ONE FROM THE BEGINNING: A PROPOSED APOLOGETIC FOR
THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH FROM AD 30-250

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ONE FROM THE BEGINNING: A PROPOSED EXPLANATION FOR
THE HISTORICAL GROWTH OF THE CHURCH FROM AD 30-250

Douglas Edward Taylor

Read and approved by:
Chairperson: ____Ken Cleaver_______________________________
Reader: _______Kevin King_____________________________________________
Reader: _______Ed Smither_____________________________________________

Date: ______________________
To my wife—the mother of my children, Kathryn:

When you became a Christian your biological family essentially severed all ties with you because of the differences each of you understood with respect to the person of Jesus. Yet you have never waivered in your belief of the gospel message of the eternal deity, physical death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus. You have asked questions that made me dig deeper and look harder for not only what we as Christians believe, but also to know why we believe what we believe. Over the years you saw something in me that I never saw or could have imagined of myself, and it was you who encouraged me to pursue graduate school and my doctorate. Without you, this work would never have happened.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................xv

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION........................................................................................................1
  Background and Need for the Study .......................................................................................... 1
  Limitations and Delimitations .................................................................................................. 4
  Epistemology .......................................................................................................................... 5
  Methodology ........................................................................................................................... 5
  Root Cause Analysis ............................................................................................................... 7
  Rationale ................................................................................................................................ 8
  Defining Key Terms ................................................................................................................. 14
  Relevant Texts for Establishing the Research Basis ............................................................... 15
  History ................................................................................................................................... 15
  Apologetics ............................................................................................................................. 22
  Summary of Thought to This Point ....................................................................................... 29

CHAPTER 2: ESTABLISHING THE SPAC .................................................................................. 31
  The Path Forward .................................................................................................................... 32
  The ‘Gospel’ ........................................................................................................................... 35
    1 Thessalonians ................................................................................................................... 35
    Galatians .............................................................................................................................. 38
    SPAC ................................................................................................................................... 40
  Death and Resurrection .......................................................................................................... 41
  Christ Died for Our Sins ........................................................................................................... 44
  He was Buried ......................................................................................................................... 45
Aristo of Pella ........................................................................................................ 90
Apollinaris of Hierapolis ...................................................................................... 90
A Single Christianity ............................................................................................ 92
Origen (ca. 185-254) .......................................................................................... 95
Hippolytus (ca. 160-236) .................................................................................... 97
Tertullian (ca. 160-230) ..................................................................................... 99
Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215) ................................................................. 100
Irenæus of Lyons (ca. 130-202) ....................................................................... 102
Justin (ca. 100-165) ......................................................................................... 103
Polycarp (ca. 69-155) ....................................................................................... 105
Ignatius (ca. 50-110) ......................................................................................... 106
Clement of Rome (ca. 30-100) ....................................................................... 107
Church Councils ................................................................................................ 108
Church Discipline .............................................................................................. 110
The SPAC Traced ............................................................................................... 112
Clement of Rome .............................................................................................. 113
Ignatius ............................................................................................................... 113
Polycarp ............................................................................................................. 114
Aristides of Athens ............................................................................................ 114
Irenæus ................................................................................................................ 115
Against Heresies .................................................................................................. 115
The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching ............................................... 116
Tertullian ............................................................................................................. 118
Origen .......................................................................................................................... 119

Tracing the Positive Apologetic .................................................................................... 120

Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna ............................ 121

Aristides and Justin ....................................................................................................... 124

Clement of Alexandria ................................................................................................. 125

Irenæus .......................................................................................................................... 126

Tertullian ....................................................................................................................... 128

Origen .......................................................................................................................... 130

Non-Christian Information .......................................................................................... 131

Summary of Thought to This Point ............................................................................. 132

CHAPTER 4: FROM SPAC AND APOLOGETICS TO ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS .......... 136

Other Gospels ............................................................................................................... 138

Ebionites ....................................................................................................................... 138

The Clementine Homilies ............................................................................................ 142

Recognitions ................................................................................................................ 145

Docetists ....................................................................................................................... 146

Marcionites .................................................................................................................. 149

The Root Cause Analysis Process .............................................................................. 156

Causal Factors ............................................................................................................ 157

Causal Factor Types and Problem Categories ......................................................... 158

Major Root Cause Category ...................................................................................... 159

Near Root Cause and Intermediate Cause ............................................................... 162

Root Cause Type and Root Cause ............................................................................ 163

vii
Root Cause Analysis

Root Cause #1: Documentation Issue – Inaccurate

Root Cause #2: Documentation Issue – Missing Information

Root Cause #3: Supervision Issue – Performance Not Corrected

Root Cause #4: Communication Issue – Incorrect

Summary of Thought to This Point

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Implications from the Research

Earning Salvation

A Trojan Horse

Marcion

Root Cause

Potential Objections

Causal Overdetermination

Disproportionate Sources

Limited Sources Concede Too Much to the Skeptic

Events are too far in the Past for Root Cause Analysis

The Role of Defensive Apologetics

Implications for the Church Today

Appendix A – Crucifixion of Jesus

Appendix B – Resurrection of Jesus

Appendix C – Rule of Faith

Appendix D – Law and the Prophets
Appendix E – Root Cause Paths Considered and Rejected ............................................ 240
Bibliography ................................................................................................................... 249
FIGURES

4.1 Causal Factor Types and Problem Categories..................................................158
4.2 Major Root Cause Categories Irrelevant to This Research.................................160
4.3 Major Root Cause Categories Relevant to This Research..................................161
4.4 Root Cause Types and Root Causes.................................................................163
4.5 Root Cause #1 – Path.....................................................................................164
4.6 Root Cause #2 – Path.....................................................................................167
4.7 Root Cause #3 – Path.....................................................................................170
4.8 Root Cause #4 – Path.....................................................................................172
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Apol</td>
<td>First Apology</td>
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<td>1 Clem</td>
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<td>3 En.</td>
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<td>Apology (Aristides)</td>
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<td>Adv. haer</td>
<td>Adversus Haereseus</td>
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<td>Ag. Ap.</td>
<td>Against Apion</td>
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<td>Apol</td>
<td>Apology (Tertullian)</td>
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<td>b. Ber.</td>
<td>Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berakhot</td>
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<td>b. Sota</td>
<td>Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sotah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contra Cels</td>
<td>Against Celsus</td>
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<tr>
<td>De carn Chr</td>
<td>On the Flesh of Christ</td>
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<td>De civ. Dei</td>
<td>The City of God</td>
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<td>De jejun</td>
<td>On Morality</td>
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<td>De praesc haer</td>
<td>The Prescription Against Heretics</td>
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<td>De princ.</td>
<td>De Principiis</td>
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<tr>
<td>De res</td>
<td>On the Resurrection of the Flesh</td>
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<td>De. Pud</td>
<td>On Modesty</td>
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<td>Epistles (Cyprian)</td>
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<td>Hist Eccl</td>
<td>Ecclesiastical History</td>
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<td>Homilies (Pseudo-Clementine)</td>
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<td>IEph</td>
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<td>The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians</td>
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<td>The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnæans</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. W.</td>
<td>Jewish Wars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poly</td>
<td>The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prot.</td>
<td>Exhortation to the Heathen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recog</td>
<td>Recognitions (Pseudo-Clementine)</td>
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<td>Refutatio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strom</td>
<td>Stromata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trypho</td>
<td>Dialogue with Trypho</td>
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Abstract

“The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; *the blood of Christians is seed.*”¹ Why Christianity from its inception grew in numbers has remained a relatively stable and uncontested topic. Moreover, recent history has seen a move by some scholars to claim not one but multiple Christianities existed in the first three centuries. No study, however, has approached the growth of Christianity as being a result of positive apologetics and then defended that there was but one Christianity from the beginning through the use of Root Cause Analysis. After proposing an early fixed understanding of those core beliefs that established one as being Christian this study treats the characteristic teachings of Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites through the filter of Root Cause Analysis toward supporting the claim that from the origin of Christianity there has been only one Christianity, and that Christianity grew through the use of a positive apologetic.²

¹ Tertullian, *Apol* 50.
² Unless otherwise noted, all references from the Ante-Nicene Fathers will be taken from the 1885 edition.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background and Need for the Study

The purpose of this research is to focus on select materials from AD 30-250, predominately from Christian sources but also including select non-Christian material in an effort to determine whether it was through the use of positive apologetics that the church grew.

From the very beginning of his text *How Jesus Became God*, Bart Ehrman states that the early church believed Jesus to be God, but since the late eighteenth century historians have figured out that this is simply not correct.³ While Ehrman brings the challenge it must be questioned if he is guilty of rejecting the data rather than simply objecting to the interpretation of that data—or more importantly demonstrating the flaws within the data, the interpretation of the data, or both, and as such has not demonstrated the validity of his claim.⁴ Much work has already been done by

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³ Bart Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee* (New York: HarperCollins, 2014), 2. What is conspicuously absent in Ehrman’s work is any explanation on how the church was wrong for centuries, and then what specifically was it that surfaced from an historical perspective that justified dismissing that which the church had held to over the centuries. In short, no evidence was offered that would refute the reports of the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, that he was an itinerant preacher who was reported to have done wondrous things labeled by many as miracles, that he died by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, that he was buried in a borrowed tomb, that there were reports of Jesus having been seen alive by many shortly following his death and burial, or that would explain the transformation of the disciples, as well as the conversion of the skeptic James and the enemy of the church, Saul.

⁴ Specific sources include Habermas, Licona, Gathercole, Bird, and others. For information related to the uncommon nature of miracles in the first century yet historians did not appear to *a priori* reject those claims, see Gary Habermas and Michael Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004), 297; for an assessment of the scarcity of miracle claims tied to an historical individual, see Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 247; for the range of
Habermas in establishing the minimal facts for both the resurrection and the deity of Christ. In a review of *Debating Christian Theism*, of Habermas’ minimal facts Angus Menuge states, “Habermas’s ‘minimal facts’ approach is not without its critics (some say it concedes too much to tendentious principles of biblical criticism), but it does explain why, over time, one skeptical alternative after another to the historical fact of the resurrection has been abandoned, leaving critics with shrinking cover to hide from Christ’s claim on their life.”

Habermas cites what he believes to be the most important minimal facts related to the resurrection as being Jesus’ death by crucifixion, that the disciples had experiences they believed to be appearances of the risen Jesus, that the disciples were transformed based on those experiences, there was very early preaching of the reported resurrection event in Jerusalem—the same location as the crucifixion of Jesus, the conversion of Paul, and the conversion of James, the half-brother of Jesus. The significance of this listing is that if all of Christianity hinges upon the resurrection then by way of the resurrection the deity and death aspects of the apologetic method are affirmed. Given Menuge’s comments about the strength of Habermas’ argumentation acceptance of miracle claims by historians see Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, ed. Conrad H. Gempf (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), chapter 3; for a priori rejection of supernatural as an ad hoc response, see Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 582; for a priori rejection as an invalid process see Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, 8th printing (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2008), 59; “Evidential Apologetics,” in *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and Steven B. Cowan (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 112; for why the claim of a priori is not rightly applied to the individual holding to the plausibility of miracles see Douglas Geivett and Gary Habermas, *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God’s Action in History* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 32 where the discussion focuses on why credibility may be ascribed to witnesses and historians; for why giving speculation the force of probability is bad methodology, see Simon Gathercole, “What did the First Christians Think about Jesus?” in *How God Became Jesus: The Real Origins of Belief in Jesus’ Divine Nature*, ed. Michael F. Bird (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 106.

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it would appear plausible to expect to find these same strong arguments in the post-apostolic writings of the church.

Authors have on a large scale seemingly conflated Christianity such that what Christianity does or is supposed to do is understood to be what it is. Not unlike any other time in history personal biases have influenced how Christianity is understood today. This research seeks to identify not what Christianity does, but what it was that constituted the most necessary belief in order to be considered Christian.

By returning to the period of the early church it will be possible to identify exactly what it was that the earliest followers of Jesus believed made them uniquely Christian, and that there were clearly understood lines of demarcation between those who were Christian and those who merely claimed the title but followed a different gospel. More specifically, this research seeks to demonstrate the early church grew through the use of a positive apologetic. Defensive apologetics may reveal error in thought or belief and may lead one to theism, but defensive apologetics do not necessarily lead one to the God of Christianity. It is the role of positive apologetics to establish the credibility of Christianity, in significant part by affirming the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Three key arguments will be addressed in this research. First, it is plausible that a distinction needs to be made between the root cause for the spread of Christianity and causal factors associated with the same. Second, by looking to positive apologetics one finds justification for belief in and commendation of Christianity. Finally, when examining Gnostic and what some deem to be heretical texts it will be demonstrated that each offered system of belief incorporated a significant change to one or more aspects of the deity, death, and resurrection reports as they related to Jesus.
Limitations and Delimitations

In anticipation of a broader readership and with respect to limitations, English translations of the original works will be preferred in this research. Non-English terms will be included when the inclusion will add clarity that might not be adequately communicated from the English alone.

In terms of delimitations, this research will evaluate the growth of the church from a terminus a quo of AD 30 and terminus ad quem of AD 250. The terminus a quo allows for an early letter to the Galatians (AD 49). In looking to the first two chapters of Galatians the reader finds that Paul had converted to Christianity, then over seventeen years had made two trips to Jerusalem, both of which had occurred prior to the penning of the letter. Subtracting seventeen years would place Paul’s conversion at AD 327 necessitating a crucifixion dating of AD 30. The terminus ad quem has been selected to ensure a long enough period following the apostles yet early enough to avoid the influence of Constantine on the growth and polity of the church.

With the desire to build the strongest case possible for the proposed thesis, this research will only include those seven texts of the Pauline corpus that are accepted by critical scholars (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon) as authentic as well as those speech-acts and sermon summaries accepted from Acts. This is not to suggest a lack of value for the balance of the material now known as the New Testament; rather the intent is to build an inductive argument for the thesis using only those sources generally

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7 It is recognized and acknowledged that there are scholars who interpret this passage in Galatians such that there were only fourteen years in which both Jerusalem visits happened, believing the three years first mentioned were concurrent to the fourteen years that follows. If one concludes there were only fourteen years in which both visits occurred, then it would be possible for an AD 33 crucifixion date. Whether one opts for fourteen or seventeen years in the exegesis of the text does no damage to the thesis of this research.
accepted by critical scholars. Additionally, because the Jewish Scriptures were in use at the same
time as the accepted Pauline corpus those will be admitted where appropriate.

No anonymous or pseudo works will be included in this research with respect to Christian
writings and that by establishing this threshold it will prevent the use of sources known to be
Christian yet with uncertainty in relation to the author. It is recognized that such inclusion by
known name of author is not a viable threshold with respect to Gnostic texts and as such a select
number of works included in The Nag Hammadi may be included and examined.

Because of the volume of work already completed by Gary Habermas, the minimal facts
for the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus will be accepted as a very early teaching within the
church without attempting to demonstrate the validity of the belief of the specific elements.
Additionally, there will be no attempt to prove the historicity of Jesus as an individual.

**Epistemology**

**Methodology**

The primary approach to this research will be an evidential methodology. Believing the
early church taught the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus, a brief case will be made from the
accepted Pauline corpus establishing a baseline for early teaching. The baseline will become
known in this research as the Standard, Policy, or Administrative Control (SPAC). If
Momigliano’s Rule that the historian searches for the original versus the derivative sources is to

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8 Making such a move will necessitate that valuable pieces of work such as *The Epistle to Diognetus* will
not be considered as part of this research. Equally, by not allowing certain pseudo works, pieces where there may be
disagreement as to whether an early father actually wrote a certain document will be exempted from this research in
an attempt to avoid pieces that are more likely to draw the criticism that the research is speculative, having drawn
conclusions from those speculations, and then gone further to build additional arguments presuming any
speculations to be fact. It is important to note that the decision to not include such works is in keeping with the
stated methodological approach of this research and should not be interpreted as meaning such works lack value for
scholars researching this era but with a different focus.
be applied here then by identifying the original SPAC will enable the bifurcation of original versus derivative with respect to early Christian beliefs regarding what it was that made them what they were.\(^9\)

Hegel stated the role of original history to be the penning of eyewitness testimony by those eyewitnesses, whereas critical reflective history emphasizes research focused on determining the truthfulness and credibility of particular historical sources.\(^{10}\) Thus a distinction is made between the event itself as being history and the record of that event as history. History is unable to be recreated as though it were operating in the field of one of the hard sciences and as such is relegated to the sources which remain for investigation. Relevant extant sources may therefore constitute evidence in relation to the research. Almost as a cautionary statement Hegel said, “What the historian puts into their mouths is no supposititious system of ideas, but an uncorrupted transcript of their intellectual and moral habits.”\(^{11}\) The proposed evidential methodology must therefore be grounded in what exists and not travel down a speculative path.

Bart Ehrman suggests historians appeal to evidence, preferring physical evidence, surviving products that “can be traced back with relative certainty back to the person,” and other kinds of evidence that is not from the person but about the person.\(^{12}\) Of importance here is

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\(^9\) Paul Barnett, *The Birth of Christianity: The First Twenty Years* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 17. See also Arnaldo Momigliano, “The Rules of the Game in the Study of Ancient History,” *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 55, no. 1 (Feb 2016): 39-45 (http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/hith.10786/full). For a translation of Momigliano’s ten theses. If Momigliano’s “rules” are applied here and accepted as an accurate method to investigating historical claims, then it would appear to follow that if one was to desire to challenge the offered SPAC of this research, they would have to demonstrate that other materials, such as that of Marcion, Celsus, etc., were actually produced and circulated prior to the material examined here as being considered original.

\(^{10}\) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 1-7. The differentiation is made between the *geschichte*, or story, as compared to the *historie*, or what actually happened.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 3.

Ehrman’s appeal to a relative certainty and not a requirement for mathematical or absolute certainty. Habermas stated that the focus of historians is on both the event and how that event has been recorded and interpreted.¹³

Root Cause Analysis

Through establishing a SPAC it will be possible to introduce a secondary methodological tool also evidential in nature: Root Cause Analysis. Greater detail will be provided in chapter four, but here it suffices to state that Root Cause Analysis is a systematic approach that attempts to identify why undesired or unintended events happened as compared to the expected outcome. More specifically, the research will include theABS Root Cause Analysis Methodology in assessing selected writings that either ran concurrent or following Paul and deviated from the established SPAC. Because it is anticipated that one will be able to clearly identify what it is that made Christianity the very thing it is, it is also believed that one can identify writings from the period in review that offered a change or variation to the Pauline teaching (SPAC) specifically as it relates to the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. By utilizing a non-theological tool to assess the writings of individuals who opposed Christianity or sought to offer a different version the specific point(s) of deviation should be objectively identifiable. Additionally, because using root cause methodology for assessing gaps or failures focuses on evidence rather than pure speculation and is commonly used by major corporations and government agencies in the United States,¹⁴ the objectivity of the system has been well established in the secular community. No


¹⁴ Examples of Root Cause Analysis being used by agencies in the United States include: a Fatal Accident Investigation Report where an Isomerization Unit explosion took place killing seventeen people in Texas City, TX in 2005 (http://www.csb.gov/bp-america-refinery-explosion/); *Deepwater Horizon Accident Report* where an oil drilling rig lost containment in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 (https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/sustainability/issue-
known works have sought to evaluate the differences in Christian teachings during this time span through the use of Root Cause Analysis. A thorough explanation of this methodology and its application to the research will be provided in Chapter 4.

It is important for now to note that the use of Root Cause Analysis is not merely “a business tool.” Rather it is a method for investigating historical conditions and events related to why virtually any undesired event obtained. Speculation may often be avoided but is not always completely preventable, and this method does address the inclusion of speculation in the course of an investigation. When speculation enters the investigation, the conclusions become more tentative. Because this research seeks to investigate historical events, ranges of plausibility are to be preferred in assessing offered root causes and interpretation of data rather than mathematical probabilities.

Equally important to understand is that Root Cause Analysis is designed to determine why a deviation or failure occurred and cannot be used as a tool to affirm why something happened correctly—a positive outcome—according to the established expectation. As such the role of Root Cause Analysis in this research will be to aid in demonstrating not only objectivity on the part of the researcher, but also to assist in building a cogent argument that increases the plausibility of any offered conclusions.

Rationale

This work will employ both inductive and abductive approaches of argumentation, building from specific points of evidence to the best possible inferred conclusion. Recognizing

reports/Deepwater_Horizon_Accident_Investigation_Report.pdf); US Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board report following a release of Methyl Chloride on January 22, 2010, a release of Oleum on January 23, 2010, and a release of Phosgene on January 23, 2010 where the releases were linked to at least one death and possible exposures to others (http://www.csb.gov/assets/1/19/CSB%20Final%20Report.pdf).
the Humean problem of induction argument exists it is suggested that this research avoids such a challenge. The two issues associated with the Humean problem of induction in particular are with the concept of generalizing about the properties of a group of objects, and presupposing that future events will happen as in the past. This research will focus on establishing a SPAC based on one specific individual rather than a collective and second, because of the definition used in determining what will constitute ‘evidence,’ future events are not admissible in this research. As a result, the problem of induction is avoided by focusing the research on the evidences.

Evidences are necessary for establishing matters of truth. In American jurisprudence, evidence broadly speaking is understood as testimony, physical objects, and documents materially relevant to the case at hand that is capable of demonstrating a fact without inference or presumption. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines evidence as information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true, while Webster’s considers evidence to be an outward sign or indicator of something that furnishes proof. The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy moves a step further by stating that evidence is that which increases or decreases the probability of a proposition.

Frederick Ferré notes the following regarding the nature of evidence:

Suffice it to say that while the general function of evidence is to count for or against the reasonableness of giving some degree of assent to a possible belief, its specific nature is field-dependent and thus relative to the logical character of the sort of beliefs at issue. Evidence is either logically relevant, that is, or it is not evidence (within that field of thought) at all. In practice, furthermore, what makes some datum or other evidence is not some absolute characteristic inherent in it, but, rather, the considered judgment of those who work and think in the field that it needs to be taken into account in the weighing of their beliefs. Thus evidence becomes evidence, I submit, by a kind of ruling made—often not without debate and never incorrigibly—by those most intimately concerned. Evidence is provisionally granted its evidential status by being acknowledged as properly pertinent to the resolution of the issue at hand; it is ruled in order by those seized of a

question; it is admitted into court, as it were, by those most interested in reaching a fair verdict.16

Thomas Kelly notes the following:

Reflection on examples such as these naturally suggest that evidence consists paradigmatically of physical objects, or perhaps, physical objects arranged in certain ways. For presumably, physical objects are the sort of thing which one might place in a plastic bag, dig up from the ground, send to a laboratory, or discover among the belongings of an individual of historical interest…. Empiricists in the vein of Russel think of evidence as sense data…. Quine held that evidence consisted of the stimulation of one’s sensory receptors…. Evidence is that which makes a difference to what one is justified in believing or what is reasonable to believe…. Thus, the skeptic about our knowledge of the external world maintains that one’s evidence does not favor one’s ordinary, commonsense views about one’s surroundings over the various skeptical alternatives…. Insofar as one is rational, one is disposed to respond appropriately to one’s evidence: at any given time, one’s views accurately reflect the character of one’s evidence at that time, and one’s views manifest a characteristic sensitivity or responsiveness to change in one’s evidence through time.17

_The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy_ frames evidence as follows:

Evidence is information bearing on the truth or falsity of a proposition…. One has knowledge only when one has a true belief based on very strong evidence…. Conclusive evidence is so strong as to rule out all possibility of error. The discussions of skepticism show clearly that we lack conclusive evidence for our beliefs about the external world, about the past, about other minds, and about nearly any other topic. Thus, a person’s perceptual experiences provide only inconclusive evidence for beliefs about the external world since such experiences can be deceptive or hallucinatory. Inconclusive, or prima facie, evidence can always be defeated or overridden by subsequently acquired evidence, as, e.g., when testimonial evidence in favor of a proposition is overridden by the evidence provided by subsequent experiences.18

From an empiricist viewpoint evidence is presented as being objective in nature and known through one or more of the five senses. The skeptic’s position of our knowledge not


favoring one’s ordinary and commonsense views about one’s surroundings over various alternatives fails to convince. If, as suggested by the skeptic, there is no reason to favor the commonsense views, then one is at a loss for explaining why such a person when driving a vehicle stops when the traffic light turns red or chooses to use an umbrella when it rains.

Evidence will be defined in this work as a condition or event, objective in nature, knowable by those present, open to investigation by all others, whereby when rightly interpreted, corresponds to reality. Using this definition, evidence may be either a noun or a verb, is not limited to a single person, is not subjective, and requires interpretation for correct understanding. One cannot avoid the reality that there are what would be known as evidences for events that have happened in history or conditions which exist. This arguably is the very basis upon which forensic science was established. As such the definition used here is a softer form of evidentialism, allowing for the existence of paradoxes and belief in other areas of life where such belief does not meet the established standard for inclusion in this research.

Of importance here is not to claim future events as being evidential. John Hick proposed that eschatology could be used as part of an evidential argument.

The appeal to evidence as a means of verifying the truth of Christianity has been made to the past (history) as well as to present experience either internally (as in mysticism) or externally (in nature). But some have also appealed to the future as a source of evidence for the possible truth of Christianity. Such was the suggestion of John Hick in his eschatological verification.

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19 Doug Taylor, “A Positive Case for the Primacy of an Evidential Apologetic Method” (paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society Eastern Region Meeting, March 2016), 1-2. The idea behind the definition is that there are no such things as brute facts—facts require interpretation. The facts are individual points of data that must be understood in context. The challenge with those who would oppose the interpretation will require that one clearly delineate between an objection to the interpretation of the data versus an a priori rejection of the data.

20 Ibid.

In denying the use of what may be in the future and appealing only to that which exists now or in the past an evidential method avoids challenges that the structure is logically fallacious by way of introducing statements that may be interpreted as appealing to a hypothesis contrary to fact.

A significant benefit to the use of an evidential method is that it has the ability to become a positive apologetic that focuses on individual points building from the data to the conclusion. A pitfall that may be avoided by the use of evidential methods is that it may prevent movement toward polemical arguments and instead focuses on the data and subsequent conclusion.

John Frame, in responding to Habermas’ preference of an evidential apologetic method, makes a point of indicating that there is difficulty in using the evidential method in trying to reason with unbelievers and points to Romans 1 for support that unbelievers suppress the truth and exchange the truth for a lie.\textsuperscript{22} What cannot be missed is that Frame’s very argument supports the offered definition for evidence. More specifically, if evidence rightly interpreted corresponds to reality, then to know and be able to suppress truth indicates that one has epistemic access to evidence.

