historical Paul and his place in early Judaism and the early Christ community, it is clear he stood at a nexus of profound change, even though he and others in the church could not have fully understood this. He was a Jew and presumably remained a Jew throughout his life.¹² What kind of Jew he was after his

¹⁰ See Sandra Huebenthal's threefold distinction regarding memory: social memory, collective memory, and cultural memory: *Reading Mark's Gospel as a Text from Collective Memory* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 164–72; and also 24n1 below, where the terms are described more fully.

¹¹ See below, 140; and the similar comments by Schröter, Buttica, and Dettwiler, *Receptions of Paul in Early Christianity*, 9–11.

¹² For recent discussions of this question, see the essays in Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm, eds., *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*

Damascus Road experience may be debated, but that he remained some kind of identifiable Jew seems clear.

But even more, he was a forceful agent for much of the change we see in the first century of the church. Would the Christ movement break through and become not just a Jewish phenomenon but also a non-Jewish movement? Would the Christ movement become an urban social reality or would it remain a mostly rural Palestinian religious expression? Would it become a movement of small communities spread throughout much of the Roman Empire, or would it remain largely a regional and ancestral phenomenon? Paul was the principal figure in most of these transformations. He argued passionately for the inclusion of non-Jews even though he probably could not appreciate fully how that would ultimately change the church. Unlike Jesus, Paul was comfortable in an urban environment, having been born and educated in Tarsus, a not insignificant Greco-Roman city in Asia Minor. And he was well equipped and prepared to make good use of the Roman transportation system on his way into far-flung regions of the Roman Empire. In addition to Paul's profound effect on the early Christ movement, he occupied a difficult place intellectually and religiously in the landscape of the first-century Mediterranean world, even though this was not fully apparent until much later. To be sure, he was jailed and persecuted by Roman authorities, vilified and challenged by opponents, and sorely tried for his convictions and practices, as even a superficial reading of his epistles and Acts makes clear.¹³ What he would not have been able to appreciate fully is how his work would transform the Christ movement and enable it to survive as a vibrant religious and institutional community beyond the first century.

If the reinterpretation and reconstruction of Pauline thought and tradition broadly conceived is the underlying and animating question for us here, it is insufficient simply to focus on Paul *or* on his legacy in the Greco-Roman world. We need a bifocal look at Paul with the reference points of both Paul's transformation of his own thinking and the transformation of Paul's thought

(Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015); Fredriksen, *Paul*; and Matthew V. Novenson, "Did Paul Abandon either Judaism or Monotheism?" in *The New Cambridge Companion to St Paul*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 239–59.

¹³ Jens Schröter, "Paul the Founder of the Church: Reflections on the Reception of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles and the Pastoral Epistles," in *Paul and the Heritage of Israel: Paul's Claim upon Israel's Legacy in Luke and Acts in Light of the Pauline Letters*, ed. David Moessner, Daniel Marguerat, Mikeal Parsons, and Michael Wolter, LNTS 452 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 206–12.

and tradition by others.¹⁴ For example, we might ask how Paul transformed his understanding of Judaism (let's say specifically how his reading of the Jewish scriptures changed in light of Christ)¹⁵ as well as how Paul's own ideas, practices, pastoral advice, and sense of the ἐκκλησία were remembered and rethought in new circumstances and for new purposes after his death. On the former, we only need to read Rom 4–5, 9–11; Gal 3–4; 1 Cor 10; and 2 Cor 3 to see how Paul reread the Jewish scriptures. It was not that he necessarily used non-Jewish approaches to the reading of the scriptures but that he addressed his own questions in light of Christ to the texts, as he sought to address his own audiences. At least two things were at work for Paul in the turn to scripture. First, he sought to root what he had to say in the authority and antiquity of Jewish tradition. And second, he found in scripture ways of generating new thinking and new languages concerning the issues that confronted him. For example, we think about the argument in Rom 9–11, the place with the greatest concentration of scriptural quotations and allusions anywhere in his epistles. Paul was deeply troubled, as he says, by the fact that the vast majority of Jews had not come to share his conviction that Jesus is the messiah. Because of this he felt compelled to explain how it could be that God's word

¹⁴ Richard Pervo makes the claim that the only real Paul is the dead Paul (*The Making of the Apostle in Early Christianity* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010], 2). Although it is clear what Pervo means by this statement, it is still helpful to think in terms of a bifocal distinction between the Paul of history and the Paul of memory and tradition, a distinction that is also operative in his book. See also Benjamin L. White, *Remembering Paul: Ancient and Modern Contests over the Image of the Apostle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–107; and the discussion below, 14–15. See also the distinctive arguments by Fredriksen about Paul the Jew in *Paul: The Pagans' Apostle*; and in her subsequent article, "What Does It Mean to See Paul 'within Judaism'?" *JBL* 141 (2022): 359–80.

¹⁵ Among the many works on this subject, see, e.g., the following: James W. Aageson, *Written Also for Our Sake: Paul and the Art of Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993); and "Paul's Use of Scripture: A Comparative Study of Biblical Interpretation in Early Palestinian Judaism and the New Testament with Special Reference to Romans 9–11" (DPhil diss., Oxford University, 1983); Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988); and *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Steve Moyise, *Paul and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010); Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley, eds., *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*, SBLSymS 50 (Atlanta: SBL, 2008); Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*, SNTSMS 74 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Christopher D. Stanley, ed., *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Extending the Conversation*, Early Christianity and Its Literature 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012); and J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans*, NovTSup 101 (Leiden: Brill, 2002).