A second challenge to the use of an evidential method may rest in the concept of rationalism where the intent is to express that reason is the epitome of authority when discussing religious matters. “More broadly, rationalism is any philosophical position affirming the ability of thinking, apart from sensory experience, to discover fundamental truths about the world or reality.”\textsuperscript{23} The challenge here is that one is not capable of thinking in a vacuum. Even if one were truly able to reach a position whereby they could think without any external sensory experience,

\begin{footnotes}
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thinking that is done in the present is influenced by both experiences and knowledge gained in
the past. One can think rationally but one cannot think where that thinking is not in some way
influenced by external stimuli.\textsuperscript{24}

A possible objection that might be brought against the one giving primacy to an
evidential method, \textit{a la} Evans, is associated with a lack of objectivity.\textsuperscript{25} The difficulty here is
that this challenge cuts in more than one direction. First, it is not possible to come to the table as
an unbiased or disinterested party. Second, biases are driven to a large degree by an individual’s
worldview meaning that a person’s conclusions will likely be influenced by how they see the
world. The bias challenge, however, fails to carry convincing weight. Berkhof notes, “Dr.
Kuyper speaks as follows of the attempt to do this [prove the existence of God through
evidence]: ‘The attempt to prove God’s existence is either useless or unsuccessful. It is useless if
the searcher believes that God is a rewarder of those who seek Him. And it is unsuccessful if it is
an attempt to force a person who does not have this \textit{pistis} by means of argumentation to an
acknowledgment in a logical sense.”\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} Francis Schaeffer said, “Postmodernism has been defined more simply as the belief that there is no
bottom line, anywhere.” See Barry Hankins, \textit{Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America}, ed. Mark
A. Noll, Nathan O. Hath, and Allen C. Guelzo, Library of Religious Biography (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008),
174. Eckman states that, “In postmodernism, the self defines reality.” See James P. Eckman, \textit{The Truth About
Worldviews: A Biblical Understanding of Worldview Alternatives} (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 10. In
postmodernism it could be argued by someone that my immediate context determines meaning and that there is no
such thing as shared knowledge, understanding, or truth. Text without context is meaningless, and if postmodernists
collectively would appeal to the idea that there is no such thing as shared knowledge, understanding, or truth, the
position is self-refuted since they would share a belief in the knowledge, understanding, or truth set forth by their
claim.

\textsuperscript{25} Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman, Jr., \textit{Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to

\textsuperscript{26} Louis Berkhof, \textit{Systematic Theology} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1938), 21. It is important to note here
that Berkhof points back to his own translation of \textit{Dictaten Dogmatiek, de Deo I}, 77.
When speaking of evidence this research is speaking to those points of data that are open to investigation and known widely. Such a move is not done to avoid difficulties and questions that remain regarding what will happen in the future, rather it is a deliberate move to look at what may be known and what pieces of information are open to investigation by any interested party now. The Holy Spirit may speak to a person internally and bear witness but this is not necessarily open to investigation by others and therefore is not considered as evidence in this research. Moving beyond this, a crucial aspect to properly understanding an evidential method is in the right interpretation of the data. When examined in context the interpretation should yield the best plausible conclusion consistent with the data.

Defining Key Terms

To facilitate clear communication between the researcher and readers, it will be necessary to define certain strategic words used throughout the research.

1. **Evidence** will be defined as a condition or event objective in nature, knowable by those present, open to investigation by all others, whereby when rightly interpreted, corresponds to reality.

2. **Miracle** will be defined as a highly improbable event with no known naturalistic causes, which is charged with religious significance in relationship with YHWH, the execution of which is for the benefit of His people.²⁷

3. **Positive apologetic** will be defined as the commending of Christianity as understood through the established SPAC, affirming the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

4. **Defensive apologetic** will be defined as a methodology or argument demonstrating why views not related to the established SPAC (the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus) are lacking, and thus are not to be included in this research. Examples of such defensive apologetics would include responses to charges that Christians were cannibals and atheists.

5. *Root Cause* will be defined as a plausible “why” behind a condition or event obtaining contra an established SPAC.

6. *SPAC* will be defined as Standards, Policies, or Administrative Controls.\(^2^8\) A SPAC provides the boundaries within which a system is intended to function.

7. *Contributing Factor* will be defined as a condition or event that is of interest, and could have some level of impact or influence within the system, but if that condition or event were removed, it does not mitigate or prevent the condition or event being investigated from obtaining or obtaining in the manner currently observed.

8. *Causal Factor* will be defined as a condition or event that, if removed, mitigates or prevents the condition or event being investigated from obtaining or at least from obtaining in the manner currently observed.\(^2^9\)

9. *Worldview* will be defined as the filter, beliefs, or methodological system through which one interprets data and arrives at meaning.\(^3^0\)

### Relevant Texts for Establishing the Research Basis

#### History

Almost a century ago Walter Bauer penned *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, with his conclusions influencing scholars since that time. In his introduction he states, “We must also approach the “heretics” in the same way. We need to understand them also in terms of their own time, and not to evaluate them by means of ecclesiastical doctrine which was developing, or which later became a ready-made norm…. Where there is heresy, orthodoxy


\(^2^9\) Ibid., 13.

must have preceded.” While Bauer made the statement that orthodoxy must have preceded, his thesis in the end suggested the exact opposite.

Unlike Bauer’s conclusion, this work seeks to demonstrate the primacy position by way of the Pauline corpus. Over the past century even most critical scholars have come to accept seven texts of the Christian New Testament as having authentically come from Paul. As such the starting point for this research is different in that Bauer held the position that, “As we turn to our task, the New Testament seems to be both too unproductive and too much disputed to be able to serve as a point of departure. The majority of its anti-heretical writings cannot be arranged with confidence either chronologically or geographically; nor can the more precise circumstances of their origin be determined with sufficient precision.”

Andreas Köstenberger and Michael Kruger outlined in The Heresy of Orthodoxy how several scholars that have challenged Bauer’s thesis, suggesting that, “Although the late first and early second century gave birth to a variety of heretical movements, the set of (Christological) core beliefs known as orthodoxy was considerably earlier, more widespread, and more prevalent than Ehrman and other proponents of the Bauer-Ehrman thesis suggests.” Hultgren’s work was cited, noting that, “But there was a stream of Christianity—which was indeed a broad stream—that claimed there were limits to diversity, and that persisted from the beginning on into the second

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32 Ibid., xxv. While Bauer found the New Testament writings to be “too unproductive and too much disputed” to serve as a starting point, it is interesting that in his concluding chapter he makes use of select passages from Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Philippians (all texts that will be used to establish a SPAC) in this research. He additionally makes use of First Timothy, Colossians, and First Peter. See pages 233-235.

33 Andreas Köstenberger and Michael Kruger, The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture’s Fascination with Diversity has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 66.
century, providing the foundations of orthodoxy.”

This text, along with those other scholarly works pointed to by Köstenberger and Kruger, demonstrate that what makes this research unique is not the claim that there was one Christianity or one orthodoxy from the beginning, rather it will be the use of root cause analysis in evaluating whether or not divergent teachings from groups such as the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites qualify to be considered Christian based on specifically selected data points. By this it is meant that the seven Pauline texts to be used will be considered as independent letters and not from the perspective of how they fit into the whole of what would become the Christian New Testament.

John Behr provides argumentation for an incarnational theology in *The Way to Nicea*. With acceptance of the existence of early texts deemed authoritative in the church, Behr states, “The Christ who appears on the pages of the writing recognized as canonical Scripture, the Scriptural Christ, is always the crucified and risen one…. The Christian confession is not simply who a figure of the past was, what he did and said, but rather who he is; the Christian faith confesses the living Lord…”

Behr’s argumentation, as with Köstenberger, demonstrates that others have argued for a single Christianity as well as an early orthodoxy. While those interested in pursuing the historical Jesus would end at the cross, this text would have the cross become the starting point for how one is to understand not only Scripture, but also the person of Jesus.

James Dunn, in his two volume work *Christianity in the Making*, would purport that one cannot rightly use the term Christianity as something of a defining characteristic of beliefs until

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35 John Behr, *The Way to Nicea*, vol. 1, *Formation of Christian Theology* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 49. Behr suggests an incarnational theology and that the cross of Jesus becomes the hermeneutic through which the whole of Scripture is to be understood.
some eighty years following Luke penning Acts, suggesting that to use the term for the earlier church would be to run the risk of superimposing a modern mindset onto the data rather than letting the data reveal what constituted, and when, one was to be identified as a Christian.  

While caution is warranted, what has been missed is that a lack of total knowledge does not equate to an absence of any knowledge. It must be conceded that the well-established formulaic explanations as found in the Apostle’s Creed, for example, did not yet exist, yet it does not follow that the absence of the articulated detailed explanation, even if by Luke years later, means the concepts held by the early church as core beliefs cannot be identified. Additionally, one must address the statement by Paul in Gal 1:6-9 regarding the teaching that there were others presenting different gospels from what Paul had already established. Dunn notes that in the immediate time following the reported resurrection event, multiple terms were used to describe followers of Jesus, and that the issue of identifying what it meant to be a Christian, if the term could rightly be used, gave indication of a multifaceted structure lacking in a singular, overarching designator.

Mark Noll notes how the widespread existence of synagogues across the Mediterranean could have served as a platform for the spread of Christianity, as could the safe travel within Roman territories. Moving beyond this he points to the early creeds, even in their infancy, and how it was those creeds that marked the boundaries of Christianity, with the creeds ultimately

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36 James Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*, vol. 2, *Beginning from Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 6. Later in this same volume Dunn would make the argument that the resurrection event was crucial in defining how the earliest believers understood Jesus as a person and in God’s involvement with humanity. In §23.4a he points to Rom 1:4 and 1 Cor 15:20-23 as the beginning of a new era with respect to God’s dealing with humanity, and goes on to affirm in §23.4c how he (Dunn) understands Paul as holding the belief that sonship for Jesus was not of an adoptionistic nature, rather this was a pointer to the exaltation of Jesus.

37 Ibid., 15-16.

becoming the gatekeepers to orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{39} While the points here may be valid, the reason for the growth of the church is not addressed. If, by way of example, the \textit{pax Romana} was the cause for the growth, then it would appear to follow that Christianity had no advantage, and all religions should have grown equally. A similarly important point of distinction must still be made between the creeds themselves and to that which the creeds pointed. Simply stating what one believes is not the same as providing a grounding for why the belief is more plausible than not.

Justo González speaks of the earliest Christians as not seeing themselves as followers of a new religion, rather they were living in an age where the fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures had been complete.\textsuperscript{40} He offers that the expansion was, in large part due to Hellenistic Jewish Christians that evangelized in one-on-one settings, and that as more gentile believers came into the church, there was an increased need for additional training on faith and ethics for the prospective converts.\textsuperscript{41} As with Noll, González finds creeds as a defense tool against heresy.

Additionally, González examined what he called the cradle of Christianity, or the world in which Christianity arose. He stated, “Christianity is incarnation, and, therefore, it exists in the concrete and historical.”\textsuperscript{42} Beyond this, much time was spent discussing the various sects within Judaism, Platonism, and Aristotelian thought, offering little by way of Christian beliefs.

Here, as with the creeds, the authors point to the “what” of Christianity, but they have not addressed the “why” that rests just beyond their stopping point. Hellenistic Jewish Christians evangelizing one-on-one is who and how, but does not address what made Christianity

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 23, 35-6.

\textsuperscript{40} Justo L. González, \textit{The Story of Christianity}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 26-30.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 31-5; 116.

believable to the point that individuals would convert even in the face of persecution and death, even if that persecution and death were on a limited scale.

Tim Dowley oversimplifies the spread of Christianity, suggesting that four key elements to the growth were to be found in the existence of a unifying language and culture, the Jewish Diaspora, and the *pax Romana*, while conceding that not much is known with respect to the specific details of growth during this time.\(^{43}\) Similarly, William Tabernee would put heavy emphasis on the improved roads and shipping as the why behind the growth of Christianity.\(^{44}\) While it is undisputed that each of the points brought forth by Dowley and Tabernee indeed aided in the spread of the message of Christianity, each point was also available for use by those who would spread the Roman religions, heresies, or Gnosticism.

David Bebbington would suggest that throughout history each people group has expected divine intervention into human affairs by their respective god(s).\(^{45}\) He then noted how, unlike many of the surrounding cultures, Christianity saw history as linear rather than cyclical, leading him to assert that the three elements found in the history of Christianity are interventions, linearity, and eschatology.\(^{46}\) While interesting, this again does not answer why people became Christians.

\(^{43}\) Tim Dowley et al., eds., *Introduction to the History of Christianity*, Revised ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 78-9; 84.


\(^{45}\) David Bebbington, *Patterns in History: A Christian Perspective on Historical Thought* (Vancouver: Regent College Publications, 2000), 47.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 51-53.
Everett Ferguson comes closer to espousing the thesis of this work than any other historian reviewed. He points to Jesus as the essence of Christianity.\footnote{Everett Ferguson, \textit{Backgrounds of Early Christianity}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 619-620.} If one is to accept that by essence one means the unchanging or unchangeable aspect of something which is necessary in order for it to be what it is, then how one understands the essence of Christianity should not be any different today than it was two thousand years ago.\footnote{Doug Taylor, “The Essence of Discipleship: An Evangelical Perspective” (paper presented at the Graduate Research Symposium, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, April 2014), 6.} That which is truly unique to Christianity is Jesus Christ. He was what was essential to its beginning and remains central to what it is. This is so in an historical sense. However much of his life and teachings might be paralleled from one part of the ancient world or another, Jesus—his person and work—are what was unique to Christianity. It is not the idea of redemption through suffering but the “event” of the crucifixion understood as the atoning work of God that distinguishes Christianity. It is not the doctrine of resurrection but faith in the resurrection of Jesus which forms the basis of the Christian decision of faith.

Notwithstanding, the truth claims of Christianity are bound up with the person and work of Jesus, who he was and what he did. What would make Christianity unique in an absolute sense, with no possible historical rival, would be for Jesus to be what is claimed for Him—the one and only Son of God, God who has come in the flesh; and to have done what is affirmed for Him—to have brought a salvation and relationship with God that no one other than the Son of God could have brought. There we pass from history to faith.

Joseph Early would point to a suffering servant as a catalyst for the growth of the church, noting how people who suffered could take solace in one who also suffered, how women were
accepted, and the love between believers contributed to growth.\textsuperscript{49} Then, when pointing to some of the specific patristic writings, he indicated how they contended for the right of Christianity to exist, argued against idolatry, and how there was much commonality between philosophy and Christianity.\textsuperscript{50} As with the other historians, Early brings forward important elements, but not the elements that account for the growth of Christianity over other religions, especially in a time when persecution could include death just for being called a Christian.

Apologetics

Of significance to this research is Bart Ehrman. With respect to Paul, Ehrman states that none in the period of the early church were as adept at making an argument both clear and convincing.\textsuperscript{51} With this proclamation from a skeptic, strength is gained in using the accepted Pauline corpus in building a baseline for early Christian teaching. Additionally, Ehrman lays the groundwork for what Ebionites and Marcionites believed as core to their theological positions.\textsuperscript{52}

Richard Bauckham suggests a New Testament Christology from the patristics that included two key points. He offered that Jesus was included by the New Testament writers in the


\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 28-29; 53. Early points to Justin, Tatian, and Clement of Alexandria respectively. Difficulty arises with his claims to how a suffering servant, love, or the acceptance of women was the reason for the church to grow. Taurobolium emphasized the Great Mother of the Gods and love has not been nuanced by Early to show what was different about Christians versus others such that the love becomes a notable distinction making Christianity credible above all other religions of the time. Other reports of dying and rising gods came later in history and did not generate the same following as this one Suffering Servant, so that does not in and of itself make the case for the growth of Christianity. Attis bled to death as a result of self-emasculiation, while Krishna reportedly died after being shot in the foot by an arrow, yet neither has produced a following that has spanned the globe and endured two millennia. Additionally, I would concede the point that there are moral atheists, so one must do more than merely point to the taught Christian morality in order to produce a plausible “why” behind conversion at the time.


\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 100-105.
identity of God, and that these same writers affirmed the humanity and death of Jesus, followed by exaltation.\textsuperscript{53} Such affirmation by the writers indicates that these beliefs were in place as early as +20 years from the crucifixion. While Bauckham makes the assertion, what will be of interest is whether or not there is evidence that not merely an affirmation of the belief in deity, death, and resurrection is made by the patristics, but that they offer an apologetic “why” for the credibility of this message.

The \textit{Babylonian Talmud} offers a Jewish affirmation for the crucifixion of Jesus at the time of Passover.\textsuperscript{54} While this source is dated approximately two and a half centuries after the period in review, it offers enemy testimony agreeing with the Pauline corpus for the humanity of Jesus and death by crucifixion.

A source which cannot be missed for this work is \textit{Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity} by Charles Kannengiesser. While there is much detail offered with respect to the individuals of the era and their contributions to Christianity, the contributors included both primary and supplemental bibliographic lists for each individual studied. Kannengiesser defines the Patristic Era as that period of time between the Gospel event affirmed by the New Testament and the collapse of the Roman Empire in the seventh century (West) or ninth century (East), and focuses on the exegesis of early Christian writers.\textsuperscript{55} Of particular importance here is the work done to try to bring together more than just the exegesis of each

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} Richard Bauckham, \textit{Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 57.
\end{itemize}
work, instead including other historical and cultural elements that were functioning at the time the source document was written.

Gary Habermas offers significant works focused on the historical Jesus, to include establishing the deity, death, and resurrection. Two of the more significant works include *The Risen Jesus and Future Hope*, and *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Additional useful works by Habermas in understanding background information relevant to this research include *Beyond Death: Exploring the Evidence for Immortality* and *There Is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*. The significance of Habermas’ work cannot be overstated, as this is at least in part the genesis for using deity—death—resurrection as the core of positive apologetics.

One might challenge that the research is being nuanced so far that the conclusions are unavoidable, but that by inclusion of other texts, such as the balance of Scripture or all texts from the period, the additional information might change the offered deity—death—resurrection foundation. Such a challenge is dubious at best, as no such argumentation has been brought against Habermas, although some may contend he concedes too much to the skeptic. An additional reason such a challenge is lacking is that by way of introducing other texts, such as Revelation, one may introduce eschatological issues, but those eschatological views are secondary to the offered argumentation. Notwithstanding, it is believed that if extreme difficulties or contradictions became evident to the deity—death—resurrection argumentation by way of adding additional texts, the skeptics would have already discredited the work of Habermas and others.

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56 Habermas’ methodological approach can be found in “The Minimal Facts Approach to the Resurrection of Jesus: The Role of Methodology as a Crucial Component in Establishing Historicity” in *Southeastern Theological Review*, vol. 3 (Summer 2012), 15-26.
Michael Licona points to how much emphasis Paul placed on the authority of the tradition he reportedly received.57 In steering to Habermas, Licona cites as “historical bedrock” that Jesus died by crucifixion, that the disciples had experiences that they believed to be Jesus raised from the dead, and Paul’s conversion.58 Furthering the statement made regarding Habermas, Paul’s teaching to the Thessalonians regarding eschatological issues follows the establishing of deity—death—resurrection and does not stand alongside or in front of the same. The focus here is on the deity aspect and not an appeal to eschatology, again demonstrating an early and consistent teaching by the church that Jesus was God. Additionally, Licona has provided an assessment of many of the texts contained in The Nag Hammadi and, using terms for “likelihood,” “possibility,” “usefulness,” and “probability” to suggest the relative value of each in studying the historical Jesus. This will provide fertile ground from which to begin evaluating which Gnostic texts to include in the research.

Of particular interest to this research is Edwin Yamauchi’s review of A Crack in the Jar: What Ancient Jewish Documents Tell Us About the New Testament by Neil Fujita. Specifically pointing to a weakness, Yamauchi stated, “Also, the absolute use of the Aramaic mara‘ (found in the Job Targum from Qumran) to explain the Jewish use of the title ‘Lord’ for Jesus overturns not only Rudolf Bultmann’s thesis that Judaism never referred to the Messiah as ‘Lord,’ but also Wilhelm Boussett’s famous Kyrios Christos, which attempted to prove Jesus was first addressed as Kyrios, ‘Lord,’ among gentile Christians.”59 If Yamauchi’s assessment is correct, then there is

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58 Ibid., 302-3.

additional support to the affirmation of deity with respect to the person of Jesus. While interesting, this line of research is better suited for a different project. The basis for this decision is found in the work of Edward M. Cook, a leading scholar in Qumran Aramaic.

Some, like André Dupont-Sommer and John Allegro agree with the pre-Christian dating of the scrolls but believe that the early Christians borrowed most of their ideas and characteristic belief about Jesus from the Essene/Qumran sect. They have to argue for a “Christianity before Christ.” Other scholars, such as Barbara Thiering or Robert Eisenman, say that while there are no overt references to Jesus in the scrolls, there are concealed references to him and to his disciples. They must therefore argue that the consensus dating of most scholars in the pre-Christian period is wrong. Finally there is Jose O’Callaghan, who believes that there are New Testament texts among the Qumran fragments.60

Cook continues and, pointing to Millar Burrows who stated, “It is my considered conclusion, however, that if one will go through any of the historic statements of Christian faith he will find nothing that has been or can be disproved by the Dead Sea Scrolls.”61 Because this is a specialized field of study and not necessary in establishing the proposed SPAC, further pursuit, while interesting, will not be followed here.

Kenneth Boa and Robert Bowman note the critical nature of the apology issued by Paul in Acts 17. Additionally, they note how apologetics is part of practical theology seeking to answer the pragmatic question of how to defend Christianity to non-believers.62 The significance of this work is that it approaches apologetics from a cumulative case basis, offering various definitions and concepts of application. Additionally, a chapter is included early that examines the apologetics of Paul as well as that of the early church fathers. Unfortunately, there are only

four paragraphs on Paul and three on patristics during the dates under investigation, making the work of extremely limited value.

Ulrich examines points of agreement and divergence in volume five of *Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity*. Time is spent in chapter one establishing definitions and building a case for the defense of Christianity also including an explanation. Tatian’s *Discourse to the Greeks* and Tertullian’s *Apology* are considered in this volume. Further investigation is warranted to determine how Ulrich differentiates between positive and defensive apologetics. Additionally, volume fifteen of this series (*In Defense of Christianity*) seeks to establish the context in which Christianity functioned in the second century, inclusive of how pagan authors responded to Christianity.

Larry Hurtado has released a new text titled *Destroyer of the Gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World*. Hurtado focuses on how Christianity rejected Roman gods, were known as having a new identity that was not based on national ethnicity, they had become a bookish religion, and there were ethical expectations upon all, from the moment of conversion. While Hurtado does examine certain distinctives of Christianity in the first three centuries, those idiosyncrasies examined are centered around the behavior of individuals after they had converted to Christianity, but does not address why Christianity was appealing and something to which an individual would convert in the face of being ostracized, persecuted, or even killed. Morality in and of itself fails to explain the growth of Christianity.

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A second text released in 2016 by Hurtado was *Why on Earth did Anyone Become a Christian in the First Three Centuries?* Here Hurtado remains consistent with *Destroyer of the Gods* in that he focuses on the outward behavior of Christians post-conversion. While his works certainly add value to the field of study, the ever-present concern of “the moral atheist” remains, meaning there must still have been something compelling that drove an individual to convert. If this assessment is confirmed, then the root cause for the growth of Christianity has not been addressed.

L. Russ Bush’s work, *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics* was released in 1983 and provides a cursory overview of only five early fathers of interest to this dissertation (Justin, Athenagoras, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen). Bush’s source follows the Ante-Nicene Fathers collection by almost a century, and the introduction to each of the fathers by Bush includes a limited assessment of their apologetics. The same concern is found with Bush’s work as noted with that of other scholars, specifically that he addresses apologetics as either a defense of the faith in general, or a focus on the methods and arguments used specifically to defend the faith. Both points of focus address the methodology for how one does apologetics, or why certain charges against Christians were invalid, but does not explain what it is that makes Christianity credible in the first place.

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64 It is recognized that there have been multiple sources published on the patristic writings since the ANF series over a century ago. While the specific source documents do not appear to be questioned in terms of content (accepting that there may be missing portions of text), research and discoveries since the publication of the ANF series has yielded some additional insights into the texts and may be found in the introductory and content material by more recent researchers.

Summary of Thought to This Point

It is doubtful that any would argue that the period under review did not go through significant change, not only in the realm of religion, but also in politics. The church was young, lacking authority within the societal realm save for that which followers allowed, and there was pressure from all sides for Christians to conform to other patterns of thought and belief rather than following a reportedly dead carpenter who came back to life. Indeed, it was the resurrection that became the central and defining event for Christianity.

Historians have pointed to the existence of good roads, a common language, and the peace of Rome as reasons for the growth of Christianity. While all of these conditions were certainly influential to the spread of the new belief, especially when considering the speed with which Christianity grew, those conditions were available to all people regardless of their religious or political beliefs, and as such would not be a unique benefit for Christians.

The proposed methodological approach follows a path allowed by critical scholars, making the thesis of this work more difficult to demonstrate if for no other reason than the minimization of allowed works. Notwithstanding, the method is believed to be objective in nature and, using what the skeptics allow, still able to yield research results believed to be plausible in demonstrating the thesis.

By introducing Root Cause Analysis, a new way to evaluate objectivity of conclusions drawn about the growth and spread of the early church may be demonstrated. The methodology is established, known and used in secular fields, and by design always investigates incidents, events, and conditions in the past, meaning this investigation should also be able to use the same approach.
The lacuna has been demonstrated. Next steps include researching and establishing the Pauline understanding of the gospel and what it meant to be Christian. Once this has been accomplished, it is believed that this same Pauline understanding will be found consistently throughout the Patristics for the period under review. From there, it shall be necessary to examine select Gnostic and heretical material to determine if the points of deviation are specific to the established Pauline understanding. Finally, I will then attempt to trace the points of deviation from the Pauline understanding through the Root Cause Analysis Map to determine if plausible root causes may be uncovered for those points of deviation.
CHAPTER 2
ESTABLISHING THE SPAC

Stated in the methodology section of this research was reference to the use of ABS Root Cause Analysis as a means for identifying why groups claiming to be Christian during the period in review, yet not remaining consistent with the position established by Paul, do not qualify as being Christian. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the existence of a clearly defined Standard, Policy, or Administrative Control (SPAC) then the presence of a positive apologetic based on information contained within the accepted Pauline corpus. Stated differently, the SPAC provides a right belief that should lead to right practice. If no such SPAC can be identified or demonstrated, then the responsibility for any deviation from what was originally intended with respect to Christianity would rest with those who originally penned what is now known as the New Testament. If conversely a SPAC is identified, then an apologetic should be identifiable, and it is plausible to conclude that a fixed system of beliefs did exist with respect to how Christianity was defined and specifically with regard to the distinctives that made Christianity the very thing it was.

A point of clarification must be included related to the differentiation between a SPAC and a procedure. The SPAC provides guidance on how an activity should be accomplished whereas a procedure identifies the point-by-point steps to be taken in how a particular task is
accomplished. Put into perspective, the SPAC addresses the sense of what constitutes correctness (points related to the deity–death–resurrection) while the procedure addresses how one became a Christian in light of the SPAC.

An example of the differentiation between a SPAC and a procedure might be made using the case of Jewish circumcision. Following the issuance Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 17 it is clear that there was an expectation that all males would be circumcised if they were part of Abraham’s posterity, whether through physical birth or other means. More specifically verses 9-11 address what would be the SPAC while verse 12 begins to address the procedure (speaking of circumcision on the eighth day following birth which begins to address the step-by-step of when and how circumcision is to be performed).

The Path Forward

What, in conclusion can we say about the utility of the manuscript tradition of the New Testament for the scholar of Christian antiquity? Textual scholars have enjoyed reasonable success at establishing, to the best of their abilities, the original text of the NT. Indeed, barring extraordinary new discoveries or phenomenal alterations in method, it is virtually inconceivable that the character of our Greek New Testaments will ever change significantly. Critics have been less assiduous in pursuing the history of the text’s subsequent transmission. At the same time, scholars have already used some of the available data to unpack some aspects of Christian social history: the nature of the early theological controversies, the polemical relations between Christians with both Jews and pagans; the oppression of women in the church, the social history of scribes, the use of magic and fortune telling among ordinary Christians, the extent and character of the early Christian mission, the use of Christian scripture in public worship and private devotion. Much more, however, is left to be done, both on these issues and on others, as we move beyond a narrow concern for the autographs to an interest in the history of their transmission, a history that can serve as a window into the social world of early Christianity.66

The previous chapter demonstrates the lacuna in the research related to why the early church grew. Good roads, a common language, common culture, and similar thoughts fail to carry convincing weight in explaining why the church expanded. The idea has been that certain conditions were responsible for why the church grew, but these conditions were equally available to all others, regardless of political or religious affiliation. Therefore, it is claimed that these are conditions that aided in the speed with which Christianity spread, making them contributing factors, but not causal factors for the spread. This portion of the research seeks to demonstrate that the use of the deity–death–resurrection message constitutes the use of a positive apologetic and thus provides the reason behind why individuals chose to become Christian during this period. It is this singular message that constituted the proclaimed gospel and will be demonstrated to be the SPAC with respect to Paul’s teaching.

This approach begins to address Ehrman’s call for additional research into the transmission of the New Testament which should also provide insight into how to rightly understand some of the reported theological controversies found in the same period.

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67 One challenge brought against the credibility of early Christian writings is the idea that there was a very low literacy rate among the population. Ehrman points to studies on ancient literacy rates that allege only about ten percent of the population “could read at all and possibly copy out writing on a page. Far fewer than this, of course, could compose a sentence, let alone a story, let alone an entire book. And who were the people in this 10 percent? They were the upper-class elite who had the time, money, and leisure to afford an education.” See Bart Ehrman, Did Jesus Exist? (New York: HarperOne, 2012), 47. This was not however always consistent as it was even possible for slaves to obtain an education, rendering them able to read and write, including composing sentences and beyond. For support of this, see Michael J. Smith, “The Role of the Pedagogue in Galatians,” Bibliotheca Sacra 163 (Apr-Jun 2006), 197-214. While Ehrman’s broad brush approach may be generally accurate, it does not follow that this was true in the case of all of the Disciples or named Christians of the New Testament. There is nothing in Ehrman’s argument that would preclude Paul or Luke from being literate. If the gospel account of Matthew’s call is accurate as history, then as a tax collector he would have been literate and fully capable of writing the gospel bearing his name. If Mark came from a wealthy family (see Acts 12:12 where the text states many people were at the house of Mary, Mark’s mother. As a general rule only the wealthy could have afforded a house large enough to allow for many people to meet in that one location), then he too may have been literate. However, one need not make appeal beyond Paul in order to make the point that there were literate Christians early. It is interesting that there is no similar argument using literacy rates to challenge writings from the patristics of the late first and early second centuries, begging the question of what educational movement took place to suddenly increase literacy rates among those professing to be Christian.
has conceded much with respect to the content of the Christian New Testament. From this baseline it is possible to determine what stated beliefs made Christians a separate and distinct group from others. Because the thesis claims the church grew through the use of a positive apologetic, the focus of the examination will be how Paul then the later church understood the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus as a SPAC and then as an apologetic. Only after presenting such a platform will it be possible to move on to assess how both were understood and transmitted over time.

The significance of establishing this baseline cannot be overstated. It has been suggested that at least during the period being researched here there were multiple Christianities and that it was not until the formal councils that a singular orthodox system came into existence. It is advocated here and will be demonstrated in the following that the meaningful points of differentiation between what Paul expressed as ‘the gospel’ and the message of others is to be found in each group’s respective approach to answering the questions of deity, death, and resurrection as related to the person of Jesus.

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68 See Larry Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 10-11. Hurtado states, “Illustrative of that early Christian diversity, in addition to those figures who are often regarded as precursors of the more familiar kind of Christianity of later centuries, sometimes referred to as ‘proto-orthodox’ Christians, there were, for example, also ‘Valentinian Christians, Marcionite Christians, and a number of other varieties, including the various so-called ‘gnostic’ Christians…. In this book, however, I focus on certain features of the kinds of Christianity that came to prominence and shaped what we can think of as the emerging mainstream tradition thereafter, those circles sometimes referred to by scholars today as the ‘proto-orthodox’ Christians. Even these Christians, however, were not uniform in their beliefs and practices. In this early period, there were no ecumenical councils or ecclesiastical or political structures to enforce uniformity. Instead, I have proposed that ‘proto-orthodox’ Christianity itself in the first two centuries comprised a variety of Christians and Christian circles characterized broadly by a readiness to recognize one another (despite their differences), by a high regard for traditions and a suspicion of radical innovations, by a commitment to the ‘Old Testament’ writings as Scripture, and by an exclusivist ‘monotheistic’ stance in which the deity of the Old Testament is the only valid deity worthy of worship.”
The ‘Gospel’

Paul made reference to the “gospel of God” and the “gospel of Christ” a total of fourteen times. The synonymous nature of both statements suggest that by interchange of terms Paul meant that Jesus was God.

When looking specifically to the Christian New Testament, gospel is a reference to the message of Jesus, and the message being given by Paul is considered as being news that would make one happy, bring joy, or bring smiles. Such a concept is not unique to the period of Paul as terminology. Under a Hebrew context the term conveys the same message of the bringing of news, predominately that would be interpreted as having a positive nature toward the recipient. In every case where “gospel of God” or “gospel of Christ” is read, the term is consistently found to be a singular noun thus indicating that what Paul had in mind and was communicating was one gospel message that brought joy and happiness and not a multiplicity of gospels. At no point does one find the text to read or insinuate that two different gospels existed.

1 Thessalonians

Given that Paul included both “gospel of God” and “gospel of Christ” in First Thessalonians, it lacks plausibility that the charge could be brought that over time he began to

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69 For “Gospel of God” see Rom 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor 11:7; 1 Thess 2:2, 8, 9. For “Gospel of Christ” see Rom 15:19; 1 Cor 9:2; 2 Cor 2:12; 9:13; 10:14; Gal 1:7; Phil 1:7; 1 Thess 3:2.

70 Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 412. 33.217 εὐαγγέλιον, ou n: (derivative of εὐαγγέλζω ‘to tell the good news,’ 33.215) the content of good news (in the NT a reference to the gospel about Jesus)—‘the good news, the gospel.’ οὐ γάρ ἐπαινεῖτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ‘for I am not ashamed of the gospel’ Ro 1:16. In a number of languages the expression ‘the gospel’ or ‘the good news’ must be rendered by a phrase, for example, ‘news that makes one happy’ or ‘information that causes one joy’ or ‘words that bring smiles’ or ‘a message that causes the heart to be sweet.’

71 James Swanson, Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament) (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). 1413 נָשָׂא (nāšā); v. [see also 4452.5, 4452.6]; 4452.6]; = Str 1319; TWOT 291—1. LN 33.189–33.217 (piel) proclaim, i.e., bring news (1Sa 4:17), note: often in context the proclamation is seen as positive by the hearers; 2. LN 33.189–33.217 (hitp) hear news (2Sa 18:31+).
develop a higher Christology by substituting ‘Christ’ in the place of God. Indeed, if Paul were to begin with the “gospel of God” and then made a shift to the “gospel of Jesus” while at the same time and in the same sense not believing in a co-equality between God and Jesus, then he would be guilty of changing the very gospel he proposed to defend as a singularity. With this particular letter being either his first or second the dating places it at +17-20 years from the cross, meaning the letter came during the first generation of Christians. Ewert states, “The gospel is here called God’s gospel, which is no different from “our gospel” (1:5) or “the gospel of Christ” (3:2). Whereas the gospel is good news about God, the emphasis here seems to be rather that it comes from God; God, not man, is the source of the gospel.” This same understanding is also found in Galatians.

Of Paul’s delivery of this gospel in Thessalonica, Ehrman suggests that Paul would have had to win converts first to Judaism and then move them from Judaism to Christianity.

How would Paul begin to talk about his gospel with the people like this? We are again fortunate to have some indications in Paul’s letter…. In other words, before Paul could begin to talk about Jesus, he first had to win converts to the God of Israel, the one creator of heaven and earth, who chose his people and promised to bless all nations of earth through them.74


74 Bart Ehrman, The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 307. See also Karl Paul Donfried, Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 77; G. K. Beale, 1-2 Thessalonians, ed. Grant R. Osborne (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 61. Ehrman suggests there is no mention of Jews or Judaism in reference to the converts in 1 Thessalonians, and Donfried points to no mention of the Law or justification by faith alone as a key reason for believing Paul’s theology developed over time. Donfried’s thoughts fail to convince for two reasons. First, to appeal to no mention of Law or justification by faith and draw his conclusion that Paul’s theology developed over time is an argument from silence. Second, even without mention of the Law or justification by faith there is nothing in the text that would indicate any substantive difference in Paul’s theology or understanding of doctrine between the penning of this letter and his letter to the Romans. Thus, it could be argued that Paul’s
There is no explicit mention of Paul addressing a Jewish population in Thessalonica or any explicit reference to any synagogue which would appear to fuel Ehrman’s question. Here external evidence is of great value. Witherington states:

The social situation Paul faced in Thessalonike was also complicated by the status of Jews in the empire after the expulsion of Jews from Rome in A.D. 49. While we have not yet found an inscription older than the second century A.D. Thessalonian synagogue inscription, there is little reason to doubt the claim made in Acts 17 that in the middle of the first century Jews had a meeting place in Thessalonike for Sabbath services and other meetings. The inscription dedicates the place to the Most High God, possibly with the addition of the name Yahweh in transliteration. Even more important is the inscription found on a sarcophagus that refers to Jews named Jacob and Anna and to synagogues (plural). This suggests a thriving Jewish populace in this city in the second or third century and requires that there was a Jewish presence in the city in the previous century. Beyond this Josephus advised there were Jewish men who served not only with Alexander the Great, but also those who succeeded him, making it plausible that Jewish people would be found in Thessalonica during the first century. While Christians may affirm Paul went to the synagogue and base such a claim as being tied to Acts 17:2, it is not necessary to appeal to the book of Acts in order to arrive at the existence of a significant Jewish population or synagogues in Thessalonica during this period. External evidence is sufficient for establishing the historical case.

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approach to ministry was influenced by the specific culture in which he was ministering, but always pivoted around Jesus as the evidence for the truth of the historical God of the Israelites.


The significance of the above work is that it demonstrates a consistency with the methodological approach used by Paul. Simply because Paul did not make reference to the synagogue(s) or to a Jewish population does not equate to an absence of the same. To make such a claim is to make an argument from silence and, given the external data available, is to build a straw man. Paul would not have first had to win converts to the God of the Israelites and then attempt to convince them of the deity of Jesus if a Jewish community already existed in Thessalonica. The existence of a Jewish community and the consistent methodology is integral to demonstrating an early and high Christology that allowed Paul to focus on proclaiming the gospel without first having to convince his audiences that the God of the Israelites was indeed the only God.

Galatians

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! (Gal 1:6-9, NASB).

Of particular importance in establishing the idea that Paul held a single gospel is Gal 1:7-9. Here he communicated that there were individuals who wanted to distort (v. 7) or present contrary (v. 8-9) messages to that which he had delivered. The Greek term used indicates that there were individuals who were taking what Paul had presented and making alterations of some fashion that affected the state or condition of the original gospel presented. Additionally, when

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examining the Greek Paul used an arthrous noun, which includes the use of the definite article ‘the’ immediately prior to the term for gospel when translating into English. Black states, “In general, the presence of the article emphasizes particular identity, while the absence of the article emphasizes quality or characteristic.” Had Paul not included a definite article in the text, then the interpretation should read that he was presenting ‘a gospel,’ or one form of a gospel rather than espousing that there was only one singular gospel.

In the following two verses he admonished that if anyone presented a contrary gospel then the material was not the same as the original. If the term in verse 7 for ‘distort’ is to be understood such that any addition or deletion to the original message is a different gospel, then textually it is correct to understand Paul as saying there was a singular gospel that he was proclaiming, and that gospel took on a specific form that was to be considered fixed and immutable.

The construct in the Greek for verses 8-9 shows that before use of the word for gospel Paul used language that is interpreted to mean contrary to. While the use of ‘contrary’ may be understood as an opposite teaching (based on semantic range), such interpretation is not

distort the gospel of Christ Gal 1:7.—Of Mary’s influence on the disciples μετέστρεψεν τὸν νοῦν αὐτῶν ἐκ[π’ ἅγαθον] (Mary) changed their mind [for the better] GMary Ox 3525, 13.


79 This is not to suggest that the deity-death-resurrection apologetic is a formula whereby one must use the exact same words as Paul, and then address these three elements in this sequence in order to be considered “the gospel” preached by Paul. The key is to understand and communicate effectively the same message that the original author intended.

80 William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 758. 6 marker of that which does not correspond to what is expected, against, contrary to (Hom., Alc. et al.; ins, pap, LXX; Just., Tat., Ath.—Schwyzer II 497) π. τὴν ὑδατήν Ro 16:17. παρ’ ἐλπίδα against hope (s. ἐλπίς 1a) in wordplay w. ἐκ’ ἐλπισθεὶ 4:18. παρὰ φύσιν (Thu. 6, 17, 1; Plato, Rep. 5, 466d; Tat. 22, 2; Ath. 26, 2, R. 6 p. 54, 13) 1:26, 11:24, παρὰ τὸν νόμον (Just., A II, 2, 4; Ath. 1, 3; cp. X., Mem. 1, 1, 18 παρὰ τοῖς νόμοις; PMagd 16, 5 [222 b.c.] παρὰ τοὺς νόμους; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 233; Just., A I, 68, 10) Ac 18:13. παρ’ ὁ contrary to that which Gal 1:8f (Just., A I, 43, 8).
necessary nor would it be easy to defend since Paul did not provide exact information related to what those who presented a different gospel were teaching. To say one was teaching an opposite gospel could be to imply that one was teaching a gospel against Jesus rather than addressing specific points related to Jesus or His teachings. However, to understand ‘contrary’ as a teaching that is simply incompatible with or changes from the original would be a plausible understanding that encompasses the idea of preaching Jesus while at the same time adding to or deleting from the gospel message Paul originally delivered.

By way of the two earliest texts from Paul it has been possible to demonstrate an early affirmation of a singular gospel message. The text demonstrates a synonymous nature for gospel whether referencing God, Jesus, or Paul’s gospel and then with the understanding that the gospel originated with God. No differentiation is found in the content of the gospel whether it is attached to Paul as being his gospel, the gospel of Jesus, or the gospel of God. It is this consistency that allows for identifying what made the gospel message Christian.

SPAC

One may speak of their favorite sports team in such a manner as to distinguish that team from all other teams playing the same sport. Even if one utilizes a definite article as a means of differentiating one team from another, the team being referenced is composed of multiple smaller parts that help in understanding the whole. In the case of an American football team there are multiple players, but not all players can function in every role. The presence of a proficient kicker may give the team an additional element that could help in the winning of a game, but the

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absence of a proficient kicker does not preclude the team from winning. However, the absence of
defensive players would guarantee that the team would not win a game. There would be no game
because the opposing team would simply walk the ball into the end zone every time they had
possession. The same holds true in the absence of an offensive players. Football, in this case,
would simply cease to be what it was intended to be.

In a similar fashion without certain core elements within the gospel message as
proclaimed by Paul Christianity would lack necessary distinctives and would have failed to
obtain, at least not in the manner known during the period in review. Three particular elements
that are consistently found within this gospel are the deity of Jesus, the death of Jesus, and the
reported resurrection of Jesus. This portion of the research seeks to establish these three elements
as necessary components of the gospel and that without all three of these elements Christianity
loses its distinctiveness.

**Death and Resurrection**

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you
received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word
which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first
importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the
Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to
more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some
have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as
to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. For I am the least of the apostles, and not
fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of
God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even
more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. Whether then it was I or
they, so we preach and so you believed. (1 Cor 15:1-11, NASB)

Before looking to the acceptance of Jesus by the early church as being deity it will be
beneficial to first examine how the church held to the death and resurrection teachings. The
primary text used in this assessment will be 1 Cor 15:3-5 with appeal to verses on both sides of
these as appropriate. Keener notes the importance of vv. 1-2 as an appeal by Paul to the message by which the Corinthians were originally converted (1 Cor 15:1-2; 2:1-5; Gal 3:2-5; 1 Thess 2:1; 3:4). He goes further to point out that the salvation of the individual is based on this specific message [gospel] by which they had been converted. By this it is easily demonstrated that what followed in vv. 3-5 was not new but a reiteration of what had already been preached, then with linkages back to material in both the Tanakh and extra-biblical sources.

In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul provided a significant discourse on the gospel message. This was not the first time the local church had heard this message. Prior states, “In these verses Paul reiterates the basic content of the gospel which he had proclaimed to the Corinthians from the beginning. However much he unfolds further insights as he develops the theme of resurrection, it is important to note that here he is repeating the facts, not adding to them.” Unlike the situation in Galatia, Paul was addressing a handful of errant Christians in Corinth that appear to have accepted then rejected a bodily resurrection.

The function of Paul’s rhetoric in ch. 15, as previously in this letter, is not to do apologetics but to correct Christians gone significantly astray. His major tactic is to show “some” of the Corinthians the logical implications of their position, cited in v. 12, that “there is no resurrection of the dead.” Since the implications of this position are unacceptable, then a fortiori there must be something wrong with it. To show this Paul uses both artificial and inartificial proofs or warrants, appealing to witnesses, written documents, both Scripture and popular Greek writings, and syllogistic logic to achieve his ends.

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83 Ibid. In support of this Keener points back to Ps 16:10-11; Isa 53:4-12; Hos 6:2; Jonah 1:17; and 3 En 28:10.


A significant portion of critical scholars agree that vv. 3-5 is an early creedal formula from the church that is pre-Pauline in nature. Thus, Paul was not the originator of the message. If Paul converted 18-36 months following the crucifixion event, and yet he was not the originator of this gospel message, then it is appropriate to conclude that the original gospel message was already circulating prior to Paul’s conversion but after the crucifixion event. To have this gospel message circulating prior to the crucifixion would necessitate a Christianity-before-Christianity.

One possible line of evidence indicating that this is pre-Pauline would be the use of Aramaisms and other terms Paul typically did not use. Keener suggests that while Paul may have reworded the text for his purposes in the letter, the core content is pre-Paul. “Paul is not giving us some views he has worked out for himself; he is passing on what had been told him. This is the gospel, the proclamation, preached by the early church. Paul sees it as of first importance.”

Paul indicates that he received this gospel from the Lord (Gal 1:12) and that he considered the apostles’ teaching an authoritative tradition that originated in Jesus Christ.

Within vv. 3-5 Paul is making five simple statements of fact (aorist indicative) that happened in the past as well as one action that happened in the past yet the result is ongoing (perfect passive indicative). The facts as presented by Paul in this passage are that he delivered what he received, that Christ died (v. 3), that He was buried (v. 4), and that He appeared (v. 5).

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86 Ehrman claims there were written sources related to Christianity that were post-Jesus and pre-Gospels, citing Luke as historical evidence for this position. He specifically cites Luke 1:1-3 which, if the text is taken as historical, indicates that there did exist writings that included eyewitness testimony. See Bart D. Ehrman, Did Jesus Exist?, 79.


88 Leon Morris, 1 Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 201-2.

With respect to the reported resurrection Paul indicates the raising of Jesus to have been completed with the result of that raising continuing in the present state. The first two statements, that Paul delivered what he had received, are not insignificant as they make appeal to the basis of the gospel which he had already preached to the Corinthians. However, he quickly moves into the four remaining statements that affirm what that gospel message was. First is the statement that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; second, He was buried; third, He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures; and finally, He appeared to Cephas and then to the twelve.

Christ Died for Our Sins

The first proposition made by Paul was not only an affirmation of the death of Jesus, but also why that death took place. Conzelmann notes that the main function Paul is attempting to fulfill in this chapter is not one of apologetics, rather it is one of exposition of the creed. Even if it is not possible to reconstruct or discern exactly how large of an issue this was for the Corinthians, what is certain is that we can see how Paul understood the gravity of the situation. Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner note the central focus of Paul in vv. 3-8 with respect to answering the “what” question.

Christ is the subject of all the verbs from v. 3b to v. 8 except for the two in the relative clause of v. 6b (regarding the five hundred witnesses). In several cases it was necessary to adopt passive constructions (“he was buried” rather than “they buried him,” etc.) to maintain that consistency. Paul’s recounting of the gospel message reflects the fact that it is first and foremost a message about Jesus Christ and what he has done for us, rather than being a message primarily about us and how we can be saved.

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The emphasis in this passage is less on the reality of the death\textsuperscript{92} and more on why the death.

Barrett attempts to answer the “why” behind the death of Jesus.

The first proposition explicitly relates the death of Christ to sin, but gives no precise indication what the relation is. \textit{Christ died for (ὑπὲρ) our sins}. The preposition normally means ‘on behalf of’ (and is thus usually used with persons, e.g. Rom 5:8), but this meaning is clearly impossible here; indeed, it means nothing different from the preposition (περί) used in the similar statement at Gal 1:4 (cf. Rom 8:3). Both mean ‘concerning’, ‘with reference to’, ‘in order to deal with.’\textsuperscript{93}

Paul tied the death to the condition of humanity. More specifically he indicated that humanity was in a condition or state that precluded mankind from being able to affect their condition in a positive manner. This is evidenced from passages that indicate man to have been helpless, ungodly, and where one finds the source of righteousness. Looking to Rom 1:18-3:20 shows Paul to have taught that this condition of humanity was universal in nature and in respect to the relationship between mankind and God, specifically sin.\textsuperscript{94} This exposition demonstrates Paul to have believed God to exist and that God was the final moral authority by which all others are judged. Because humanity failed to measure up to God’s standard humanity was condemned, yet God provided a means through the death of Jesus whereby reconciliation to God is possible, allowing Him to remain just while also being the justifier.\textsuperscript{95}

He was Buried

It is surprising to find specific reference to the fact \textit{that he was buried}. Probably ‘the burial was included in the \textit{kerygma}, not because it had any specific significance in itself, or fulfilled the Scriptures, but because it was the necessary stage between death and resurrection, and moreover confirmed the reality of both’ (Hooker, op. cit. p. 120). If he

\textsuperscript{92} See Rom 5:6, 8, 15; 6:9, 10; 8:34; 14:9, 15; 1 Cor 8:11; 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14, 15; Gal 2:21; 1 Thess 4:14; 5:10 for Paul’s consistent teaching of the death of Jesus.


\textsuperscript{94} For defining ‘sin’ see LN 88.118, 88.289, 88.290, 88.293, and 88.310.

\textsuperscript{95} See Rom 3:21-5:21 for this concept in greater detail.
was buried he must have been really dead; if he was buried, the resurrection must have been the reanimation of a corpse.\footnote{C. K. Barrett, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1968), 339.}

What can be gleaned from this idea that Jesus was buried? Beyond the obvious that to be buried is to confirm being dead, is it even plausible to think that Rome would have had any interest in this dead apocalyptic prophet being buried? After all, he had been crucified for claiming to be King of the Jews.

First, there is what may be a singular piece of evidence from the immediate geographical region indicating the Romans did allow the bodies of criminals to be removed from the cross and buried—even those convicted of treason. Josephus wrote in \textit{Wars} 4.317, “Nay, they proceeded to that degree of impiety, as to cast away their dead bodies without burial, although the Jews used to take so much care of the burial of men, that they took down those that were condemned and crucified, and buried them before the going down of the sun.”\footnote{Flavius Josephus, \textit{J.W.} 4.317.} This single source is not as strong as those sources that have multiple attestation, but it does exist and must be considered.

Second, there is another passage from Josephus that could add weight to the preceding. He notes in \textit{Ant.} 16:27-28,

But now, when Agrippa and Herod were in Ionia, a great multitude of Jews, who dwelt in their cities, came to them, and laying hold of the opportunity and the liberty now given them, laid before them the injuries which they suffered, while they were not permitted to use their own laws, but were compelled to prosecute their lawsuits, by the ill usage of the judges, upon their holy days, (28) and were deprived of the money they used to lay up at Jerusalem, and were forced into the army, and upon such other offices as obliged them to spend their sacred money; from which burdens they always used to be freed by the Romans, who had still permitted them to live according to their own laws.\footnote{Ibid.}
From this it is learned that the Romans were still permitting the Jewish people to live according to their laws. The most plausible understanding is that the Jewish people were still following the Mosaic Covenant and the requirements found therein.

Philo, while writing from Alexandria and separated, was a contemporary to the earthly ministry of Jesus and the subsequent work of the Apostles.

And after having established this ordinance he returned again to his natural humanity, treating with mercy even those who had behaved unmercifully towards others, and he pronounced, “Let not the sun set upon persons hanging on a tree;” but let them be buried under the earth and be concealed from sight before sunset. For it was necessary to raise up on high all those who were enemies to every part of the world, so as to show most evidently to the sun, and to the heaven, and to the air, and to the water, and to the earth, that they had been chastised; and after that it was proper to remove them into the region of the dead, and to bury them, in order to prevent their polluting the things upon the earth.  

Beyond this, Philo also indicated that those who fell in combat would be granted burial by family members.

Moreover, it has often happened that enemies have granted to those who have fallen in battle the honour of funeral rites, those who were gentle and humane burying them at their own expense, and those who have carried on their enmity even against the dead giving up their bodies to their friends under a truce, in order that they might not be deprived of the last honour of all, the customary ceremonies of sepulture.

When coupled with a Tanakh passage the texts from Josephus and Philo becomes more plausible with respect to whether or not Jesus was actually buried. Specifically, Deut 21:22-23 reads, “If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse. You must not desecrate the land the LORD

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100 Philo of Alexandria, *Flaccus* 61.
your God is giving you as an inheritance.” It was the Sanhedrin that had determined that Jesus had committed a capital offense and the same who took Jesus to the Romans for execution.

If one is unwilling to accept the Christian testimony that the Sanhedrin took Jesus to Pilate as historically accurate, then what is to be done with \textit{b. Sanh 6:1h, II.1.C}?

This implies, only immediately before [the execution], but not previous thereto. [In contradiction to this] it was taught: On the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, ‘He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Any one who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf.’ But since nothing was brought forward in his favor he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!$^{101}$

Here is an extra-biblical passage from Jewish Rabbinic authorities that indicates that Jesus was to be executed for crimes that the Tanakh deemed capital offenses. Whether Jesus was killed because of the Sanhedrin or solely on the basis the Romans thought he was usurping the authority of Caesar, Jesus was deemed guilty of a capital offense. The instructions of God to Israel as found in Deut 21:22-23 would have been binding in the minds of the Jewish leadership and required compliance. No stipulation is found in the Deuteronomy text that indicates burial was only if the Jewish people had conducted the execution. The requirement applied to one hung on a tree in the land that God had given to the Israelites. The body of Jesus would have had to have been buried and based on what Josephus wrote it appears that the Romans would have allowed the burial.

This is a very cursory examination of whether or not the body of Jesus was buried and to go beyond this is outside the scope of this research. Additional work is warranted on this point to determine if the above begins to carry convincing weight or if it suffers from an ad hoc

$^{101}$ Jacob Neusner, \textit{b. Sanh. 6:1h, II.1.C.}
development. Notwithstanding, the early church clearly taught that following death by crucifixion Jesus was buried.

He was Raised

Some in the vein of Ehrman hold that Jesus was not buried and therefore there could not have been an empty tomb—as if somehow this lack of an empty tomb is an insurmountable obstacle to Christianity obtaining. The proposal moves along the line of thought that if there was no empty tomb then Jesus was not resurrected. Such a proposal is simply bad argumentation as the conclusion is a non-sequitur. Being buried is not a necessary event in order for a resurrection to take place. All one needs is one who was previously deceased and subsequently alive again, and that without human intervention. To make appeal to the empty tomb as the source of faith is to make use of a negative assertion in an attempt to advance the point, and to deny the burial and an empty tomb would not preclude Christianity from obtaining. “The resurrection was the focal point of every other truth Christ taught.”¹⁰² Paul’s belief that the resurrection was the lynchpin to Christianity cannot be denied, as in this same chapter he made the point that if Jesus had not been raised then the faith of all Christians was for nothing. “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain” (1 Cor 15:13-4, NASB).

The question then becomes what exactly he meant by the resurrection of Jesus. Ehrman explains the emphasis of Jesus being raised on the third day as follows.

The reason he stresses that Christ “was raised on the third day…and appeared to Cephas and the Twelve” is not, as is sometimes said about this passage, because he wanted to prove that Jesus was resurrected. He is referring to Jesus’ resurrection precisely because

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the Corinthians had always agreed about it. Paul wants to point out that when Jesus was raised from the dead, he was actually, physically raised from the dead, in a real body.103 Hodge contends that the issue being addressed by Paul is one of false teachers denying the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, though he concedes that the specific details related to the specific teachings against the resurrection are speculative since details related to the exact nature of the argument were not provided.104 Fee argues that the purpose for this passage is not apologetic with intent to prove the resurrection, rather it is a return to the original gospel message and reaffirmation of the same, that this gospel denotes how they were saved, and deviation from this message puts the individual outside the teaching that had existed since the beginning of the church.105

Brown notes a dissimilarity between the Christian understanding of resurrection as compared to that of the non-Judean cultures, distinguishing between fleshly and corporeality.

For the Greeks, the gods were corporeal. For those who were immortalized, a fleshly corporeal existence was at times their destiny. While celestial immortality should be regarded as material, and therefore corporeal, it cannot be described as fleshly. It is with the specific possibility of a fleshly immortality that the Greco-Roman afterlife conceptions come the closest to a belief in resurrection, but certainly not resurrection as Paul understood it. I will distinguish, therefore, between the Greco-Roman notion of transformation to a fleshly immortality and Paul’s notion of resurrection primarily to

103 Bart D. Ehrman, Peter, Paul, and Mary Magdalene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 135. This quote is of significance because if Ehrman is correct, and if we can date Paul’s ministry in Corinth at AD 50-53, then the teaching of a bodily resurrection could not have been a later development by the church. See also Victor Paul Furnish, “Corinthians, Second Letter of Paul to the,” ed. Mark Allan Powell, The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary, Revised and Updated (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 154. This demonstrates that the early church held belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus as orthodoxy.


105 Gordon D. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 718. See also Richard B. Hays, First Corinthians (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989), 252 where Hays contends that chapter 15 of 1 Cor is the weightiest of issues addressed by Paul in this letter and that the contents are a matter of “life and death,” asserting that those who abandoned belief in the bodily resurrection had as a result jettisoned the most fundamental belief in Christianity.
avoid confusion of concepts since even though there are undeniable similarities, there are
significant differences as well.\textsuperscript{106}

Blomberg states that the issue for the Corinthians was one where the significant differences seen
by Brown was that they failed to recognize those dissimilarities.

By denying the resurrection, the Corinthians were almost certainly not denying life after
death; virtually everyone in the ancient world believed in that. Rather, they would have
been disputing the Jewish and Christian doctrine of bodily resurrection and endorsing one
of the more Greek forms of belief that limited the afterlife to disembodied immortality of
the soul.\textsuperscript{107}

Blomberg’s assertion reveals the difficulty as found in Corinth is evidence to the teaching that
Jesus had been bodily raised from the dead, and that this was what Paul was teaching. One may
attempt to examine Paul through various lenses including those of Pharisaic Judaism or a Greco-
Roman culture, but both lack convincing correlation to the teachings of Paul, so one is left with
examining his encounter with the risen Jesus as the nexus for his theological teaching.\textsuperscript{108}

One cannot dismiss the idea that Paul understood this questioning of bodily resurrection
as a significant change to the gospel. Remembering that in his earlier letter to the Galatians he

\textsuperscript{106} Paul J. Brown, “Bodily Resurrection and Ethics in 1 Cor 15,” in \textit{Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament} 2. Reihe 360 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 43. Brown provides a significant handling of Greco-Roman beliefs as related to the afterlife in chapter two of this work. Moreover, he demonstrates not only the difference between how individuals of the time understood life after death, but also how there was a significant distinction between Paul’s use of resurrection as compared to how non-Christians understood physicality with respect to life after death. For an opposing but unconvincing understanding of resurrection in the first century see Dag Øistein Endsjø, “Immortal Bodies Before Christ: Bodily Continuity in Ancient Greece and 1 Corinthians,” \textit{Journal for the Study of the New Testament} 30 (2008): 417-36. Endsjø concludes on page 434, “In all Greek stories of resurrection, there is an absolute bodily continuity. Eternal life was originally always tied to the body, meaning the same body made incorruptible. The countless bodies which had turned into dust, been devoured or been burned were essentially lost. It was not even possible to recreate Pelops’s single shoulder as this had been annihilated. Then Paul arrives and proclaims that his God will resurrect everybody who only believes in Christ. No wonder the Corinthians did not believe in Paul’s claim about the general resurrection of the dead.” The specific difficulty with Endsjø’s conclusion is that it necessitates changing the definition of resurrection as Paul was using it, making the term broader and less specific.

\textsuperscript{107} Craig Blomberg, \textit{1 Corinthians}, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 294-5.

had stated there was but one gospel and any change or deviation was another, Paul would have understood those holding to no bodily resurrection as an assault on the very foundation of that gospel. “The gospel is the power of God for salvation (Rom 1:16), and they owe their new existence as Christians to Paul’s preaching of this gospel. He uses the present tense “you are being saved,” which refers to both a present process and a future reality.”\textsuperscript{109} This demonstrates an extremely early belief that there was but one gospel through which righteousness in the sight of God came and by which one was identified as a Christian.

The resurrection of Jesus was a completely unique event in history. No pre-Pauline resurrection accounts exist, and the earliest competing dying-and-rising gods do not appear until Adonis in the second century and Attis in the third.\textsuperscript{110}

\textbf{He Appeared}

Some might contend that by limiting the examination to vv. 3-5 the Christian is losing the strength of argument found in the group appearance to five hundred. Such concern is unwarranted because with vv. 3-5–verses accepted as being early and pre-Pauline, there is already found an accepted report of group appearances. The importance of this is that Paul’s report must be explained away if one is to deny the resurrection. If the appearances happened,

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\textsuperscript{109} David E. Garland, \textit{1 Corinthians} (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 683.
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\textsuperscript{110} For examples related to Egyptian views of resurrection, see Miriam Lichtheim, \textit{Ancient Egyptian Literature: Volume II: The New Kingdom} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 81, 119; see also Jacob Neusner, \textit{The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary}, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011), 193. For a view claiming all Pharisees accepted the resurrection see William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, \textit{Exposition of Galatians}, vol. 8, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 17. Because there are no pre-Pauline resurrection accounts (considering the term to be used as Paul used it), Dawkins’ appeal to Robert Gillooly’s claim that every aspect of the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus was taken from history and surrounding cultures is incorrect and not supported by historical inquiry. See Richard Dawkins, \textit{The God Delusion} (London: Bantam Press, 2006), 94.
\end{flushright}
whether individually or in a group, then evidence for life after death exists. The question remains as to whether the reported appearances were believed to be physical in nature.

One of the current favored explanations by skeptics is to claim the Disciples suffered hallucinations.\textsuperscript{111} Employing this line of reasoning fails to convince because hallucinations are personal, not contagious, they fail to take into account the various personalities involved in the group, and hallucinations do not address the conversion of Paul, with these just being a few of the more significant challenges to any hallucination theory.\textsuperscript{112} Appealing to hallucination fails to convince as a challenge to the idea of a physical corporeal appearance as taught by the early church.

With respect to appearances Ehrman stated, “There is little doubt, historically, about what converted Paul. He had a vision of Jesus raised from the dead. This is what he himself says, and it is recorded as one of the key incidents in the book of Acts.”\textsuperscript{113} In a similar fashion Lüdemann affirmed, “It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus’ death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ.”\textsuperscript{114}

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\textsuperscript{111} Appealing to hallucination as an explanation for appearances, whether individual or group, has been used since the mid-1800s. For a more recent work comparing resurrection to apparitions see Glenn B. Siniscalchi, “On Comparing the Resurrection Appearances with Apparitions,” \textit{Pacifica} 27, no. 2 (2014): 184-205. See also Gerd Lüdemann, \textit{What Really Happened to Jesus: A Historical Approach to the Resurrection of Jesus} (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995); John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, \textit{In Search of Paul: How Jesus’ Apostle Opposed Rome’s Empire with God’s Kingdom} (New York: HarperCollins, 2004); John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, The Birth of Christianity: Discovering what Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998); and Gary R. Habermas, “Hallucination Theories to Explain Jesus’ Resurrection?” \textit{Christian Research Journal} 23, no. 4 (2001). It must be noted that Lüdemann, Crossan, and others who would hold to an hallucination theory will typically refer to the sightings of Jesus as visions, considering the term “hallucination” as pejorative.


\textsuperscript{113} Bart D. Ehrman, \textit{Peter, Paul, and Mary Magdalene} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 111.

appearances has less to do with the ability to recreate the reported events and instead is an evaluation of the available sources of information. To appeal to hallucination as an explanation is to introduce non-evidenced assumptions as ad hoc explanations.

After pointing to the appearance to Cephas, Barrett notes that only in 1 Cor 15:5 does Paul make reference to “the Twelve” as a group and this can be taken as clear indication of his quoting a very early creedal formula. Paul had already been to Jerusalem twice and visited other Apostles (see Galatians 1 and 2), and claimed that he received the gospel message from Christ directly and not from man which would be consistent with how the other Apostles had received the gospel. It is extremely plausible that Peter, Paul, James, and John would have shared about their first experiences with the risen Christ which would give Paul the information for the appearances.

Kurios and Christos

One of the cornerstones of the Jewish life and faith was the prayer of the Shema daily. Within the Hebrew text the term YHWH is found three times when the Shema is first introduced in Deut 6:4-6. That the This use of YHWH was predicated upon the belief of the Israelite’s personal name of God was too holy to be pronounced or even spelled out, thus the tetragrammaton was used as a nomen sacrum, or holy name. Likewise, the Greek kurios was understood to be an equivalent to Adonai from the Hebrew. Kurios was understood as Lord

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whereas YHWH is generally shown as LORD in English translations. In the English the Shema is stated as, “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart” Deut 6:4-6, NASB).

Regardless of whether a first century Israelite used the Greek or Hebrew, they would have come to the same conclusion that there was only one God, and that one God was the only one that was to be worshiped and followed. Additionally, when looking at the term used for “all” in these verses, the understanding would have been a complete and total, all-consuming element, thus disallowing any potential space to remain in which Israel might opt to follow another deity-type figure. Those from within Judaism that faithfully practiced the Torah would pray the Shema twice daily and as such would have understood their responsibility in relation to this one God.

Paul made explicit use of the title Lord when referencing the person of Jesus. This is found not fewer than sixty times across the accepted Pauline corpus. Returning to the Shema it would lack plausibility to state that those of Jewish lineage that were attending the synagogues would have understood Paul to have been saying anything other than Jesus was God.

The title ‘Lord’ is used in the Septuagint 12,657 times in 5,257 verses when the search operator is set to “Lord AND NOT God,” and when the search operator is reset to “Lord God”

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the term is used 7,206 times in 1,828 verses.\textsuperscript{121} Narrowing the search further reveals that when examining the Torah alone, ‘Lord God’ accounts for a full thirty percent of the total times the phrase is used in the Tanakh, and Deuteronomy accounts for seventeen percent of the total uses.

This same reverence and respect for the name of God appears to have carried over into the early Christian writings as \textit{nomen sacrum} are found very early and tied to the person of Jesus. Larry Hurtado presents the four earliest and most attested to \textit{nomen sacrum} as being renderings for Jesus, Christ, Lord, and God.\textsuperscript{122} With respect to the purpose behind the \textit{nomen sacrum} he states,

\begin{quote}
The aim is clearly to express the Christian reverence, to set apart these words visually in the way they are written. In the nomina sacra, we encounter a fascinating manifestation of Christian devotion, and these scribal symbols are perhaps the earliest surviving artifacts of an emerging Christian material culture. In fact, the origin of nomina sacra appears to take us back beyond the second-century manuscripts, in all likelihood well back into the first century.\textsuperscript{123}
\end{quote}

Comfort makes the point that no known manuscript dating from the second through the fourth century differentiates between God the Father and Jesus as God.

With respect to the use of the nomen sacrum for \textit{theos}, not one of the early Christian manuscripts (second to fourth century) makes a written distinction between the Father being called “God” and the Son being called “God.” In other words, in all instances where \textit{theos} is used of deity, whether referring to the Father or to the Son, it is written as a nomen sacrum. This also applies to those passages where exegetes have typically made arguments about articular \textit{theos} meaning “the God” or “God himself,” in contrast to anarthrous \textit{theos} meaning “deity” or “divinity.” The usual understanding about the use of the article before \textit{theos} is that it designates individuality and divine personality—i.e., it denotes the personhood of God, making it titular. By contrast, the absence of the article before \textit{theos} is supposed to signal divine essence. These distinctions, however, may not

\textsuperscript{121} These numbers were arrived at by utilizing Logos Bible Software and searching \textit{Septuaginta: With Morphology}. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996. The totals presented are the sum of cases where the nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative forms were considered for both \textit{kurios} and \textit{theos}.

\textsuperscript{122} Larry Hurtado, “The Origin of the Nomina Sacra: A Proposal” in \textit{Journal of Biblical Literature} 117 no. 4 (Winter 1998): 655. In this same manuscript (p. 656) Hurtado notes that the \textit{nomen sacrum} are found in Greek, Latin, Coptic, Slavonic, and Armenian manuscripts, thus showing a wide acceptance of the practice.

\textsuperscript{123} Hurtado, “The Origin of the Nomina Sacra,” 659.
have been recognized by the earliest scribes if the writing of the nomen sacrum for God always designated a title, regardless of whether or not it had an article. In other words, it is well worth asking if the nomen sacrum form in and of itself communicated so powerful a signal that the distinctions between anarthrous *theos* andarthrous *theos* were subsequently blurred.\(^\text{124}\)

If the potential blurring of lines by scribes is accepted by some, what would that do to the idea of the early church teaching that Jesus was God? The answer quite simply is: nothing. With no distinction being made between God the Father and God the Son between the second and fourth centuries, then the use or lack of use of *nomen sacrum* does nothing to change the “who” within the text. Whether one used the *nomen sacrum* or wrote out the name of Jesus the context of the text did not change nor did the status related to the deity of Jesus. Unlike when the Roman Senate declared through apotheosis the idea that a deceased emperor had somehow been exalted or divinized,\(^\text{125}\) the divinity of Jesus was not dependent upon humanity giving that divinity to Him, rather Jesus was understood to have been divine from time before his birth.

Understanding that words have meaning and the use of those words by writers is for the purpose of communicating a message or idea to others, Comfort provides insight into why

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\(^\text{125}\) Ferguson notes of the deification of emperors, “The second step in the cult of Caesar was taken with his official apotheosis after his death. As a dead hero he was transferred to the number of the gods. The senate and people declared him a god and during the celebration in honor of the *divus Julius* the appearance of a comet was taken as proof that his soul had been received into the number of the immortals.” See Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 208. Pliny said, “Rome is the only place in the whole world where there is a temple dedicated to a comet; it was thought by the late Emperor Augustus to be auspicious to him, from its appearing during the games which he was celebrating in honour of Venus Genetrix, not long after the death of his father Caesar, in the College which was founded by him. He expressed his joy in these terms: “During the very time of these games of mine, a hairy star was seen during seven days, in the part of the heavens which is under the Great Bear. It rose about the eleventh hour of the day, was very bright, and was conspicuous in all parts of the earth. The common people supposed the star to indicate, that the soul of Caesar was admitted among the immortal Gods; under which designation it was that the star was placed on the bust which was lately consecrated in the forum.” This is what he proclaimed in public, but, in secret, he rejoiced at this auspicious omen, interpreting it as produced for himself; and, to confess the truth, it really proved a salutary omen for the world at large.” See Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, ed. John Bostock (Medford, MA: Taylor and Francis, 1855), 1058.
scribes might prefer the use of a *nomen sacrum*. A possible reason for choosing to incorporate a *nomen sacrum* by early Christians was their having the ability to distinguish the Christian use of “Lord” as compared to any variety of other uses, even when the same term was used in reference to pagan deities or claims by emperors. Such visual differentiation would easily allow any reader to clearly understand the context in which the term was being used and readily comprehend if one was referring to an alleged god, a man, or the Creator God as revealed in the Tanakh.

From the above evidence it would appear highly plausible that the early church was already demonstrating an affirmation of a high Christology that accepted Jesus as divine. The lack of distinction in earliest documents between Jesus and God, especially in light of the fact that Christianity originated within the first century Jewish culture, is unthinkable for a group that saw a clear line of demarcation between the Creator and created unless they truly understood Jesus to be God. In looking back further to the Shema it is even less likely that a first century Jewish Christian would affirm ditheism since such a claim would be in direct contradiction to the Tanakh.

**Additional Considerations**

**Laws of Prohibition**

Ehrman has suggested the church may have understood Jesus to be God, but that deity status was the result of an adoptionistic Christology, and points to henotheism as justification for believing in the existence of multiple gods. To that end, he suggests that laws prohibiting specified activities are not established unless first someone has acted in such a manner as to

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126 Ibid., 211.
necessitate the formation of such a law.\textsuperscript{127} Thus, as stated earlier, he believes God’s prohibition against having other gods proves that other gods exist. Without accepting Ehrman’s point related to henotheism, he may be correct at least in part when he states that laws of prohibition may indicate that something has happened which led to the implementation of that edict.

One might turn to Gen 2:16 where God prohibited eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—a prohibition which came prior to any offense—which could create difficulty for the theory. However, this could be avoided by denying the first eleven chapters of Genesis as being a record of literal events. One could point to Ex 23:24 where God said not to bow down to the Canaanite gods before Israel ever got there, but the Canaanites had bowed down. It would seem that, as a general rule, Ehrman may be correct on this point.

If laws of prohibition are created because acts were first performed, what then is one to do with the Nazareth Decree? Elwell and Comfort date the decree to the time of Claudius (AD 41-54) noting that it was Claudius who took an interest in Jewish affairs in other lands.\textsuperscript{128} Habermas would concur with the dating noting three key historical facts that can be known as a result of the inscription: 1) there must have been reports in Palestine that were such that they warranted the emperor to take stern action, 2) burials in Palestine often involved sealing tombs or using stones, and 3) penalties for disturbing a tomb were increased from financial to a capital offense.\textsuperscript{129} The Nazareth Decree from an historical perspective alone would appear to corroborate not only Justin Martyr’s claim that the Jews were spreading word that the disciples

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{127} Bart Ehrman, \textit{How Jesus Became God}, 55.


\textsuperscript{129} Gary Habermas, \textit{Ancient Evidence for the Life of Jesus: Historical Records of His Death and Resurrection} (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 155-156.
stole the body of Jesus from the tomb\textsuperscript{130} but also that of the writer of Matthew. It would follow that if Jesus had not been buried, there could not have been the theft of the body or an empty tomb.

If the Nazareth Decree is correctly dated to Claudius, then the text could be within eight to twelve years of the crucifixion event at earliest and as late as twenty-four years. It is reasonable to believe that tombs had been disturbed in history prior to the Nazareth Decree, but here there is a significant difference because the Decree focuses on Judea, and second, it makes what had been an offense punished by financial means now an offense that carried the death penalty. If Ehrman’s proposal is correct that one does not get laws of prohibition unless first an action has occurred which would have been in violation of the law, then there must have been a trigger event which caused Claudius to believe it necessary to go to such an extreme measure. Grave robbing is wrong to be sure, but the world is not turned upside down when a peasant’s grave is found empty. The empty tomb was not the source of faith, rather it was the disciples’ belief that they had encounters with the risen Christ. If Jesus was not buried as Ehrman suggests, then there would have been no tomb to be found empty, so no offense could have occurred. If, however, Jesus was buried, and if the tomb were found to be empty, both claims found explicitly and implicitly by Paul, then it would seem to provide supporting reasons for why Claudius would have issued the Nazareth Decree.

\textsuperscript{130} Justin Martyr, \textit{Trypho} 108.
Other Historical Dying-and-Rising Gods?

N. T. Wright indicates that when one spoke of resurrection as a Christian during the first century they were using the term the same as the pagan and Jew would have used the term, recognizing the pagans denied and many Jews accepted the resurrection as something that would happen.\(^{131}\) Christianity appeared unexpectedly with a new focus on human existence giving indication that what was found with the rise of Christianity was something wholly other from any other religion of or before that time.\(^{132}\) Yet Ehrman would suggest that Christianity was somehow to be understood as a copy of the emperor cult and the associated deification of the Caesars.\(^{133}\)

Here it is advocated that the emperor cult was but a continuation of the ancient mystery religions. While the emperors did not rise and fall based on agrarian cycles like Ba’al of the Tanakh, it is believed that many of the same arguments submitted by Smith in *Drudgery Divine* prove effective in demonstrating the significant difference between Christianity and the emperor cult.

Smith submits that parallels between the mystery religions and Christianity are not carried out systematically, meaning the comparisons fail to yield any major conclusions.\(^{134}\) A second matter brought out is that Christianity lacks any rich notion of myth, regardless of how one defines the term, as is found in the mystery religions and without this there cannot be found

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any parity between stories.\textsuperscript{135} “Parity is a prerequisite for comparative research. Any attempt to escape this requirement and its consequences will render the enterprise necessarily vain.”\textsuperscript{136}

What is one to make of the emperor cult in light of Smith? First, while the emperors were not associated with agrarian cycles, one continues to see dying-and-rising gods. Perhaps a key difference to be found is that with the emperors one was to become a god by right of birth, but the deification came with the death. This would be consistent with the mystery religions. Second, similarity does not make for sameness. Both a human and a whale have lungs, but none would dispute that the two are distinctly different beings. Even if one were to try to compare the emperor cult to Christianity for “sameness” such comparison fails due to the lack of any parallels being systematically examined, and what is examined may leave one with the question, “so what?” in response. Suetonius indicates that the apotheosis of Julius Caesar involved a physical element, as did the reports of Jesus’ resurrection per Christian sources, but there is no systematic examination between the two.\textsuperscript{137}

Apollonius of Tyana and Hierocles have been suggested as comparable individuals to Jesus. According to Mozley, Apollonius lived in the second half of the first century AD, or as a contemporary of the Apostles, but after Jesus.\textsuperscript{138} Moreover, Ehrman relies on Philostratus for information on Apollonius, but Mozley points to the fact that Philostratus could not have been born any later than AD 182, meaning the birth of the author of the \textit{Life of Apollonius of Tyana}...

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 87.
\textsuperscript{137} C. Suetonius Tranquillus, \textit{Julius Caesar} 88.
was not until approximately one hundred years after Apollonius lived. Not only did Philostratus not have access to Apollonius directly but also he lacked access to the first generation Christians, especially those who may have witnessed events performed by Jesus or the Apostles.

Beyond this Hierocles was a stoic philosopher who lived in the first half of the second century, meaning his birth was after all initial leadership of the church had died. To appeal to Hierocles is problematic because if Mark is considered questionable at crucifixion plus forty years, or Paul is questionable at crucifixion plus twenty with both having lived in the right time and geographic location to have access to the knowledge they claimed to have, then one cannot admit Philostratus, Hierocles, or others such as Plutarch, the biographer of Alexander the Great, because they lived too far past the time of the events and one would not be able to discern which of their reported events truly happened.

Henotheism

Ehrman suggests that because Moses was commanded that the Israelites were to have no other gods before them other than Yahweh, such a command provides evidence for the belief that there existed many gods, but Israel was to worship only Yahweh, and suggests monotheism in Israel is a late development. As for monotheism being late, Moberly would concur, noting that monotheism is clearly found at the time of the Babylonian exile. If, as Moberly suggests, there

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139 Ibid.
140 Iliara Ramelli, *Hierocles, the Stoic* (Boston: Brill, 2009), xix.
is evidence to indicate Jewish monotheism at the time of the Babylonian exile, then monotheism was established as a normative practice at least five hundred years prior to the birth of Jesus. While other cultures and even some Jews may have held to a multiplicity of gods, the Jewish concept of monotheism was well established long before the historical setting from which Christianity would emerge. Ehrman concedes that Jews on the whole in first century Palestine were monotheistic, and most Jews held the books that would come to be known by the church as the Old Testament as being sacred. Thus, claiming a late development of monotheism fails to support Ehrman’s case.

Recognizing the accepted authority of the Jewish Scripture it is beneficial to examine two passages in particular and how they relate, if at all, to the concept of henotheism. The first is Psalm 82 and the second Psalm 89.

**Psalm 82**

God takes His stand in His own congregation;
He judges in the midst of the rulers.
How long will you judge unjustly
And show partiality to the wicked? Selah.

Vindicate the weak and fatherless;
Do justice to the afflicted and destitute.
Rescue the weak and needy;
Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.

They do not know nor do they understand;
They walk about in darkness;
All the foundations of the earth are shaken.
I said, “You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High.

“Nevertheless you will die like men And fall like any one of the princes.”
Arise, O God, judge the earth!
For it is You who possesses all the nations (Psalm 82, NASB).

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Depending on the translation used, some might read Psalm 82 and conclude that a multiplicity of gods exist, with only one God to be worshiped. The difficulty arises in the fact that the Hebrew text uses the title Elohim for God, and also uses Elohim in the place where the editorial committee translated the term as rulers. Such difficulty need not exist nor is there a necessity to employ henotheism as the correct way to understand this passage.

While Elohim has been translated as rulers in this passage, this is not the only place where Elohim is not translated or understood to be a reference to God or gods. In Ex 22:8-9 the text reads, “If the thief is not caught, then the owner of the house shall appear before the judges, to determine whether he laid his hands on his neighbor’s property. For every breach of trust, whether it is for ox, for donkey, for sheep, for clothing, or for any lost thing about which one says, ‘This is it,’ the case of both parties shall come before the judges; he whom the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor.” Here the term is rendered as judges and is understood to be a reference to humans. In like manner, Gen 23:6 is understood such that Abraham is considered a mighty prince and not a god. Mal 2:15 translates Elohim as the adjective godly and is in reference to human children.

What can be seen with respect to this passage is that the context has significant bearing on how the term is to be understood. The individuals before God are those who have authority on earth and more specifically those having the responsibility to enforce God’s laws. Based on the context, those called judges in the NASB are humans and not deity at any level.

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144 Allen P. Ross, “Psalms,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 854. See also Zeph 2:11 where it is said that God will starve “all the gods of the earth.” While the text contains the term Elohim, the context makes clear that those being referenced are humans.

Because this psalm was first part of Scripture for the Israelite community and later adopted by Christians as their Scripture as well, it would be beneficial to examine how the Jewish community understood this passage. To gain this insight it is necessary to look to the Babylonian Talmud.

Two specific references point to the psalm in question. The first, found in Tractate Berakhot, refers to the teaching being based on Tannite authority. Because the Tannite period was from AD 1–200, this teaching is contemporaneous with the period under review.

*It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

B. Abba Benjamin says, “A prayer of a person is heard only if it is said in the synagogue.

C. “For it is said, ‘To hearken unto the song and to the prayer’ (1 Kgs. 8:28).

D. “Where there is song, there should the prayer take place.”

E. Said Rabin bar R. Ada said R. Isaac, “How do we know on the basis of Scripture that the Holy One, blessed be he, is found in the synagogue? As it is said, ‘God stands in the congregation of God’ (Ps. 82:1).

F. “And how do we know that when ten are praying, the Presence of God is with them? As it is said, ‘God stands in the congregation of God [which is ten]’ (Ps. 82:1).

G. “And how do we know that where three are sitting in judgment the Presence of God is with them? As it is said, ‘In the midst of the judges he judges’ (Ps. 82:1).

H. “And how do we know that where two are sitting and studying the Torah, the Presence of God is with them? As it is said, ‘Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name’ (Mal. 3:16).”

I. *What is the meaning of* “Who thought upon his name”?

J. Said R. Ashi, “If a person gave thought to doing a religious deed but perforce was not able to do it, Scripture credits it to him as if he had actually done it.”

K. [Continuing Isaac’s statement,] “And how do we know that even if one person alone is sitting and studying the Torah, the Presence of God is with him? As it is said, ‘In every place where I cause my name to be mentioned I will come to you and bless you’ (Ex. 20:21).”

L. *Now since it is the case that even if one is studying by himself [the Presence is with him], why was it necessary to make the statement concerning two?*

M. *The words of two are written down in the book of remembrances, while the words of one are not written down in the book of remembrances.*

N. *And since it is the case that even if two are studying [the Presence is with*
them], why was it necessary to make the statement concerning three?

O. What might you have said? Judging cases serves only for the purpose of making peace in this world, and the Presence of God would not come on that account. So we are informed that that is not the case, for judging a case also is an act of Torah.

P. And since it is the case that even when three [are studying Torah, the Presence is with them], what need was there to speak of ten?

Q. In the case of ten, the Presence of God comes first, while in the case of three, the Presence comes only when the people actually go into session.\textsuperscript{146}

The above makes clear reference to the presence of God, as found in Ps 82:1, in relation to humanity. One may challenge that to claim this passage is in reference to humans and not some form of deity is to presuppose such a position \textit{a priori}. However, such need not be the case. By referencing prayer in the synagogue, it is highly plausible to believe that those who would pray in the synagogue would be human. Likewise, those studying the Torah is best understood to be human. Because those praying and those studying are both references to humans, and there is no literary marker indicating a need to understand the passage of judges differently, and the subsequent passages are referring to humans, they too must be human. Similarly, the \textit{Tractate Sotah} had been associated with Ps 82:1.

When hedonists became many [fierce wrath came upon the world, and glory of Torah ceased.]

B. [When those who went about whispering in judgment multiplied, conduct deteriorated,] the laws were perverted, and [T.:] the Holy Spirit ceased in Israel [T. Sot. 14:3].

C. When those who displayed partiality in judgment multiplied, the commandment, You shall not respect persons in judgment (Deut 1:17) was annulled, and You shall not be afraid of anyone (Deut 1:17) ceased.

D. And they removed the yoke of Heaven from themselves, and accepted the authority of the yoke of mortal man [T. Sot. 14:4].

E. When those who went about whispering in judgment multiplied, fierce wrath multiplied for Israel, and the Presence of God went away.

F. For it is said, “He judges among the judges” (Ps. 82:1).\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{146} Jacob Neusner, \textit{b. Ber.} 1:1, III.21.B.

\textsuperscript{147} Jacob Neusner, \textit{b. Sota} 9:7, V.2.A.
Within this passage clarity exists in that it specifically identifies partiality on the part of the judges as the issue at hand. Moreover, the writers tied this to Deut 1:17, a command given by God to Israel with the expectation that the appointed human judges would comply with the command. Likewise, the Pirkē Aboth would support the understanding that the second use of Elohim in this psalm warrants interpretation as being a reference to particular humans and not any deity-type figures.

R. Ḥalaphta [b. Dosa] of Chephar Hanania said: When ten sit and are occupied with Torah, the Shechinah is among them, as it is said: ‘God stands in the congregation of God.’ [And whence is it proved for even five? As it is said: ‘He hath founded His troop upon the earth.’] And whence even three? As it is said: ‘He judgeth among gods.’ And whence even two? As it is said: ‘Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.’ And whence even one? As it is said: ‘In every place where I record My name I will come to thee and will bless thee.’

Psalm 89

The heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies is comparable to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty is like the LORD, A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, And awesome above all those who are around Him? O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You (Ps. 89:5-8, NASB).

R. Hanina says, “Proof of the proposition is from here: ‘God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints and to be held in reverence by all those who are about him’ (Ps. 89:8).”

R. Nehunia says, “Proof of the proposition is from here: ‘God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints and held in reverence by all those who are about him’ (Ps.

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149 Jacob Neusner, b. Yeḥam. 16:4, II.3.H.
Said R. Yosé b. R. Bun, “That proposition derives not from that verse but from the following: ‘God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints and held in reverence by all those who are about him’ (Ps. 89:8)—by those who are near even more than by those who are far away.”

Difficulty needlessly arises with respect to the above passage and the question of whether or not there are multiple gods, with only one of those gods being worshiped. How should the “holy ones” referenced in the above passage be understood? First there is an issue of what it means to be holy. Not fewer than thirty-four verses in Scripture point to persons or things being holy. In looking to these verses it is discovered that holiness is not something that originates within the individual, rather it is a direct result of the person or act of God, and when something is deemed or declared to be holy it is set apart for God. Seeing that individuals or things have been declared as holy by God does not necessitate a henotheistic interpretation. Second, with respect to henotheism Hurtado states:

…if the Jews were henotheistic, then there should be evidences found which indicate that the Jews were not, as a rule, monotheistic. In making his case Hurtado points to worship as being the key distinctive, suggesting that if the Jews were henotheistic, then one should expect to see evidence for idols and other gods, angels and demons all being worshiped in the temple—or in separate temples—along with Yahweh. However, following Antiochus Epiphanes and his attempts at Hellenizing the Jewish people, it is

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150 Jacob Neusner, b. B. Qam. 5:5a, I.5.B.
R. Rabbi
b. ben, son (of)
R. Rabbi
151 Jacob Neusner, y. Yom Tovh 3:8, I.2.N.
difficult to see anything that would suggest evidence for Jewish worship on the whole to have been henotheistic.\textsuperscript{154}

Based on these two key points it is difficult to construct a plausible system that would support the idea that Jewish people and subsequently those who would become Christian believed there were multiple gods, but only Yahweh was to be worshiped. Such is concluded, at least in part, based on Bauckham’s six features used in identifying the God of Israel and the early church.\textsuperscript{155}

**Adoptionistic Christology**

An indispensable point that cannot be missed is that any appeal to adoptionistic Christology does not work in a monotheistic worldview. By that it is meant that if Jesus was adopted and gained the status of a deity, then the worldview would be polytheistic or pantheistic—but certainly not monotheistic. Considering the previous section where monotheism appeared to be the norm in Judea, any adoptionistic Christology would be difficult to demonstrate.


\textsuperscript{155} Richard Bauckham, “Monotheism and Christology in Hebrews 1,” in *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E.S. North (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 167-168. Here Bauckham points to the following key distinctive identifiers associated with Yahweh. He notes 1) God’s sovereignty over all, answering to none; 2) God will achieve his eschatological rule and be uncontested; 3) God is creator of all and not created; 4) God has a personal name, thus is a personal God; 5) Only this God is to be worshiped; and 6) only God is inherently eternal, both past and present.
Ehrman uses Rom 1:4 as a key text for his belief that adoptionistic Christology is a valid understanding when it comes to establishing the deity of Jesus. Gathercole suggests that Ehrman’s interpretation of this passage is speculative at best, and declares, “to grant one’s speculation the force of probability such that one can then proceed to use them as foundations for other arguments is - not to put too fine a point on it - indefensibly bad method.”

Scalise and Dodson suggest that the use of horidzo as found in Rom 1:4 indicates a change in how a place or time is to be understood, but does not connote a change related to the person. To appeal to Rom 1:4 as support for an adoptionistic Christology would be to ignore the original meaning, context, and intent of the author.

Gathercole addresses Ehrman’s concept of adoptionistic Christology on three fronts. The first has already been presented, specifically the argument against giving speculation the force of probability. Second, he states that Rom 1:3-4 and Acts 13:32-33 speak of issues of ‘sonship’ where Acts 2:36 speaks of Jesus in terms of ‘Lord’ and ‘Messiah.’ Finally, the only way Ehrman can get Acts 2:36 to an adoptionistic Christology is to take the verse out of context from the whole of 2:31-36.

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158 Ibid., 109.

159 Ibid. Gathercole also notes in this section that adoptionistic Christology fails to take into account the “I have come” statements of Jesus; one cannot conclude the voice heard at Jesus’ baptism to be the point of adoption unless one also believes Jesus to have been adopted again at the transfiguration event later; Jesus accepted the worship of men whereas Peter refused (see Peter at Cornelius’ house in Acts 10); there was a clear Creator–created divide, yet Paul worshiped Jesus as Creator (see Rom 1:25 and 1 Cor 8:6); and finally Jesus forgave sins, an act reserved for God Himself. Whether one views these individually or collectively they point to Jesus being God, not Jesus being adopted to some other type of deity status.
Kenosis

Gathercole provides significant insight into the belief of the early Christians that Jesus existed prior to the incarnation. Particularly when considering Phil 2:7 he points to the word rendered *kenosis*, or the concept of emptying. This term becomes problematic for those espousing adoptionistic Christology for a couple of key reasons. First, the passage is accepted as one of the early creeds of the church.\(^{160}\) If this passage is extremely early and potentially going back to within months of the crucifixion, then the potential for growth of legend is diminished. Second, Gathercole demonstrates that this passage shows the incarnation as a voluntary act, that *kenosis* frames Jesus as a willing participant prior to the events, which shows pre-existence.\(^{161}\) With this text being very early, and given the language used, there is simply no means for interpreting the text such that an adoptionistic Christology is supported.

_Apotheosis_ and Resurrection

With the use of resurrection, it becomes apparent that the authors of the New Testament, and Paul in particular, believed that for Christ what was buried is exactly what came up out of the grave. Such is consistent with Peter’s message at Pentecost. “Peter began his testimony with the announcement of the historical facts of the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and represents these facts as the divine seal of his Messiahship, according to the


prophets of old, who bear witness to him that through his name every one that believes shall receive remission of sins.”¹⁶²

Moreover, it was not Peter alone who believed that the very same body that had been crucified was in fact the one and same body that had been raised from the dead. Bloesch notes, “Similarly Paul believed not because he was persuaded by the testimonies of eyewitnesses but because he was personally visited by the risen Christ and heard the voice of Christ with his inner ears (Acts 9, 22).”¹⁶³ To these passages from Acts can be added Paul’s claim in Galatians 1 to have received the gospel directly from the risen Jesus.

Thus, the easier part of this conversation is found in understanding what was meant by the use of the term ‘resurrection’ as used by Paul. The difficulty with the resurrection may rest at least in part in the competing concept found in the first century culture whereby one may be exalted through apotheosis, a concept which is expressed clearly by Suetonius of Julius Caesar.

He died in the fifty-sixth year of his age, and was ranked amongst the Gods, not only by a formal decree, but in the belief of the vulgar. For during the first games which Augustus, his heir, consecrated to his memory, a comet blazed for seven days together, rising always about eleven o’clock; and it was supposed to be the soul of Caesar, now received into heaven: for which reason, likewise, he is represented on his statue with a star on his brow. The senate-house in which he was slain, was ordered to be shut up, and a decree made that the ides of March should be called parricidal, and the senate should never more assemble on that day.¹⁶⁴

From Suetonius it is clear that, at least when evaluating the concept as presented in this example, the idea of apotheosis was that life continued, but not in the same physical manner as known here on earth. Additionally, the reported existence of Julius Caesar as based on this account was one


where the soul was received into heaven indicating a belief that he had become as one of the
gods, meaning he had become deity. Augustine notes,

And what was the end of the kings themselves? Of Romulus, a flattering legend tells us
that he was assumed into heaven. But certain Roman historians relate that he was torn in
pieces by the senate for his ferocity, and that a man, Julius Proculus, was suborned to give
out that Romulus had appeared to him, and through him commanded the Roman people to
worship him as a god; and that in this way the people, who were beginning to resent the
action of the senate, were quieted and pacified. For an eclipse of the sun had also
happened; and this was attributed to the divine power of Romulus by the ignorant
multitude, who did not know that it was brought about by the fixed laws of the sun’s
course: though this grief of the sun might rather have been considered proof that Romulus
had been slain, and that the crime was indicated by this deprivation of the sun’s light; as, in
truth, was the case when the Lord was crucified through the cruelty and impiety of the
Jews. For it is sufficiently demonstrated that this latter obscuration of the sun did not occur
by the natural laws of the heavenly bodies, because it was then the Jewish Passover, which
is held only at full moon, whereas natural eclipses of the sun happen only at the last quarter
of the moon.\footnote{Augustine, \textit{De civ. Dei} 15.}

Based on the report from Augustine it becomes readily evident that the \textit{apotheosis} event as
reported of Romulus was not to be considered the same type of afterlife as evidenced by Jesus.
Such deification is to be found written of Augustus. “After his death in AD 14 Augustus, like
most of his successors, was elevated to deity (\textit{apotheosis}). Senators had to express their belief in
this exaltation, and the emperor cult was added to that of other state gods. Living emperors came
closer and closer to divinity, though never actually becoming gods.”\footnote{Dankward Vollmer, “Roman Empire,” in \textit{The Encyclopedia of Christianity} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 725.} Again there is life after
death, but this life was first of a spiritual nature. There was but a single reported encounter with
the deceased in the case of Romulus whereas with Christianity the resurrection brought about not
only individual reports of having seen Jesus, but also group encounters. One additional point that
need be made here is that it was not the resurrection that conferred deity status upon Jesus, nor

\begin{thebibliography}{165}
\urlprefix\footnote{Augustine, \textit{De civ. Dei} 15.}
\urlprefix\footnote{Dankward Vollmer, “Roman Empire,” in \textit{The Encyclopedia of Christianity} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 725.}
\end{thebibliography}
does the future promise of resurrection to the follower of Jesus promise elevation to a status of deity for the believer.

Finally, there is an important difference between the claims that Apollonius was deified and that Jesus was Deity. Apollonius’s deification is known as apotheosis, the process by which a human becomes God. Christ’s incarnation was a process by which God became human. Further, the concept of “God” differed. Christ was God in the theistic sense. The claim for Apollonius would make him God only in a polytheistic sense.  

From SPAC to Apologetic

Demonstrating that Paul believed there to a singular gospel has been accomplished. It has also been shown that this gospel had as its core the proclaimed deity–death–resurrection of Jesus. Challenges to this message such as any addition or deletion to a deity–death–resurrection, adoptionistic Christology, henotheism, the kenosis of Jesus, apotheosis, and reports of other alleged dying and rising gods have been touched on sufficiently to show how there may have been similar attributes, but no other religion or system of thought demonstrated the sameness as what was preached in Christianity.

Dating the proclaimed message back to at latest within just a few months of the crucifixion event has been established through examining the letters to the Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, and 1 Cor 15:3-5 in particular. The belief of Jesus as being God by the early church has been demonstrated through the interchange between Gospel of God, Gospel of Christ, and Gospel of Jesus. In addition, it was shown how through the use of nomen sacrum there was a high regard for the names and titles related to God by the early church manuscripts of the second through fourth centuries, with Hurtado believing this shows the practice of using nomen sacrum to be reasonably pushed back into the first century. The gospel message is clear, but as of yet has

not been demonstrated to be an apologetic that could account for why people chose to become Christian during the period in review. What remains for this portion of the research is to identify the use of each of the three core points of the gospel message in an apologetic manner with the intent of converting others to belief in Jesus.

The accepted Pauline corpus is of limited value in establishing this point because each of the seven letters were written to already existing churches. These letters do help establish what Paul believed and taught, but were not written in an attempt to convince the recipients to convert to belief in Jesus. Here it shall be sufficient to turn to three speech-act summaries in Acts.

Peter Before the Sanhedrin - Acts 4:8-12

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health. “He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone. “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

When brought before the Sanhedrin Peter expresses that the issue at hand is the belief that a man had been healed by the Apostles and the source of that capability is the answer sought.168 It had been just a few weeks since the epic trial and crucifixion of Jesus and now Peter stands in the midst of the Sanhedrin, most of whom would have been Sadducees, and proclaims 1) Jesus as the Christ; 2) the Sanhedrin’s responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus; 3) the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; 4) the healing was done through the authority of the person of Jesus; and 5) salvation only comes through this same Jesus. As such this immediately meets

the understanding of what an apologetic is, but Peter’s message constitutes a positive apologetic because he was commending the deity–death–resurrection of Jesus as the source of power and authority. Verse twelve makes explicit that he was advocating that unless one accepted this message salvation would remain unattainable.

Witherington opines that through the introduction where Peter states “let it be known” an important move has been made. One may have possibly attempted to plead ignorance that Jesus was the Messiah prior to the crucifixion, but with the resurrection event there was no longer any excuse. The idea that God would raise a heretic from the dead was unthinkable, and because there were multiple witnesses to the risen Christ, God must have vindicated the message and person of Jesus. The culpability of the audience to whom Peter was speaking could not be mistaken.169

Toussaint understands Peter to be pointing back to Psalm 118 and the anticipation of deliverance, and recognizes by way of appealing to this Psalm that Peter was preaching both an individual and a national justification as being available through Jesus. This caused the Sanhedrin to be moved from the offense to the defense in relation of the hearing.170 The apology offered by Peter was a positive apologetic focused on commending the truthfulness of Christianity to the audience which effectively undercut the intentions of the Sanhedrin.

Peter at Cornelius’ House - Acts 10:36-43

“We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. “God raised Him up on the third

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169 Ben Witherington III, The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 193–194. This is an historical claim and should not be understood as anti-Semitic. The commentary by Peter was addressed to the same body of leaders that reportedly had deemed Jesus as guilty of a capital offense and had taken Him to Pilate demanding crucifixion.

day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, *that is*, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. “And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. “Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”

In this speech-act Peter begins his presentation, inserts additional information, then continues with his apology for Jesus. In v. 36 Peter makes reference to Jesus Christ, applying the Greek translation for the Hebrew term Messiah, so the audience would have understood that there was something unique about this Jesus. Then, adding emphasis Peter stated that Jesus is Lord of all. There would have been no misunderstanding by a Roman centurion that this was an appeal to deity. Almost as justification for the aforementioned Peter then emphasizes that he and those with him were eyewitnesses to the acts of Jesus during His ministry. After claiming Jesus to be God and establishing that he was speaking from firsthand knowledge Peter introduced the consistent gospel message and placed responsibility for the crucifixion at the feet of the Jewish people in Jerusalem, stating that they killed Jesus but God raised Jesus.

The final part of the story, in which Jesus was betrayed, tried, crucified, and raised from death (cf. Lk. 9:18–24:53), is summarized in simple terms: ‘They killed him by hanging him on a cross (xylou, ‘tree’), but God Raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen’. The Gospel narratives make it clear that the Romans actually crucified Jesus, but Peter ascribes moral responsibility for this to the Jews who rejected him as their Messiah (cf. 2:22–23; 3:13–15; 4:10–11; 5:30; 13:27–29).

While there is clear appeal to having been a witness to the works of Jesus prior to crucifixion, it is interesting that Peter presents the deity–death–resurrection motif only to return

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171 Ibid., 381.


to what appears an attempt to add further credibility to his testimony. Not only were they witnesses of the works of Jesus prior to death, and not only did they see Jesus following his death, but they also ate and drank with Him. This makes appeal to personal experience but also affirms a physical bodily resurrection.


“Brethren, sons of Abraham’s family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. “For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him. “And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. “When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. “But God raised Him from the dead; and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. “And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.’ “As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: ‘I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE blessings OF DAVID.’ “Therefore He also says in another Psalm, ‘YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.’ “For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay; but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

Based on the opening line of this speech-act it is interesting that Paul addresses three specific and distinct groups. First by appealing to ‘brethren’ he is speaking to those who have already converted to Christianity. Second, the ‘sons of Abraham’s family’ is an appeal to those who would associate themselves as followers of Judaism. Finally, in the event he has left anyone out, ‘those among you who fear God’ was a reference to those who were considering or in the process of converting to Judaism. This group of people could be from any nationality. Paul established early in this passage that the message he was about to deliver was not just for a select few, rather it was open to all.
As with Peter, Paul placed the responsibility for the death of Jesus squarely at the feet of those who lived in Jerusalem and their leaders. Neither Peter nor Paul made a universal statement blaming all Jewish people in all places and at all times for the crucifixion of Jesus. Both proclaimed the death by crucifixion, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus. The message at Pisidian Antioch by Paul was completely consistent with the messages delivered by Peter before the Sanhedrin and Cornelius.

Unlike the messages delivered in Romans 1, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians 1, and 1 Thessalonians 2, Paul did not make appeal here to his apostleship. Instead in Acts 13:30 he makes appeal to the witnesses who were with Jesus during His earthly ministry and then as witnesses to His resurrection and teaching prior to the ascension. In short Paul was making it possible for his audience to speak to others beyond himself who had seen the risen Christ.

It could be argued that Paul’s message does not make use of Christ or Lord as titles in the passage, meaning he did not ascribe deity to Jesus. While neither term is present in the Greek there is yet another marker that indicates deity. Remembering that Paul was in the synagogue, all those who were present except perhaps the newest God-fearers would have understood forgiveness of sins to be a prerogative of God alone. Turning to v. 43b Paul makes explicit that belief in this Jesus who died by crucifixion and then was raised by God results in the forgiveness of sins through the person of Jesus. If God alone can forgive sins and yet Paul is claiming that forgiveness comes through Jesus, then the audience would have understood him to be ascribing deity to Jesus.

Summary of Thought to this Point

The first chapter of this research began by establishing the period in review as being AD 30-250. The church was young, lacking in authority in societal realms except for what the
believers gave to the church leadership. The church was beginning in a period where syncretism was to be preferred against any exclusivist system of belief. The question was posed as to why anyone would choose to become a Christian during this time.

Historians have offered that the cause of growth of the church was the presence of good roads, common language, *pax Romana* and a host of similar thoughts as explanations. The previous chapter demonstrated why these fail to convince, leaving need for a better explanation for the growth of the church.

In addition to the spread of Christianity, it was shown that some historians hold to the existence of multiple Christianities during the first three centuries or so. From the prior arguments of why the church grew and then the idea that there were multiple Christianities, the thesis was presented that the early church grew as a result of using a positive apologetic, specifically the proclaimed deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It was also claimed that it could be demonstrated that there was but one Christianity from the beginning.

Chapter two focused on establishing what the core of Christianity was through the identifying of an early and consistent Standard, Policy, or Administrative Control (SPAC). Through the use of Galatians 1 it was possible to show that from as early as AD 49 Paul had a high Christology and understood Jesus to be God. Furthermore, he stated explicitly that any change or alteration to the gospel message he was preaching to be unacceptable and incompatible with the singular gospel he was presenting. Using 1 Thessalonians it was possible to demonstrate equally early that Paul interchanged Gospel of God and Gospel of Christ as equal terms. This too affirms a high Christology and belief that Jesus was God.

Looking to 1 Cor 15:3-5 it was possible to demonstrate that Paul was reminding the Corinthians of the gospel message he had previously taught them, tying salvation to belief in this
singular message. This message did not originate with Paul, and in looking at Galatians he stated that he received the gospel directly from Christ and no man, yet the message was consistent with that taught by the Apostles that had been with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry.

The use of the titles *kurios* and *Christos* were examined. With *Christos* being the Greek term for Messiah, by applying this title Paul was stating explicitly that Jesus was the anointed one of God. The use of *kurios* was the Greek equivalent of Adonai, a title that was used of God and is translated as LORD when the original language used YHWH and Lord when *kurios* was present. Because the term could be applied to humans as well as God, a search was conducted and revealed that, based on the Septuagint, *kurios* was used over twelve thousand times in over five thousand verses when not referencing God, and was used over seventy-two hundred times in over eighteen hundred verses when speaking of God. Jesus was not a governmental ruler, so to apply the term to Him would have been understood by the original audience that Paul was ascribing deity status to Jesus.

The belief that Jesus is God by the early church was further validated when looking at *nomen sacrum* particularly from the second through fourth centuries. A shorthand similar to the Hebrew tetragrammaton was found where in particular the names Jesus and God as well as the titles of Lord and Christ were converted into an abbreviated style that made it readily understood that the referent was deity.

Potential challenges were also examined in an effort to demonstrate the higher plausibility of the thesis of this work than competing views. One of the more recent arguments against Christianity has been that there was no empty tomb, thus no resurrection. This line of argumentation was shown to be unconvincing as burial is not necessary in order for a resurrection to obtain. Further the impact of the Nazareth Decree was considered in relation to
Ehrman’s proposed laws of prohibition. It is at least strange timing for the Emperor of Rome to issue such an edict imposing the death penalty for disturbing a tomb unless a tomb had first been disturbed, and then the occupant was of such stature that the empty tomb caused significant activity.

The challenge of other dying and rising gods was also shown to be left wanting, as there are no pre-Pauline resurrection accounts so there would have been no pre-Christian religion from which the Apostles could have borrowed material. The closest reported resurrection account in a mystery religion deity is found in Adonis and Attis from the second and third centuries, well after Christianity had taken root and began growing.

Henotheism along with adoptionistic Christology were evaluated. Henotheism, or the idea that there are multiple gods but only one is to be worshiped, failed to convince since most Jewish individuals were monotheistic and Christianity grew out of first-century Judaism. Hurtado noted that if henotheism were a valid concern then one should expect to find multiple temples in Jerusalem or multiple gods within a single temple, neither of which has been the case.

Gathercole presented a convincing argument with respect to the kenosis of Christ from Philippians 2. The passage in context gives three points which must be considered. First, the kenosis framed the incarnation as a voluntary act which would indicate pre-existence of Jesus. Second, kenosis indicates that Jesus did something, making him a willing participant in the actions. This, too, would indicate pre-existence. Finally, the passage stating that Jesus began in the form of God then having taken on a human form indicates pre-existence. This belief in Jesus as deity further complicates the idea that Jesus was somehow deified through apotheosis.

After having established the SPAC, that same SPAC was then demonstrated to be the positive apologetic used not only by Paul but also by Peter. Two speech-acts from Peter and one
from Paul were examined from the book of Acts. The two from Peter included him before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8-12); Peter at Cornelius’ house (Acts 10:39-43); and finally, Paul in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:26-39). All three speeches included the preaching of the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Additionally, in the example from Paul it was noted how Paul in this case did not make appeal to his own apostleship, rather pointed to the other Apostles as ones who were witnesses of Jesus’ earthly ministry as well as having spent time with Him following His resurrection.

It is not necessary to provide an exhaustive listing of gospel presentations in order to make the case. To do such would be difficult at best given challenges by skeptics as what does or does not count as historical data. The work above has been with the intent of demonstrating what the church believed and taught, but is not an attempt to demonstrate miracles in particular happened. Other scholars have produced significant works already toward demonstrating why miracles should not, a priori, be rejected.

Having established a singular consistent SPAC, the research will next attempt to trace this same SPAC through known patristic works up to AD 250. Chapter three will begin with establishing what is meant by patristic as compared to a church father or church doctor, then move to tracing the SPAC and apologetic through the period in review. Where appropriate Nag Hammadi texts will be introduced as well.
CHAPTER 3

PURSUING THE SPAC

Rudolf Bultmann believed that it was not possible to know much of anything related to the life and personality of Jesus because the earliest sources had either little interest in or only fragmentary sources related to Jesus.\textsuperscript{174} Yet in the previous chapter it was demonstrated that there was a single Christianity proclaimed by Paul that was based on the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and that it was possible to establish that the early church believed any deviation to this singularly-preached Christianity was to espouse a different gospel. Thus, the culmination of what the church believed about the life and ministry of Jesus is not found lacking, rather the most critical part of the life of Jesus is what has survived. By looking to 1 Thessalonians and Galatians it was demonstrated that Paul held an early and high Christology that did not develop over time. Additionally, by appealing to the first two chapters of Galatians it was shown that Paul and at least the Apostles in Jerusalem were preaching the same gospel message.\textsuperscript{175} The two-fold purpose of this chapter is first to identify whether or not there was a

\textsuperscript{174} Rudolf Bultmann, \textit{Jesus and the Word} (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958), 8.

\textsuperscript{175} To appeal to the whole of the Apostles from this one text would necessitate use of an argument from speculation and silence. The text would seem to infer that others were present, but this is not explicitly stated. Likewise, to appeal to the idea that we did not hear in Galatians 1 and 2 from all of the Apostles, therefore there must be some different yet approved of gospel being preached, necessitates an argument from speculation and silence. What can be known from the text is that Peter, James, John, and Paul agreed on the content of the gospel message.
belief in a single Christianity following the Apostolic Period, and second to attempt to identify
the defined Standard, Policy, or Administrative Control (SPAC) as established in the previous
chapter is readily identifiable and was used by the Patristic authors. In order to further the thesis
it will also be necessary to demonstrate the same SPAC was used as a positive apologetic
following the Apostolic Period.

**Going in Reverse**

Having sufficiently explained these opinions, let us next pass on to a consideration of the
subject taken in hand, in order that, by proving what we have determined concerning
heresies, and by compelling their (champions) to return to these several (speculators)
their peculiar tenets, we may show the heresiarchs destitute (of a system); and by
proclaiming the folly of those who are persuaded (by these heterodox tenets), \textit{we shall prevail on them to retrace their course to the serene haven of the truth}.\textsuperscript{176}

Hippolytus contain much wisdom with respect to how to advance the research from here.
If current scholarship envisions multiple Christianities as the norm until more established
councils, then attempting to trace Christianity from the beginning would be a difficult task
without drawing the charge of using a straw man. If over time the multiple Christianities were
reduced to a single orthodox system of belief, then working in reverse chronological order
should both reveal whether or not the church, even in the earliest years, accepted multiple
Christianities, while at the same time avoid the charge a straw man.

**The “Faded Five”**

Before moving to a reverse chronological examination of the patristics, it is appropriate
to at least mention writings by five of the earliest known individuals from within Christianity—all
writers in the second century. Most if not all of the works by these early Christians have been

\textsuperscript{176} Hippolytus, \textit{Ref. 4.46}. Emphasis mine.
lost, and what remains is of limited or no substantial value in terms of defending the thesis of this work without embarking into the realm of speculation. The research would however be found lacking if these individuals were passed by in complete silence.

Papias

Papias is perhaps one of our earliest sources with close connection to the Apostles. What has been left to us are but fragments that have been quoted by Irenæus and Eusebius, yet they lend credence to the idea that Papias was living in a time when he could have heard the oral teachings of Apostles—the actual eyewitnesses to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.\textsuperscript{177} It is from Papias that we learn Mark wrote his gospel by listening to the sermons of Peter.\textsuperscript{178} Part of the value found in what does remain can be identified in the first fragment as follows:

But I shall not be unwilling to put down, along with my interpretations, whatsoever instructions I received with care at any time from the elders, and stored up with care in my memory, assuring you at the same time of their truth. For I did not, like the multitude, take pleasure in those who spoke much, but in those who taught the truth; nor in those who related strange commandments, but in those who rehearsed the commandments given by the Lord to faith, and proceeding from truth itself.\textsuperscript{179}

\textsuperscript{177} Richard Bauckham, \textit{Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 25-29. Based on Bauckham the early church demonstrated a preference for eyewitness testimony. This would be no different than modern judicial proceedings or the desire of historians to have first-hand accounts rather than second.

\textsuperscript{178} Eusebius, \textit{Hist. Eccl.} 3.39.15. While Eusebius and Irenæus offer conflicting testimony regarding whether or not Papias actually heard any one of the Apostles preach, both agree that he and Polycarp knew each other, and that Polycarp was trained by the Apostle John. Thus linkage back to one of the eyewitnesses of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is established and fixes Papias as a third-generation source. If he wrote ca. 140-160 this places him at +110-130 from the crucifixion and only +40 or so from the death of John the Apostle meaning he was in the right time and geographic location to have this knowledge of what John had been teaching.

\textsuperscript{179} Papias, “Fragments of Papias,” in \textit{The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenæus}, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 153. Here the editors have noted that the reference to “strange commandments” is a reference to commandments by others that were strange or novel to the followers of Christ. If this is to be accepted as an accurate understanding, then it would lend credence to the idea that there was a clear distinction seen by the church in what actually constituted the Christian teachings.
Of special interest is the term “strange commandments.” If Papias is correctly understood as affirming a singular Christianity as opposed to variations, this would be an early source indeed. However, to make such an appeal necessitates some level of speculation. The source is interesting but provides no appreciable material in developing the thesis.

Quadratus

Quasten states Quadratus was the earliest of all Christian apologists following the apostolic age, citing the year 123 as the date for his apology to Hadrian, and credits what is known of him to Eusebius. Unlike later apologies pointing to unfair treatment by the governmental systems, here the focus appears to have been calling attention to how certain individuals were responsible for causing issues for the Christians. According to Eusebius, this same Quadratus was also the bishop of Athens during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. This would put forty years between the apology and the time of his bishopric. Quadratus was possibly trained by the Apostle Philip, and if accurate it becomes evident that he was extremely old by the time of Marcus Aurelius’ reign. What should not be overlooked is that Eusebius himself states that it was tradition that said Quadratus was associated with the daughters of Philip.


181 For an interesting evaluation of who the possible individuals were that were causing difficulties for the Christians, see Paul Keresztes, “Nero, the Christians and the Jews in Tacitus and Clement of Rome,” Latomus, 43, no. 2, (Apr-Jun 1984): 404-413. Keresztes believes the conflict in Rome that caused Claudius to expel the Jews and Jewish Christians was based on ongoing arguments over whether or not Jesus was Messiah. He infers this to mean the Jewish population would have been in a position to know who the Christians were and that it was some from within this Jewish population that were responsible at least in part for turning in Christians to the Roman authorities. If this theory is accurate, it would appear plausible that such a condition could have continued well beyond the reign of Claudius.

182 Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. 4.23.3.

183 Ibid., 3.37.1.
The work of Quadratus had circulated and was known within the church as evidenced by the use of his material by Miltiades in addressing false prophets speaking in ecstasy. It would appear plausible to believe if Quadratus’ work was used in addressing false prophets, then the church held there were groups teaching material inconsistent with what the earliest church held to be a correct understanding. However, with but one snippet remaining from his work, Quadratus does not add appreciable material that would further the thesis of this research.

Miltiades

Miltiades was considered both a sophist and apologist within the early church, and care must be used when doing quick searches not to confuse this Miltiades with the Athenian general or the Montanist by the same name. Because of the lack of extant material, it is difficult to build a complete picture from what sources remain. It appears that this apologist lived and wrote in the region of Asia Minor, particularly during the heyday of Montanism. According to Eusebius, Apollinaris of Hierapolis spoke of the work of Miltiades as it related to the refutation of Montanism. The estimated dating would place the works of Miltiades around 160-180, making him a contemporary of Justin Martyr and Tatian.

Specific works attributed to Miltiades include *Apology for Christian Philosophy, Against the Greeks* (two books), *Against the Jews* (two books), *That a Prophet Should not Speak in Ecstasy*, and another treatise contra Valentinian Gnosticism. If this is to be considered an accurate summation by Eusebius, and if Valentinus lived ca. 100-160, the last work in particular helps significantly with the dating of this apologist. No extant works remain.

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Aristo of Pella

Aristo of Pella, also known as Ariston in some works, is dated such that he would be one of the first apologists following the apostolic era. While Quasten communicates the title of the work by Aristo as *Discussion between Jason and Papiscus concerning Christ*, labeling this as the earliest penned apology against Judaism,\(^{185}\) Origen would communicate the title as *Controversy between one Papiscus and Jason*. While patristics referenced the work of Aristo, according to Origen, so did the opposition to Christianity. It was reported by Origen that Celsus spoke out against this lone work known to be from Aristo.\(^{186}\) While different, the titles bear sufficient resemblance to consider the two to be referencing the same work. The text, now lost, is said to have been a work in which a Jew and a Christian discuss Jesus as the Christ, ending with the conversion of the Jew to Christianity.

Dating of the work becomes increasingly easier given reports by Eusebius. It was Eusebius who places Aristo of Pella in a position to know of the decree by Hadrian related to the final Jewish revolt. In the wake of Bar Kochba, Hadrian had banished the Jews from their own country, with the survivors of the conflict, whether involved or not, refused admittance or to come close enough to even see the city of Jerusalem from a distance.\(^{187}\)

Apollinaris of Hierapolis

Apollinaris of Hierapolis was, along with Miltiades, a second century Christian apologist. Though there are no extant works, Eusebius reported that these works did survive at least until the earlier part of the fourth century. Specific works attributed to him by Eusebius included a


\(^{186}\) Origen, *Cont. Cels*. 4.52.

treatise to Marcus Aurelius, *Against the Greeks* (five books), *On the Truth* (two books), and *Against the Jews* (two books). Quasten notes that one additional text credited to Apollinaris, *On Easter*, is known of through *Chronicon Paschale*, and suggests that he had been against the quartodeciman debate. By way of introducing the quartodeciman issue there is evidence of his interest in the reported death and resurrection of Jesus and the dating of the same.

With a dating of the second century, this placed Apollinaris as a contemporary of Justin, Tatian, and Miltiades. According to Eusebius, Apollinaris spoke of the work of Miltiades as it related to the refutation of Montanism, and further suggests that at the time of writing, Montanism had just begun, with Montanus and his original two prophetesses being active. Conceding no birth records and an uncertain date of death, all that can be known is that Montanus was active during the latter half of the second century.

While disagreeing with the quartodeciman debate, what is of interest is the belief that Apollinaris held the disagreement to be one that grew from ignorance and not divisiveness. With respect to the Montanist desire to change the dating of the Passover, it was Apollinaris who drew upon Scripture to defend the traditional dating, that being the fourteenth day of the first month.

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188 Ibid., 393–395.
He is also credited with arguing, like so many others, that because Christianity came through Judaism, Christianity was older than the Greek philosophies.

**A Single Christianity**

In the previous chapter it was demonstrated that Paul preached a singular and consistent gospel message that was the basis of Christianity. The high Christology and singular gospel message were demonstrated to have existed no later than +19 years from the crucifixion of Jesus. Beyond Paul it is possible to trace this concept of a singular gospel through multiple other authors, then demonstrating that there were as few as twelve and not more than thirty-three years between extant works where the authors affirm that only one Christianity existed.

Some such as Schoedel believe that identifying such clearly established self-definition by way of the patristic writings is at best a difficult task, but would seemingly state that such identification is not completely impossible. He says,

> It is natural to look at the so-called ‘Apostolic Fathers’ for light on the emergence of normative self-definition in Early Christianity. For this body of literature might be expected to provide a link between the plastic religious categories of the New Testament and the authoritative utterances of a later period. Unfortunately, the Apostolic Fathers are an exceedingly heterogenous group of writings and do not fit comfortably into any developmental scheme.

The self-understanding of Ignatius and those who listened to him, then, depended more on the drawing of sharp internal boundaries than on emphasizing the split between the church and the world. This is partly intelligible in light of the general principle that in most contexts ‘the closer the relationship, the more intense the conflict.’ Antagonistic outsiders are not as great a threat to one’s aims as those who ‘seem worthy of trust’ yet are perceived as ‘teaching differently’ (*Pol* 3.1). This refusal to locate the major challenge in the surrounding pagan world has a bearing, as we shall see, on the shape of Ignatius’ theology.\(^2\)

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Such diversity in character and content does not preclude the ability to identify consistent core teachings. Moreover, diversity in character and content by individual writers abates potential charges of collusion and recognizes both the person as author as well as the audience. By examining the sharp internal boundaries it is argued that one can identify what it was that the patristics held to be the lines of demarcation between whether one was or was not Christian. Such an examination would be consistent with how it was earlier demonstrated that Paul taught ‘the gospel’ in contrast to ‘any other gospel’ as a means of delineating what exactly made his message Christian.

Ehrman would go a step further and propose multiple Christianities that are incapable of being separated such that one can identify a real versus false Christianity. He says,

In the second and third centuries there were, of course, Christians who believed in only one God; others, however, claimed that there were two Gods; yet others subscribed to 30, or 365, or more. Some Christians accepted the Hebrew Scriptures as a revelation of the one true God, the sacred possession of all believers; others claimed that the Scriptures had been inspired by an evil deity. Some Christians believed that God had created the world and was soon going to redeem it; others said that God neither had created the world nor had ever had any dealings with it. Some Christians believed that Christ was somehow both a man and God; others said that he was a man, but not God; others claimed that he was God, but not a man; others insisted that he was a man who had been temporarily inhabited by God. Some Christians believed that Christ’s death had brought about the salvation of the world; others claimed that his death had no bearing on salvation; yet others allege that he had never even died.193

While the above could be thought of as a series of multiple mutually exclusive conditions and readily dismissed as fallacious, such argumentation could potentially be overcome by appealing to henotheism. However, it has already been demonstrated that a SPAC existed whereby the church knew that Paul advocated for a single gospel while at the same time and in the same condition preaching against any other gospel. Thus, and by demonstrating that there was already

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a single Christianity, the conditions proposed by Ehrman such that there were multiple Christianities is untenable unless at a minimum three hurdles are overcome. First the case must be made that any of the suggested Christianities existed prior to the Pauline corpus. Second, the variant system must have generated documentation that is extant and available for critical review. Finally, the proposed precursor to the Pauline corpus must have been anchored in the Tanakh. It is a *non-sequitur* that simply claiming the name of Christian without also being anchored on the same gospel message as proclaimed by Paul, inclusive of the Tanakh, made one Christian.

In establishing the SPAC, the approach was to start earlier chronologically and move the investigation forward in time. In this chapter it is necessary first, before attempting to identify whether or not the SPAC and accompanying apologetic are present in the patristic material, to examine the known and accepted Christian sources in an effort to determine if there is evidence indicating that there was not an acceptance by all, of all, who claimed the title of Christian. If such an exclusivity in terms of what made the message Christian is found and is consistent with Paul, then the research can advance toward attempting to find evidence for the SPAC and apologetic.

If the claims by many that what is now known as orthodox Christianity coalesced from multiple Christianities, then the evidence should correspond to the assertion, with later texts beginning to support exclusivity and younger texts lacking such contentious language. Thus, for
the purpose of this section, the source data will be examined in reverse chronological order working from Origen to Clement of Rome.\textsuperscript{194}

Origen (c. 185-254)

It is conceded that at best Origen is a contentious source. Many vilify him while others would commend both the man and his works without question. While determining where Origen and his works belong on such a scale is beyond the scope of this research, that does not nullify the value in examining what he did say with respect to Christianity or his belief that there were those who held incorrect opinions regarding Christianity.

In the fourth book of the \textit{De Principiis},\textsuperscript{195} the first three chapters of which are devoted to Holy Scripture, Origen was convinced that “the cause of false opinions” which he had encountered among Jews, heretics, and simple Christians, lay only in the fact that “Scripture is not spiritually understood, but conceived according to the bare letter” (\textit{De princ.} 4.2.2).\textsuperscript{196}

As noted by Kannengiesser, Origen indicated that he believed there were false opinions, pointing to Judaism and heresies, which implies that he held that it was possible to come to a correct understanding of Christianity, but points to Scripture as the basis of that understanding. Moreover, Origen made appeal to what he believed to be an established doctrine related to the faith of the church, claiming that the doctrine to which he appealed was the gospels, epistles, law, and prophets of Scripture.\textsuperscript{197}

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\textsuperscript{194} It is not necessary to provide an exhaustive review of the patristic writings in making this point. To do so would weary the reader and does not add force of argument. If an author appealed to one church (a single Christianity), then that appeal does not somehow increase in truthfulness if such appeal is made multiple times.

\textsuperscript{195} In this work Origen quoted twenty-two books of the Christian Old Testament, and all books of the Christian New Testament except 2 John, 3 John, Jude, 2 Peter, Philemon, 2 Thessalonians, and Titus.


\textsuperscript{197} Origen, \textit{De princ.} 1.3.1.
\end{flushright}
Beyond this Origen expressed clearly in De princ. 1.3.1 that he believed those holding to multiple Gods and multiple Christs to be heretics, but indicated that he was unaware of anyone appealing to multiple Holy Spirits.\textsuperscript{198} He further lays the charge that because those he deemed heretics were not listening to those Origen considered to be Christian, they were following error and deception instead of “by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, according to the declaration of the Apostle…”\textsuperscript{199} Those who assimilated incorrect doctrine then began to teach the same incorrect position to others, claiming the error to be the truth.\textsuperscript{200}

With respect to those, indeed, who teach differently regarding Christ from what the rule of Scripture allows, it is no idle task to ascertain whether it is from a treacherous purpose that these opposing powers, in their struggles to prevent a belief in Christ, have devised certain fabulous and impious doctrines; or whether, on hearing the word of Christ, and not being able to cast it forth from the secrecy of their conscience, nor yet to retain it pure and holy, they have, by means of vessels that were convenient to their use, and, so to speak, through their prophets, introduced various errors contrary to the rule of Christian truth. Now we are to suppose rather that apostate and refugee powers, which have departed from God out of the very wickedness of their mind and will, or from envy of those for whom there is prepared (on their becoming acquainted with the truth) an ascent to the same rank, whence they themselves had fallen, did, in order to prevent any progress of that kind, invent these errors and delusions of false doctrine.\textsuperscript{201}

If it is accepted that De princ. was composed in the second decade of the third century, then the text was in circulation over a hundred years prior to the Council of Nicæa, and almost

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 2.7.1. A possible conflicting statement attributed to Origen is found in Apology for Origen by Pamphilus with respect to two Holy Spirits, although it is plausible that he might have learned of a different heresy after penning this work. Of Origen Pamphilus states, “Moreover, <there are those> who say that there is one Holy Spirit who was in the prophets, but another who was in the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. These are guilty of exactly the same impious offense as those who, to the extent that they have it in them, sever the nature of the deity and divide the one God of the Law and of the Gospels.” See David G. Hunter, ed., St. Pamphilus: Apology for Origen; With the Letter of Rufinus; On the Falsification of the Books of Origen, trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 58. While Pamphilus may reveal a change in Origen’s knowledge of other beliefs about the Holy Spirit, this in no way damages the thesis that there was a singular gospel to which the church held or that Origen believed in an exclusive Christianity.

\textsuperscript{199} Origen, De princ. 2.7.3.

\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., 3.3.3.

\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., 3.3.4.
the same before the Edict of Milan. According to this one work Origen clearly held that a single Christianity existed and rejected those views he found in conflict. By citations he demonstrated not only an acceptance, but also a reliance upon both the New Testament documents as well as anchoring his theology in the use of the Tanakh.

Hippolytus (c. 160-236)

If Hippolytus penned this work, or at least completed the manuscript after the death of Callistus, then Ref. would have to be dated at 222 or later, meaning Origen’s De princ. would have been an earlier complete source. The placement of Ref. at this point in the research is based on Hippolytus’ date of death being prior to that of Origen. Such dating would place Ref. at ninety years prior to the Edict of Milan and a full century before the Council of Nicaea.

From the first paragraph there is a charge levied against those Hippolytus would consider opponents of Christianity. He notes that those holding differing views than what he advances do not use holy Scripture and teach contrary to what had been handed down, arguing that heresies were constructed using the doctrines of their respective originators.202 He further distinguishes between being a disciple of Christ and being a disciple of some other, such as Marcus, Pythagoras, Colarbasus, and Basilides.203

202 Hippolytus, Ref. 1.1. Care has been taken to this point to not employ the term “heresy” in relation to different views or opinions presented, as this is now typically used as a pejorative term. The purpose of this research is not to define what is or is not to be considered heresy, rather it is to pursue a positive argument for the proposed thesis. If the thesis is demonstrated true, then it will be demonstrated that there was a single Christianity from the beginning and that the church did not accept the concept that multiple Christianities existed at this time in history, and that the church grew through the use of the positive apologetic commending belief in the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Further, if the thesis is proven true, then it would appear to follow that if a system of belief was not Christian in the first place, then it would be inappropriate to reference such a system as being a Christian heresy: if the system is not Christian then one cannot rightly attach the name Christian to the group.

203 Ibid., 6.47; 6.50.
Of particular interest is Hippolytus’ call for those who would propose a different, heterodox system of Christianity than that to which he points to “retrace their course” in such a manner as to be able to demonstrate the truthfulness of their system.\textsuperscript{204} He considers Simon and Valentinus, calling them first “liars” and then “heretics.”\textsuperscript{205} With such strong language it is hard to imagine that one could conceive of Hippolytus as being accepting of other or multiple Christianities, yet he did not stop with these.

Of Marcion’s doctrines he wrote that nothing being taught by Marcion or his disciples was found to be consistent with the teaching of Paul; nothing was found to be consistent with the Gospel of Mark.\textsuperscript{206} Condemnation fell from him on those of the Ebionite persuasion that would assert Jesus to have been a mere human alone,\textsuperscript{207} as well as on Theodotus for holding an adoptionistic Christology that asserted Jesus to have become the Christ at his baptism.\textsuperscript{208}

With respect to especially the beginning of Ref. there is little doubt that Hippolytus was familiar with and used what had been produced by Irenæus. From the text it is difficult if not impossible to avoid the conclusion that Hippolytus held to a single Christianity, with the grounding of his belief found in the Tanakh and New Testament texts respectively. Moreover, Hippolytus holds the distinction of having been the first anti-pope, with his open discontentment

\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., 4.46.
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid., 4.51. There is disagreement on whether or not Simon is a reference to the same individual found in Acts 8:9-25. However, Valentinus’ life can be dated to ca. 100-160. If Valentinus began advancing his theology at the age of twenty, then his theology is still +90 from the crucifixion and +60 from the death of Paul. This means Valentinus would have been active during the period in which ‘the faded five’ were active as well as Polycarp, Irenæus, and Justin.
\textsuperscript{206} Hippolytus, Ref. 7.18.
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid., 7.22.
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid., 7.23.
being expressed by way of doctrinal disagreement. If there was an overall acceptance and
toleration of multiple Christianities prior to Nicæa, then there does not appear to be a reason for
Hippolytus to have driven a stake in the ground whereby he believed others to be liars and
heretics or that there was something unique and authoritative about the material found in the
Tanakh and New Testament.

Tertullian (c. 160-230)

As with Origen, the study of the person of Tertullian comes with a mixed bag of issues.
Many would look to his time aligning with Montanism at the end of his life and as a result
dismiss him in full as a result of departing from orthodoxy. Others look at his time adhering to
Montanism and use that to support their doctrinal understanding of revelation. As a result, and in
an effort to demonstrate that Tertullian held to a single Christianity, Apology is here considered,
having been penned around 197 and prior to his embracing Montanism.209

Tertullian held that he was…“persecuted for His doctrine, offering to Him, at His own
requirement, that costly and noble sacrifice of prayer despatched [sic] from the chaste body, an
unstained soul, a sanctified spirit, not the few grains of incense a farthing buys—tears of an
Arabian tree,—not a few drops of wine,—not the blood of some worthless ox to which death is a
relief, and, in addition to other offensive things, a polluted conscience, so that one wonders,
when your victims are examined by these vile priests, why the examination is not rather of the
sacrificers [sic] than the sacrifices.”210 Unpacking this passage reveals that he believed doctrine

209 The issue of Tertullian’s shift to embracing Montanism is a subject beyond the scope of this research, but even looking to his later works one does not find any evidence for a shift from the proposed SPAC.

210 Tertullian, Apol. 30.
came from God, and that the condition of the one bringing a sacrifice before God was of far more importance than the sacrifice itself. If he believed doctrine to come from God, then the question follows as to what he believed about doctrines in circulation that lacked grounding in the Tanakh or New Testament.

Here Tertullian states more explicitly what was implied earlier. Just as a wallet embossed with “Genuine Imitation Leather” might just as rightly be stamped with “Real Fake Leather,” so too he sees a clear distinction between genuine Christian doctrine and that of an imitation. The grounding for Tertullian is in “sacred Scripture,” while those advancing an imitation are corruptors, guilty of twisting that same Scripture in an effort to advance their own cause, and considers such individuals as ones who have “corrupted” the revelation proclaimed by the church, and that all such doctrines can be demonstrated as having their origin after the earthly ministry of Jesus as well as that of His Apostles.211 This work shows an appeal to a single Christianity 117 years before the Edict of Milan and 128 years before the Council of Nicæa.

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215)

Often for both Origen and Clement of Alexandria, Origen’s instructor, the first thing to come to mind is that they were proponents of using allegory as a means for understanding Scripture whereas the school at Antioch advocated for a more literal exegesis. Kannengiesser reminds today’s scholar that forming a rigid dichotomy on this point is difficult at best.

For the Christian interpreter, a first principle of the literal meaning of the Bible, underscored again and again in patristic exegesis is that the biblical “letter” as understood by patristic interpreters had its own status, originating from a divine source in a supernatural way; therefore, it admitted no neutral reading devoid of the appropriate kind of religious faith. For the exegetes of the early church the correct understanding of the

211 Tertullian, *Apol*. 47.
littera was in itself a spiritual exercise, because for them the materiality of the written text itself was filled with divine mysteries.\textsuperscript{212}

Clement made the following statement in \textit{Stromata}:

Well, they preserving the tradition of the blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles, Peter, James, John, and Paul, the sons receiving it from the father (but few were like the fathers), came by God's will to us also to deposit those ancestral and apostolic seeds. And well I know that they will exult; I do not mean delighted with this tribute, but solely on account of the preservation of the truth, according as they delivered it.\textsuperscript{213}

Here four key points can be noted. First, there was something unique about the doctrine he and the church were proclaiming, namely that the doctrine was blessed. If the doctrine was blessed, then it would follow that there were also doctrines in circulation that were not blessed. Second, he named four apostles and called them holy. These were four historical individuals, each of whom reported having seen the risen Christ. Third, he said explicitly that the doctrine had its origin in God and implicitly that it came through Christ. Finally, he emphasizes the delivery of this doctrine consistent with how the apostles delivered the same doctrine. Based on this it is clear that Clement recognized lines of demarcation whereby he understood what constituted being Christian. By appeal to the teaching of the Apostles he at the same time disavows the teaching of others that would be inconsistent with those Apostles. If Clement wrote this piece during the period in which Commodus and Septimius Severus reigned, then it places his appeal to a single Christianity at a minimum a full century before the Edict of Milan, and perhaps more than one and a quarter centuries.


\textsuperscript{213} Clement of Alexandria, \textit{Strom}. 3.01.
Irenæus of Lyons (c. 130-202)

Irenæus opens his work by immediately establishing that he held there to be individuals who were teaching material that he found to be untenable with respect to Christianity.

I intend, then, to the best of my abili

ty, with brevity and clearness to set forth the opinions of those who are now promulgating heresy. I refer especially to the disciples of Ptolemaeus, whose school may be described as a bud from that of Valentinus. I shall also endeavour, according to my moderate ability, to furnish the means of overthrowing them, by showing how absurd and inconsistent with the truth are their statements.\(^{214}\)

To claim that these other teachings were inconsistent implies that there did exist, at the same time, teachings that were consistent with what he held to be thoroughly Christian. Going a step further, to claim these other teachings were absurd was to claim that the teachings were beyond good or logical reason. Moreover, Irenæus provided the reader with a snapshot of what he held to be a correct understanding of the origin of doctrine.

As I have already observed, the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth. For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world. But as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shineth everywhere, and enlightens all men that are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth…. Nor will any one of the rulers in the Churches, however highly gifted he may be in point of eloquence, teach doctrines different from these (for no one is greater than the Master); nor, on the other hand, will he who is deficient in power of expression inflict injury on the tradition. For the faith being ever one and the same, neither does one who is able at great length to discourse regarding it, make any addition to it, nor does one, who can say but little diminish it.\(^{215}\)

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\(^{215}\) Irenæus of Lyons, *Adv. Haer.* 1.10. While Irenæus held the source of authority to be Scripture, that was in the second century. By the fourth century the church had changed leadership and, subsequently, introduced a different thought as to where one might find authority within Christianity. Beginning with Basil the Great, a transition in how the understanding of tradition occurred. In his treatise *De Spiritu Sancto*, Basil states that some aspects of the Christian faith and practice are to be found not in Scripture but in the tradition of the church. Grenz
The immediate observation is that, as with Clement, the church received the preaching and faith, indicating that these were pieces given to and not created by the church. Second, by appeal to belief in relation to specific doctrines, a bifurcation is created separating what is and is not to be considered Christian. Third the statement that the faith is one and the same and that none make addition to or deletion from that faith indicates a belief in a fixed message.

In *Adv. haer.* 1.10.3 Irenæus went so far as to claim, “It does not follow because men are endowed with greater and less degrees of intelligence, that they should therefore change the subject matter [of the faith] itself, and should conceive of some other God….” This clearly indicates a belief in a single, immutable basis upon which Christianity was established. With this work being dated shortly following the martyrdom of Christians in Lyons, it establishes that there was not an acceptance of all claiming to be Christian and instead appeals to an exclusive Christianity based on a particular foundation. This places a single Christianity at least 150 years prior to the Council of Nicæa and 135 years before the Edict of Milan.

**Justin (c. 100-165)**

Justin arguably is a difficult personality to unpack when it comes to his beliefs. Unlike Origen, Hippolytus, or Irenæus, he uses little Scripture and instead works through philosophical arguments. In part what makes Justin more difficult are his statements such as,

And this we acknowledge, that as among the Greeks those who teach such theories as please themselves are all called by the one name “Philosopher,” though their doctrines be diverse, so also among the Barbarians this name on which accusations are accumulated is

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and Franke note that prior to both Augustine in the West and Basil in the East, the church would have had extreme difficulty with the idea of tradition found outside the pages of Scripture being viewed as authoritative. See Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 95-96.
the common property of those who are and those who seem wise. For all are called Christians.\textsuperscript{216}

One cannot but concede that Justin did state that all who claimed the name were called Christian, but what is missing is any statement that would imply that he believed all who claimed the name of Christian were in fact Christian. On this point he went further:

All who take their opinions from these men, are, as we before said, called Christians; just as also those who do not agree with the philosophers in their doctrines, have yet in common with them the name of philosophers given to them. And whether they perpetrate those fabulous and shameful deeds—the upsetting of the lamp, and promiscuous intercourse, and eating human flesh—we know not; but we do know that they are neither persecuted nor put to death by you, at least on account of their opinions. But I have a treatise against all the heresies that have existed already composed, which, if you wish to read it, I will give you.\textsuperscript{217}

The critical point found here is not that Justin stated all are called Christian, rather the emphasis is to be found in his noting that even when certain philosophers had divergent doctrinal positions they were still called by the originating philosopher’s name. Even though they carried the same name, the teachings were not the same. With respect to the thesis of this research, to have a variation in the doctrine would be to have a variation from the SPAC.

Notwithstanding, it is still possible to demonstrate that Justin held to a single Christianity even if by way of developing arguments using the platforms already accepted by his audience. “And when we say also that the Word, who is the first-birth of God, was produced without sexual union, and that He, Jesus Christ, our Teacher, was crucified and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter.”\textsuperscript{218} Nothing here indicates that Justin believed the stories of

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{216} Justin Martyr, \textit{I Apol.} 7.

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 26.

\textsuperscript{218} Justin Martyr, \textit{I Apol.} 21.
\end{flushleft}
the sons of Jupiter, rather he simply used this to communicate with his audience using that which they were already familiar with.

It becomes increasingly clear that Justin held that there was but a single Christianity, and that not all who proclaimed to be Christian were in fact teaching the same doctrine. Evidence of this is found in his assessment of Marcion where he states, “And there is Marcion, a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive, and teaching his disciples to believe in some other god greater than the Creator.”\(^\text{219}\) To teach of some other god is to teach a different gospel and thus to be something other than the Christian message as delivered by Paul.

Polycarp (c. 69-155)

If Irenæus was sharp with his words related to the various systems of belief, then Polycarp may be considered abusive by many. He did not mix words, instead establishing his belief in the strongest possible terms of the day.

For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist;” and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan. Wherefore, forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning; “watching unto prayer,” and persevering in fasting; beseeching in our supplications the all-seeing God “not to lead us into temptation,” as the Lord has said: “The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.”\(^\text{220}\)

Based on this work it is evident that Polycarp did not accept one as Christian if they taught against the physicality of Jesus, the actual death of Jesus, or the resurrection of Jesus. To claim that one is the antichrist, of the devil, or the first-born of Satan is to state one is in direct and hostile opposition to the doctrinal view held, and as such is mutually exclusive from the position

\(^{219}\) Ibid., 26.

\(^{220}\) Polycarp of Smryna, \textit{Poly} 34–35.
held and taught by Polycarp. This letter, dated to 125, indicates that 200 years before Nicæa and 190 before the Edict of Milan there was a single Christianity being espoused.

Ignatius (c. 50-110)

Of the seven letters of Ignatius accepted as authentic, only two need mentioning here in order to make the case that he held to a single Christianity. In his letter to the Ephesians Ignatius made reference to some individuals having a false doctrine\(^{221}\) as well as some who corrupt the faith of God by way of wicked doctrine.\(^{222}\) To appeal to a false or wicked doctrine is to affirm, albeit implicitly, that there exists at the same time and in the same sense a correct or true doctrine.

With respect to the Magnesians it is interesting to note that the phrase “be not deceived” (IMag 8) begins in the Greek with ‘not’ and is followed by the verb in the imperative be deceived, be misled πλανῶντες καὶ πλανῶμενοι deceivers (of others) and (themselves) deceived—Let oneself be misled, deceived.\(^{223}\) Thus Ignatius commands that his readers not allow themselves to be deceived by others. When considering IMag 11, Ignatius speaks of the hooks of vain doctrine. The picture being presented is one of personal pride being like an embedded fishhook\(^{224}\) that, as with a hooked fish, allows another to draw the one hooked away from a safe area and into a position of danger. He admonishes the Magnesians to “Study, therefore, to be

\(^{221}\) Ignatius of Antioch, IEph 9.

\(^{222}\) Ibid., 16.


\(^{224}\) Ibid., 12.
established in the doctrines of the Lord and the apostles…” as the means by which to avoid being misled.  

Over two hundred years before the Edict of Milan or the Council of Nicæa, Ignatius was espousing that there was a single Christianity and that false or incorrect teachings were circulating related to the church. There is no indication, as with Polycarp, that he was willing to accept other doctrines as being equally Christian.

Clement of Rome (c. 30-100)

Clement of Rome currently holds the distinction of being the earliest patristic writer where a completely extant manuscript remains. Writing about thirty years following the martyrdom of Paul, Clement bridges the span between the Apostles and the patristics.

Clement includes extensive reference to the Old Testament, as well as to Christian writings that would become part of the New Testament. He refers to forty-two different characters from the Old Testament to illustrate either the virtue of humility and obedience or the vice of jealousy and rebellion, and he cites texts from fifteen different books of the Old Testament.  

In this work he makes appeal to the church in Corinth to include referencing five out of seven of the accepted Pauline corpus. Not only does the citations by Clement point to his belief in an authority with respect to what constitutes truth, but he also affirmed doctrine as coming from God and not man. “Content with the provision which God had made for you, and carefully attending to His words, ye were inwardly filled with His doctrine, and His sufferings were before your eyes.”

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225 Ignatius of Antioch, IMag 13.


227 The two texts from the Pauline corpus not referenced are Galatians and Philemon.

228 Clement of Rome, 1Clem 2.
Over two centuries before the Edict of Milan and the Council of Nicæa, Clement was espousing at a minimum that doctrine came from God and not man. This doctrine was not created by the church, rather it had its origin with God.

The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God. Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits [of their labours], having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe.  

From this it becomes evident that Clement was not advocating for multiple Christianities. Over two centuries before the Edict of Milan or the Council of Nicæa, Clement was already pointing to the authority of the message and the consistency of that message as originally delivered.

Church Councils

Contrary to those who would hold that Christianity did not become fixed in relation to orthodoxy until after the councils began meeting in the fourth century, evidence exists in the writings of the apostles and church fathers to suggest that councils were a normative practice long before Nicæa. The first, the Jerusalem Council, can be dated to AD 49, or less than twenty years following the crucifixion of Jesus and having Peter, Paul, James, and John in attendance. Following this council one finds Ignatius instructing Polycarp (IPoly 7) to convene a council for the purpose of selecting a messenger to Antioch.

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229 Ibid., 42.
Second, Tertullian gave indication that church councils were active at his time in determining real versus spurious writings: “But I would yield my ground to you, if the scripture of “the Shepherd,” which is the only one which favours adulterers, had deserved to find a place in the Divine canon; if it had not been habitually judged by every council of Churches (even of your own) among apocryphal and false (writings); itself adulterous, and hence a patroness of its comrades….\textsuperscript{230}” Another instance from Tertullian reveals his belief that the meeting of councils was a normative practice: “Besides, throughout the provinces of Greece there are held in definite localities those councils gathered out of the universal Churches, by whose means not only all the deeper questions are handled for the common benefit, but the actual representation of the whole Christian name is celebrated with great veneration.”\textsuperscript{231}

Third, Cyprian (c. 250) made extensive reference to the councils as active in his own day.\textsuperscript{232} In Ep. 70 he made reference to active councils in the time of Agrippinus, which would have dated back to ca. 200.

Because councils were active in the period of AD 49-250, to claim orthodox Christianity to have not been present or even to have been a minority movement within its own ranks lacks the necessary force to convince. Beyond this it is critical to note that no reference or indication has been found to indicate that the deity, death, or resurrection of Jesus was ever the minority or defensive position within these councils. The councils at times defended against or upheld certain aspects or elements of the Pauline gospel, such as when some Docetic views that denied the physicality of Jesus’ death were introduced.

\textsuperscript{230} Tertullian, \textit{De pud.} 10.

\textsuperscript{231} Tertullian, \textit{De jejun.} 1

Church Discipline

In attempting to identify whether or not the church exercised discipline within the body of believers, the focus here will be on looking at admonitions to either stay away from certain individuals or beliefs, or to have certain individuals leave the body (excommunication). If evidentially based cases can be identified from within the patristic texts then it would further the thought that the church had a clear sense of self-identity much earlier than Nicæa.

Ignatius provides an extremely clear example where the body of believers were admonished to avoid contact with a certain group of those he did not consider to be Christian. To the Ephesians he wrote, “For some are in the habit of carrying about the name [of Jesus Christ] in wicked guile, while yet they practice things unworthy of God, whom ye must flee as ye would wild beasts.”

Thus he believed that there were those who were teaching incorrectly about the person or nature of God. To the Smyræans he wrote that those who denied the physicality of Jesus’ death or resurrection were to be avoided (ISmyr 7). To the Philadelphians he advised that through remaining united as believers the church would not be deceived by those teaching a different doctrine (IPhld 2, 3). Ignatius clearly saw a line of demarcation between what he considered real Christianity and all other thoughts regarding what it meant to be a Christian. Not long following Ignatius was Polycarp’s message to the Philippians. He proclaims with extremely strong language that the teaching of the Docetæ, specifically as those teachings related to the physicality of the person of Jesus, were to be avoided (Poly 7).

Irenæus provides opportunity to read on multiple occasions a call to avoid those who held views inconsistent with orthodox Christianity. An example of such proclamations include the idea that there are those who are not part of the church and after one or two attempts to correct

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233 Ignatius of Antioch, IEph 7.
their errant theology, are to be avoided. He further believed that the church had proof for the truth it proclaimed, thus it was not necessary to look to other belief systems. Perhaps one of the strongest statements by Irenæus advocating for the self-separation of Christians from variant teachings is found in his fifth book:

> Those, therefore, who desert the preaching of the Church, call in question the knowledge of the holy presbyters, not taking into consideration of how much greater consequence is a religious man, even in a private station, than a blasphemous and impudent sophist. Now, such are all the heretics, and those who imagine that they have hit upon something more beyond the truth, so that by following those things already mentioned, proceeding on their way variously, in harmoniously, and foolishly, not keeping always to the same opinions with regard to the same things, as blind men are led by the blind, they shall deservedly fall into the ditch of ignorance lying in their path, ever seeking and never finding out the truth. It behooves us, therefore, to avoid their doctrines, and to take careful heed lest we suffer any injury from them; but to flee to the Church, and be brought up in her bosom, and be nourished with the Lord’s Scriptures.

From this it is evident that there were those from an early time who advocated for the belief in an absolute truth related to what constituted Christianity. As time advanced the church began more than just admonishing believers to avoid those who taught differently, the church began to exclude those who would advance doctrines at variance with Scripture. Irenæus reports that Marcion was excommunicated (Adv. Haer. 3.4.3). Hippolytus provides data that Sabellius was excommunicated (Ref. 9.7). Cyprian lists Fortunatus, Jovinus, Maximus, Privatur, Felix, Novatian, Marcian, Novatus, and Theodotus as all having been excommunicated (Ep. 54). The evidence here is clear that there existed a belief in the church that inconsistent doctrine was to be avoided, and if one had gained access to the church began teaching variants, they would be

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235 Ibid., 3.4.1.

summarily excluded from the body if they did not yield and conform to the established doctrines. The evidence remaining on this point from the patristics is clear and does not support the belief in an all-inclusive, tolerant-of-all society in respect to early Christian beliefs and practices.

The SPAC Traced

This section of the research focuses on tracing the proposed SPAC as established by Paul through the patristic writers. To reiterate, by SPAC it is meant that the church proclaimed the deity, death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus. It has already been established in the previous chapter that by way of employing the titles of Lord and Christ, Paul was commending the deity of Jesus to his audiences. By continued use of these same terms the church was continuing that same affirmation and commendation of the deity of Jesus.237

The importance in tracing the balance of the SPAC will be to identify whether or not there is evidence the patristics affirmed both the physical death and the physical resurrection of Jesus. Similar but different accounts would not be sufficient to defend the thesis. By way of example, consider a ball. While a ball does have a circular shape, it is not a circle, and in the same way a circle is not a ball. The intrinsic feature which determines identity in this example is the comparison between a two- and a three-dimensional object. While similarities exist, it is not by way of similarity that the two are defined or the essence identified. In like manner, if the extant patristic texts are divided on a physical or spiritual death or resurrection, similarities exist

237 There is no value to be added by attempting to trace and cite every use of Lord or Christ as ascribed to Jesus through the whole of the patristic writings in order to make this point. Through the continued use of these titles as well as the nomina sacrum investigated in the previous chapter the extremely early and then continued belief in the deity of Jesus has been established and is consistent with the position expressed by Paul. Thus, the deity aspect of the SPAC is demonstrated to have been continued by the patristics.
but any report claiming a spiritual event could not be considered the same as a report claiming a physical event in history.

Clement of Rome

Returning to an earlier quote in this chapter (I Clem 42), the gospel message is affirmed as having been preached by the apostles, but having its origin with Jesus. Noteworthy is Clement’s statement that the proclamation by the apostles was anchored specifically in the resurrection of Jesus. Here the gospel message is found through employing titles for the deity of Jesus and it follows that in order for Jesus to have resurrected He must first have died.

Ignatius

Ignatius’ words are as clear as Paul’s when it comes to the proclamation of the gospel message. To the Romans he proclaimed Jesus as God: “For our God, Jesus Christ, now that He is with the Father, is all the more revealed [in His glory]…” who died and rose again from the dead.238 Without leaving necessity for interpretation he wrote,

These things [I address to you], my beloved, …, that ye fall not upon the hooks of vain doctrine, but that ye attain to full assurance in regard to the birth, and passion, and resurrection which took place in the time of the government of Pontius Pilate, being truly and certainly accomplished by Jesus Christ, who is our hope, from which may no one of you ever be turned aside.239

The birth of Jesus speaks to the physical body which is further emphasized by way of His passion, or death, followed by the resurrection of that same body.

238 Ignatius of Antioch, IRom 3, 6.

239 Ignatius of Antioch, IMag 11.
Polycarp

In Polycarp’s lone extant work he makes clear his belief that not only did Jesus die and was then raised from the dead, but he goes a step further and proclaims the reason for this death was because of the sins of humanity.\(^{240}\) As with Ignatius, Polycarp anchors the beliefs and behaviors of the church to the commands of Jesus, as preached by the apostles.\(^{241}\) Evidence indicates Polycarp believed that the death and resurrection of Jesus was specifically for the benefit of humanity.

I exhort you all, therefore, to yield obedience to the word of righteousness, and to exercise all patience, such as ye have seen [set] before your eyes, not only in the case of the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others among yourselves, and in Paul himself, and the rest of the apostles. [This do] in the assurance that all these have not run in vain, but in faith and righteousness, and that they are [now] in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom also they suffered. For they loved not this present world, but Him who died for us, and for our sakes was raised again by God from the dead.\(^{242}\)

Aristides of Athens (c. 125)

Whether one accepts the Apology of Aristides as an appeal made to the Roman Emperor or as a rhetorical device meant for the Christian body is of little significance in understanding his belief about the person of Jesus. He said,

The Christians trace the beginning of their religion to Jesus the Messiah. He is called the Son of the Most High God. It is said that God came down from Heaven. He assumed flesh and clothed Himself with it from a Hebrew virgin. And the Son of God lived in a daughter of man…. But he himself was pierced by the Jews, and he died and was buried; and they say that after three days he rose and ascended to heaven.\(^{243}\)

\(^{240}\) Polycarp of Smyrna, *Poly* 1.

\(^{241}\) Ibid., *Poly* 6.


\(^{243}\) Aristides, *Apol*. 2. To place this quote in context, when Aristides said “and they say that after three days…” he is making explicit reference to the teaching of the Apostles who were eyewitnesses of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
And their oppressors they appease and make them their friends; they do good to their enemies; and their women, O King, are pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest; and their men keep themselves from every unlawful union and from all uncleanness, in the hope of a recompense to come in the other world…. And they strive to be righteous as those who expect to behold their Messiah, and to receive from Him with great glory the promises made concerning them. And as for their words and precepts, O King, and their glorying in their worship, and the hope of earning according to the work of each one of them their recompense which they look for in another world–you may learn about these from their writings.244

From his own words Aristides affirms the deity of Jesus by way of calling Him God; the physicality of Jesus is affirmed, inclusive of a literal death; the resurrection is affirmed by way of appeal to the gospel as preached by the Apostles.

Irenæus

Irenæus has been described by Grant as a “cathedral, strongly supported by columns of biblical faith and tradition, illuminated by vast expanses of exegetical and logical argument, and upheld by flying buttresses of rhetorical and philosophical considerations from the outside.”245 Indeed, the work of Irenæus carries much weight equally from content and the direct approach employed, and as such two of his works need to be examined independently in examining the SPAC.

Against Heresies

In his effort to refute gnosticism of his day, Adv. Haer.246 not only sought to refute errant beliefs and teachings, but also offered–particularly in book 3–what Irenæus held to be the

244 Ibid., 15, 16.


246 It needs to be pointed out that Irenæus’ addressing the teaching of Marcion, Ebionites, and Encratites were not against gnostic systems, but the majority of this work certainly targeted gnostic teachings. Specifics include Barbelos, Basilides, Cainites, Carpocrates, Cerdo, Cerinthus, Colorbasus, Marcus, Mendander, Nicholas, Ophites, Saturninus, Sethians, and Valentinus.
orthodox teaching of the church. As if driving this point home Irenæus stated that the plan of salvation for mankind was to be found in the same gospel taught by the apostles, and further dates the origin of this gospel message following the resurrection of Jesus and Pentecost event in Acts 2.\footnote{Irenæus of Lyons, \textit{Adv. Haer.} 3.1.1.} He pointed to the preaching of the apostles, considering them all co-equal and having the same message.\footnote{Ibid., 3.13.1.}

Of the person of Jesus, Irenæus affirmed,

To which course many nations of those barbarians who believe in Christ do assent, having salvation written in their hearts by the Spirit, without paper or ink, and, carefully preserving the ancient tradition, believing in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things therein, by means of Christ Jesus, the Son of God; who, because of His surpassing love towards His creation, condescended to be born of the virgin, He Himself uniting man through Himself to God, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again, and having been received up in splendour, shall come in glory, the Saviour of those who are saved, and the Judge of those who are judged, and sending into eternal fire those who transform the truth, and despise His Father and His advent.\footnote{Irenæus of Lyons, \textit{Adv. Haer.} 3.4.2.}

\textit{The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching}

Unlike \textit{Adv. Haer.}, the purpose of this work was to provide a Christian reader a “manual of essentials” related to the preaching of what the church held to be true and for the strengthening of the faith.\footnote{Irenæus, \textit{The Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching} 1.} The truth as held by Irenæus was to be found in the person of Jesus and the teaching of the apostles.

His disciples, the witnesses of all His good deeds, and of His teachings and His sufferings and death and resurrection, and of His ascension into Heaven after His bodily resurrection—these were the apostles, who after (receiving) the power of the Holy Spirit were sent forth by Him into all the world, and wrought the calling of the Gentiles, showing to mankind the way of life, to turn them from idols and fornication and covetousness, cleansing their souls and bodies by the baptism of water and of the Holy
Spirit; which Holy Spirit they had received of the Lord, and they distributed and imparted it to them that believed; and thus they ordered and established the Churches.  

If the truth was grounded in the person and work of Jesus as taught by the apostles, Irenæus understood errant teaching to be anything that failed to concede to and affirm the same. Of those who held and taught variant doctrines he said, “…now the seat of pestilential are those who by wicked and perverse doctrines corrupt not themselves only, but others also. For the seat is a symbol of teaching. Such then are all heretics: they sit in the seats of the pestilential, and those are corrupted who receive the venom of their doctrine.”

Evidence from these two sources provides several important observations with respect to Christianity. First, Irenæus understood the message of the church to be singular in nature with respect to orthodoxy. Second, the orthodox message was based on the preaching of the apostles, with those apostles having received their message from Jesus. Third, the apostles were eyewitnesses to the earthly ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Fourth, if Jesus condescended to be born of a virgin, then He existed and had consciousness prior to being born and agreed to being born of a virgin. Fifth, the dating for the death of Jesus is limited to the span where Pilate was the procurator in Judea, which limits the possible dates for death, resurrection, and origination of the church. Finally, the sixth observation that cannot be missed is that both the order found within the church and the message proclaimed by the church were grounded in the preaching of those apostles who had been with Jesus or, in the case of Paul, had seen the risen Christ following His ascension.

251 Ibid., 41.

252 Ibid., 2.
Tertullian

In his work *On the Flesh of Christ*, Tertullian appealed to Scripture as he challenged the foundations used by followers of Marcion in explaining the underpinning of their beliefs about Jesus. “To this angel, indeed, of Philumene, the apostle will reply in tones like those in which he even then predicted him, saying, ‘Although an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.’” To place a quote into proper context is the responsibility of all scholars. The above, while clearly a use of Galatians by Tertullian, was used in his rebuttal of Marcion’s followers appealing to Jesus’ body as being made of the stuff of stars rather than appealing to a physical birth. The Marcionites had made appeal to the physicality of angels as they had interacted with mankind in history, and Tertullian challenged that if they rejected the content of the Tanakh then they could not use material from that same Tanakh in pleading their case. The position being advanced by Marcion’s followers that denied the literal, physical existence of Jesus through birth was at odds with the preaching of the apostles and as such was a different gospel. His point was simple: in order for one to die, one must first be born.

Tertullian again appealed to the apostolic teaching in *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*. Here, in pointing back specifically to Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, Tertullian notes already the presence of church discipline, implying that there was a standard by which those who were members were supposed to believe and act, as well as affirming that the reason for the hope of the church was found in the death and resurrection of Jesus.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ Tertullian, *De carn Chr.* 6.
²⁵⁴ Tertullian, *De res.* 48.
Remembering that Origen can be a controversial figure, what is indisputable is his claim related to the person of Jesus. In the preface of *De princ.* he made clear what he held regarding the person and nature.

*Secondly.* That Jesus Christ Himself, who came (into the world), was born of the Father before all creatures; that, after He had been the servant of the Father in the creation of all things—“For by Him were all things made”—He in the last times, divesting Himself (of His glory), became a man, and was incarnate although God, and while made a man remained the God which He was; that He assumed a body like to our own, differing in this respect only, that it was born of a virgin and of the Holy Spirit: that this Jesus Christ was truly born, and did truly suffer, and did not endure this death common (to man) in appearance only, but did truly die; that He did truly rise from the dead; and that after His resurrection He conversed with His disciples, and was taken up (into heaven).

The text explicitly claims Jesus as God, that He had a physical body that was common to any other human, that He was born, physically died, and was physically resurrected. This is further emphasized by his appeal to the letter Paul wrote to the Romans where not only is there again an appeal made to the resurrection event, but also to the anchor that this was the message being preached by the Apostles following that resurrection.

In turning to his work against Celsus’ assessment of Christianity, Origen made the following statement:

Moreover, since he frequently calls the Christian doctrine a secret system (of belief), we must confute him on this point also, since almost the entire world is better acquainted with what Christians preach than with the favourite opinions of philosophers. For who is ignorant of the statement that Jesus was born of a virgin, and that He was crucified, and

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255 Origen, *De princ.* Pref. 4. It is beyond the scope of this work to address in depth Origen’s statement that Jesus was “born of the Father before all creatures” such that some might consider this to mean Jesus is a created being. Here it is sufficient to note that one must be clear whether they are referring to ontological or functional roles as related to the persons of the Trinity, and it is offered that Origen in this case can only be understood as referencing the functional roles. This comes from the back half of this statement where of Jesus it says “For by Him were all things made.” The difficulty with this in ontological terms is that the word “all” makes the statement all-inclusive. If Jesus were a created being then the text should read that “all other” things were made by Him because if He were a created being He could certainly not have created Himself. Further support of this point comes from the next statement where Origen explicitly called Jesus “God.”

256 Origen, *De princ.* 2.4.2.
that His resurrection is an article of faith among many, and that a general judgment is announced to come, in which the wicked are to be punished according to their deserts, and the righteous to be duly rewarded? And yet the mystery of the resurrection, not being understood, is made a subject of ridicule among unbelievers. In these circumstances, to speak of the Christian doctrine as a secret system, is altogether absurd.257

From this it is learned that there existed a core teaching related to Christianity and that teaching was well-known even outside the church. If one includes the preceding chapter along with the quotation above, evidence exists for the appeal to the gospel, the deity of Jesus, and here the virgin birth, physical death, and bodily resurrection are explicitly proclaimed.

**Tracing the Positive Apologetic**

It was shown in the previous chapter that the gospel message as proclaimed by the apostles consisted of more than just repeating the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Additionally, it was shown through the three apologetic messages examined that through this Jesus was to be found salvation. This apologetic answered the “so what” question of what made belief in this proclamation important and worthy of ascribing faith to and following Jesus. In the three examples provided the consistent message was one that following Jesus based on the deity, death, and resurrection would yield forgiveness of sins and individual salvation, putting the believer in a right relationship with the only God of the universe. This same concept of the forgiveness of sins and salvation because of the deity, death, and resurrection should also be found in the patristic sources if the thesis is correct.

It is not possible to address every reference to the death or resurrection of Jesus by the patristics in this chapter without becoming wearisome and needlessly long. A fuller detail of

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257 Origen, *Contra Cels.* 1.7.
references to the crucifixion may be found in Appendix A of this work, and Appendix B contains a fuller detail of references to the resurrection of Jesus.

Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna

Three of the earliest Christian writers provide clear messages related to why belief in Jesus was to be considered crucial by all. It may be noted with the first example from Clement of Rome, there is no reference to the death of Jesus, alleging that this simply appeals to bleeding and not death. However, in the early church there was an anchor to the Tanakh as Scripture and an understanding of the Jewish sacrificial system. The blood from the sacrificial animal was the evidence of the death of that animal. Here the reference to the blood of Jesus is a metaphor for the death of Jesus.

Let us look stedfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious that blood is to God, which, having been shed for our salvation, has set the grace of repentance before the whole world. Let us turn to every age that has passed, and learn that, from generation to generation, the Lord has granted a place of repentance to all such as would be converted unto Him. Noah preached repentance, and as many as listened to him were saved. Jonah proclaimed destruction to the Ninevites; but they, repenting of their sins, propitiated God by prayer, and obtained salvation, although they were aliens [to the covenant] of God.\textsuperscript{258}

The repentance here is an appeal to how God did not execute judgment on those who, prior to the incarnation of Christ repented of their sins, satisfying God. In the case of the Ninevites in the example above it should be noted that the salvation referenced is a salvation from the immediate judgment of God and not to be confused with the eternal salvation as offered by Christ. However, following the incarnation, death, and resurrection there is to be found an eternal salvation for all who place their trust in Jesus. With the acknowledgment that Jesus is God,

\textsuperscript{258} Clement of Rome, \textit{1 Clem 7}. See also \textit{1 Clem 28} and \textit{35}, where he commends to the Corinthians that belief in and following God protects the individual from the judgments to come, and that at least one of the gifts of God include immortality respectively.
Clement notes, “Since then all things are seen and heard [by God], let us fear Him, and forsake those wicked works which proceed from evil desires; so that, through His mercy, we may be protected from the judgments to come.” More specifically he points to immortality as one of the gifts from God as a result of following Jesus.

Ignatius would remind the Ephesians there is benefit from the belief in the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. “Let my spirit be counted as nothing for the sake of the cross, which is a stumbling block to those that do not believe, but to us salvation and life eternal,” pointing to Jesus as a sacrifice that had been offered to God on behalf of mankind. “For this end did the Lord suffer the ointment to be poured upon His head, that He might breathe immortality into His Church.” The benefit is to be twofold as found in the terms immortality and eternal life. Immortality addressed the matter of time then quality, whereas the reference to eternal life addressed the quality of that life, then the time. The Apostles had experiences that they believed to have been with the risen Jesus, and this changed their perception of not only life in terms of

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259 Ibid., 28.

260 Ibid., 35.

261 Ignatius, IEph 18.

262 Ignatius of Antioch, IEph 1.

263 Ibid., 17. A distinction needs to be made between immortality and eternal life as used by the writers. Ferguson states, “For Plato the soul is immortal, possessing both preexistence and continued postexistence. The Phaedo, set as a conversation between Socrates and his friends in his last hours, is an argument for the immortality of the soul. By definition the soul is life (psychē), and life is antithetical to death. The soul, therefore, does not die but survives the body. Plato draws on the older ideas of transmigration, rewards, and punishment.” See Everett Ferguson, Backgrounds of Early Christianity, 3rd Edition. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 335. See also George Currie Martin, “LIFE AND DEATH,” ed. James Hastings et al., A Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with Its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911–1912), 118 where Martin says, “Thus, through the more definite teaching on immortality of later Judaism, was paved the way for the doctrine of the New Testament. Our Lord did not have to explain the meaning of ‘eternal life’ and its opposite, but to show how they were respectively to be avoided and won. Fellowship is once more the prominent and central idea. All words point to it. To ‘know,’ to ‘love,’ to ‘eat,’ to ‘drink,’ to ‘keep words and commandments,’ to ‘have’—these constitute the language of the eternal life. The intimacy of union with God through Christ becomes its one essential condition; and, on the contrary, the lack of that union entails eternal death.”
their own mortality, but also in terms of how they understood immortality and eternal life. Thus Ignatius could say,

For I know that after His resurrection also He was still possessed of flesh, and I believe that He is so now. When, for instance, He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them, “Lay hold, handle Me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit.” And immediately they touched Him, and believed, being convinced both by His flesh and spirit. For this cause also they despised death, and were found its conquerors.264

Polycarp, coming on the heels of Ignatius, wrote to the Philippians reminding them that through the resurrection of Jesus the believer could be confident that the grave could not keep them either since God was satisfied with the payment made by Christ for the sin-debt of mankind.265 A clear warning is offered to those who would reject Jesus, but emphasis was placed on the expectation that the believer would also rise again.

His blood will God require of those who do not believe in Him. But He who raised Him up from the dead will raise up us also, if we do His will, and walk in His commandments, and love what He loved, keeping ourselves from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, falsewitness; “not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing,” or blow for blow, or cursing for cursing, but being mindful of what the Lord said in His teaching: “Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again; and once more, “Blessed are the poor, and those that are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God.”266

The belief was expressed with certainty that the believer could and should expect to not only rise from the dead but should also expect to see the same Jesus who also rose from the dead. “If then we entreat the Lord to forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive; for we are before the eyes

264 Ignatius of Antioch, Ismyr 3.
265 Polycarp of Smryna, Poly 1.
266 Ibid., 2. See also Poly 5.
of our Lord and God, and ‘we must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, and must every one give an account of himself.’”

Aristides and Justin

Aristides made clear the appeal to Jesus as the origin of Christianity, then advanced the claim that the reason Jesus came was for the salvation of humanity, and finally advancing the same SPAC offered by Paul as the justification for the claim of salvation.

Now the Christians trace their origin from the Lord Jesus Christ. And He is acknowledged by the Holy Spirit to be the son of the most high God, who came down from heaven for the salvation of men. And being born of a pure virgin, unbegotten and immaculate, He assumed flesh and revealed himself among men that He might recall them to Himself from their wandering after many gods. And having accomplished His wonderful dispensation, by a voluntary choice He tasted death on the cross, fulfilling an august dispensation. And after three days He came to life again and ascended into heaven. And if you would read, O King, you may judge the glory of His presence from the holy gospel writing, as it is called among themselves. He had twelve disciples, who after His ascension to heaven went forth into the provinces of the whole world, and declared His greatness.

While providing the absolute core of Christianity—the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus—he then advocated for the reader to examine personally the writings of the Apostles. Thus, this was not a simple call to belief in what he was saying alone, Aristides pointed the reader to the evidence as found in the texts.

Justin pointed to the pursuit of the Christian, namely an eternal and pure life, with that life to exist in the presence of the only true God. The life the Christian lives in anticipation of is contrasted with the lives of those who reject the salvation brought through Jesus, noting that one goes to the eternal and pure life, while the one who rejects Jesus is to exist in a state of

267 Ibid., 6.
268 Aristides of Athens, Apol. 15.
269 Justin Martyr, I Apol. 8.
everlasting punishment.\textsuperscript{270} Consistent with Clement of Rome, Justin reminded his audience, “For the heavenly Father desires rather the repentance than the punishment of the sinner.”\textsuperscript{271}

For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.\textsuperscript{272}

As is shown by the above quote, Justin affirmed the physicality of Jesus through reference to both flesh and blood, but then ties that into the salvation of believers. The flesh and blood of Jesus were for the salvation of mankind. Here again is clear linkage between the death and resurrection of Jesus and the resulting positive benefit.

\textbf{Clement of Alexandria}

This is the New Song, the manifestation of the Word that was in the beginning; and before the beginning. The Saviour, who existed before, has in recent days appeared. He, who is in Him that truly is, has appeared; for the Word, who “was with God,” and by whom all things were created, has appeared as our Teacher. The Word, who in the beginning bestowed on us life as Creator when He formed us, taught us to live well when He appeared as our Teacher; that as God He might afterwards conduct us to the life which never ends.\textsuperscript{273}

Clement ascribes in the above the role of Creator to Jesus, which the Jewish population would have understood to mean he was calling Jesus God. Moreover, he references Jesus as Savior, which implies that it is Jesus who saves mankind both from and to something. Looking to

\textsuperscript{270} Ibid., 12.

\textsuperscript{271} Ibid., 15. It is interesting to note, but cannot be pursued here, that there does not appear to be any indication of the concept of a limited atonement during the period in review. The proclamations appear to be that any and all who would come to faith in Jesus would be saved. Additional research could be warranted on this point in evaluating whether or not this particular doctrinal belief, namely limited atonement, can be shown to have existed from the beginning of Christianity and that it was perpetuated by the earliest patristic writers.

\textsuperscript{272} Ibid., 66.

\textsuperscript{273} Clement of Alexandria, \textit{Prot.} 1.
the end of the quote it is revealed that those who follow Jesus will have unending life, a claim which is synonymous with eternal life and immortality.

Only let us with our whole heart repent, that we may be able with our whole heart to contain God. “Trust in Him, all ye assembled people; pour out all your hearts before Him.” He says to those that have newly abandoned wickedness, “He pities them, and fills them with righteousness.” Believe Him who is man and God; believe, O man. Believe, O man, the living God, who suffered and is adored. Believe, ye slaves, Him who died; believe, all ye of human kind, Him who alone is God of all men. Believe, and receive salvation as your reward. Seek God, and your soul shall live. He who seeks God is busying himself about his own salvation. Hast thou found God?—then thou hast life. Let us then seek, in order that we may live. The reward of seeking is life with God. “Let all who seek Thee be glad and rejoice in Thee; and let them say continually, God be magnified.”

More explicitly Clement points to salvation as a reward. No accounts of dying and rising gods, especially and specifically as understood through resurrection, existed prior to Jesus. The resulting condition which followed the belief in Jesus’ deity, death, and resurrection was salvation and life, something that was not available through other religions. Others may have spoken of the transmigration of souls in the vein of Plato, but this only provided for a cyclical existence whereby one was condemned to live and die repeatedly and without escape in the same system.

Irenæus

The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: [She believes] in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father “to gather all things in one,” and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ

274 Ibid., 10.
Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess” to Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send “spiritual wickednesses,” and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory.  

Irenæus points to the result associated with accepting or rejecting the testimony about Jesus. The believer is to receive immortality, whereas the one who rejects Jesus is to find unending judgment. The belief that such would be the case in the future and that this was a trustworthy teaching is anchored by Irenæus in 3.3.2 as well as the opening line of this quote where the message was anchored in the Apostles as witnesses of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

This offered salvation came through Jesus because it was not possible for mankind to do anything of himself that would allow for earning the favor of God. The benefit to be had by the believer was salvation as offered from God to humanity. Jesus was preached as not only the sign of salvation, but the source of salvation.

On this account, therefore, the Lord Himself, who is Emmanuel from the Virgin, is the sign of our salvation, since it was the Lord Himself who saved them, because they could not be saved by their own instrumentality; and, therefore, when Paul sets forth human infirmity, he says: “For I know that there dwelleth in my flesh no good thing,” showing that the “good thing” of our salvation is not from us, but from God. And again: “Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Then he introduces the Deliverer, [saying,] “The grace of Jesus Christ our Lord.” And Isaiah declares this also, [when he says:] “Be ye strengthened, ye hands that hang down, and ye feeble knees; be ye encouraged, ye feeble-minded; be comforted, fear not: behold, our God has given judgment with retribution, and shall recompense: He will come Himself,

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275 Irenæus of Lyons, Adv. haer. 1.10.1. See also where it is the gospel that brings peace to mankind (3.1.1), to reject Christ is to reject salvation (3.1.2), and that the gospel message was first proclaimed by the Apostles of Jesus (3.3.2).
and will save us.” Here we see, that not by ourselves, but by the help of God, we must be saved.\textsuperscript{276}

Tertullian

Tertullian clearly advanced the idea that for the believer, good was expected. He wrote, “See now, we set before you the reward of these enormities. They give promise of eternal life.”\textsuperscript{277} With belief representing a true dichotomy, for one may only believe or not believe, he also wrote repeatedly of not only the benefits of following Jesus, but also the consequences following unbelief. While there is clear emphasis placed on what happens if one chooses to not believe (the retribution of God, \textit{Apol.} 18; unending fire and everlasting torment, \textit{Apol.} 45; no transmigration of souls, \textit{Apol.} 48; and “everlasting fire which from its very nature indeed, directly ministers to their incorruptibility,” \textit{Apol.} 48), he was far from preaching a one-sided message.

Tertullian pointed to what he classified as written revelation from God that had the ability to lead one to belief in Jesus. “But, that we might attain an ampler and more authoritative knowledge at once of Himself, and of His counsels and will, God has added a written revelation for the behoof of every one whose heart is set on seeking Him, that seeking he may find, and finding believe, and believing obey.”\textsuperscript{278} From this it is evident that Tertullian believed the material written by the apostles was sufficient to provide any person with adequate knowledge of God and His plan of salvation for mankind. Yielding to this self-revealed God would result in the

\textsuperscript{276} Irenæus of Lyons, \textit{Adv. haer.} 3.20.3.

\textsuperscript{277} Tertullian, \textit{Apol.} 8.

\textsuperscript{278} Tertullian, \textit{Apol.} 18.
reception of awards and rewards.\footnote{Ibid., 45.} He further pointed to the future resurrection of all as a necessity, that the body and soul sin together and, if saved, are saved together, meaning both are necessary for the receipt of reward or sentencing. In like manner as the unending life of the believer, the appeal to everlasting fire indicates the belief that those who fall under the judgment of God also continue to exist for all eternity in an incorruptible state of being.\footnote{Ibid., 48.}

Tertullian went a step further and advocated, as so many others did, a rule of faith in respect to Christianity. The first sentence of the following quote is of special importance.

Now, with regard to this rule of faith—that we may from this point acknowledge what it is which we defend—it is, you must know, that which prescribes the belief that there is one only God, and that He is none other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing through His own Word, first of all sent forth; that this Word is called His Son, \textit{and}, under the name of God, was seen “in diverse manners” by the patriarchs, heard at all times in the prophets, at last brought down by the Spirit and Power of the Father into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and, being born of her, went forth as Jesus Christ; thenceforth He preached the new law and the new promise of the kingdom of heaven, worked miracles; having been crucified, He rose again the third day; (then) having ascended into the heavens, He sat at the right hand of the Father; sent instead of Himself the Power of the Holy Ghost to lead such as believe; will come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of everlasting life and of the heavenly promises, and to condemn the wicked to everlasting fire, after the resurrection of both these classes shall have happened, together with the restoration of their flesh.\footnote{Tertullian, \textit{De praesc. haer.} 13.}

Note that Tertullian says, “that which prescribes belief” in relation to the core message being defended. By using the term ‘prescribe’ it indicates that this is a non-negotiable point. Unlike a point of description which may show many points of commonality between similar and same things, to prescribe means to establish a required standard that, based on authority, is to be carried out without deviation. It can then be drawn out of the text that to follow Christ prescribed
salvation and reward while rejection of Christ prescribed judgment, both conditions being based on the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Origen

Two specific works of Origen show an emphasis placed on the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus, then as it should be understood by humanity. Recognizing the differences in purpose behind the writing of De princ. and Contra Celsus, one readily finds an apologetic delivered.

But since it was to come to pass that some also should fall away from life, and bring death upon themselves by their declension—for death is nothing else than a departure from life—and as it was not to follow that those beings which had once been created by God for the enjoyment of life should utterly perish, it was necessary that, before death, there should be in existence such a power as would destroy the coming death, and that there should be a resurrection, the type of which was in our Lord and Saviour, and that this resurrection should have its ground in the wisdom and word and life of God.” And then, in the next place, since some of those who were created were not to be always willing to remain unchangeable and unalterable in the calm and moderate enjoyment of the blessings which they possessed, but, in consequence of the good which was in them being theirs not by nature or essence, but by accident, were to be perverted and changed, and to fall away from their position, therefore was the Word and Wisdom of God made the Way. And it was so termed because it leads to the Father those who walk along it. 282

While the dichotomy between the saved and unsaved was clearly laid out by Origen, he did not fail to provide the reason behind the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection. In pointing particularly to the challenges by Celsus, Origen proclaimed that Jesus had died “for the sake of men,” 283 that “He died for the salvation of human souls,” 284 affirmed Paul’s testimony as found

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282 Origen, De princ. 1.2.4.
283 Origen, Cont. Cels. 1.61.
284 Ibid., 2.50.
in 1 Cor 15:3-8, and “what the Son of the mighty God suffered, He suffered voluntarily for the salvation of men, as has been stated to the best of my ability in the preceding pages.”

**Non-Christian Information**

Multiple non-Christian sources are extant from the period in review that in some way or another make reference to the Christians. In consideration here are sources that provide any insight into the beliefs of Christians as it relates to the thesis of this research. While Epictetus, Suetonius, Marcus Aurelius, Lucian of Samosata, Hadrian, and Cornelius Fronto do mention Christians, they provide no insight related to doctrinal beliefs.

Pliny the Younger in writing to Trajan (c. 112-113) offered one appreciable piece of data, namely that the Christians either prayed to or sang hymns to Jesus as a God. While there are differences in interpretation of whether they sang or prayed, the phrase *carmenque Christo quasi deo* is indisputable that at least those Pliny was referencing believed in the deity of Jesus. Trajan’s reply in 10.97 offers no additional insight into the beliefs of Christianity. Likewise, Tacitus offers little help with respect to this particular research other than to confirm the origin of Christianity as being associated with Jesus, that he died by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, and that those who followed Jesus as a group were again active shortly following the crucifixion.

The value in these admittedly short pieces are threefold. First, Pliny’s letter to Trajan advising that Christians believed Jesus to be God is dated such that it antedates Ignatius and

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285 Ibid., 2.65.
286 Ibid., 4.73.
287 Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10.96. The Latin reads as: *Affirmabant autem hanc fuisse summam vel culpae suae vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem sequere sacramentum non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta ne latrocinia ne adulteria committerent, ne fides fallesc, ne depositum appellati abnegarent.*
288 Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44.
predates Polycarp, revealing that the belief in Jesus as deity was already firmly established.

Second, if the term is correctly translated as sang to Jesus rather than prayed, then such would affirm Hurtado’s assertion of early hymnic practices by the church, pointing to Phil 2:5-11 as indication of the earliest Christian reflection and thought on the significance and person of Jesus.289 Third, there is an affirmation that Christianity is anchored in the person of Jesus and that this Jesus died a physical death by crucifixion. As such, and even if only briefly, two of the main tenents of the positive apologetic thesis of this research are touched upon by non-Christian sources, namely the deity and death of Jesus.

Summary of Thought to this Point

Theology, we shall insist, sets out not simply with God as a speculative presupposition but with God known in his revelation. But the appeal to God and to revelation cannot stand alone, if it is to be significant; it must embrace also some agreement on rational methods of inquiry, ways of argument, and criteria for verification. For the critical question today is not simply, “What are the data of theology?” but “How does one proceed from these data to conclusions that commend themselves to rational reflection?” The fundamental issue remains the issue of truth, the truth of theological assertions. No work on theology will be worth its weight if that fundamental issue is obscured. Durable theology must revive and preserve the distinction between true and false religion, a distinction long obscured by neo-Protestant theologians. Either the religion of Jesus Christ is true religion or it is not worth bothering about. True worship is what Jesus demanded: “God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24, RSV). Jesus broke with Jewish religious leaders in his day on the ground that they were falsifying the Old Testament revelation; he came very close, in fact, to denouncing some of the influential religious spokesmen of that time as liars (John 8:44 ff.).290

Henry’s statement of how one proceeds from data to conclusion is in effect the whole point behind this research. The thesis proposes an historical investigation of the extant evidence related to the theological position held by the early church, then proceeding to make

289 Larry Hurtado, One Lord, One God: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism (New York: Continuum, 2005), 100.

proclamations about the growth of the church based on those points of theological data. Early
Christianity held certain beliefs about God, Scripture, ways of examining the data, arguments in
support of the data, and finally methods for verifying the truthfulness of what was taught and
believed. The data reveals that the Standard, Policy, and Administrative Control, or the gospel
message as laid out by Paul, was consistently carried forward by the patristic writers, and then
without deviation or modification.

There are those today, however, who would follow Derrida and question whether or not
we can understand or even hear the original author when reading the text. Yet such a challenge
fails to convince, especially in light of the fact that hard sciences rely by necessity on the words
and works done before. Even if one rejects the conclusions, a hard scientist still believes it
possible to “hear” the methodological approach, conditions, and catalysts employed by others,
even if that communication comes in a written format. If words communicate in the hard
sciences then there is no objective reason for believing words to be incapable of communicating
in the soft sciences such as history or metaphysics. Of the value of the written word, Carl Sagan
offered a penetrating assessment.

What an astonishing thing a book is. It’s a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts
on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles. But one glance at it and you’re
inside the mind of another person, maybe someone dead for thousands of years. Across
the millennia, an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you.
Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never
knew each other, citizens of distant epochs. Books break the shackles of time. A book is
proof that humans are capable of working magic.291

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Steven Soter. Aired December 7, 1980 on PBS.
A book, papyrus, or other written document provides an evidential basis from which to begin assessing and attempting to understand what one who came before thought and believed. If texts from any field outside of history or metaphysics may be accepted as providing insight into what a person or group held to be true, then short of compelling evidence to the contrary, texts reflecting historical and metaphysical beliefs are also to be considered evidential and empirical sources from which the reader might garner an understanding of what the original author believed.

Based on evidence drawn directly from the accepted original sources there is no doubt that there existed a group from shortly after if not contemporaneous with Paul that proclaimed a single Christianity. Additionally, there is evidence that not all writings proclaiming to be Christian were accepted by everyone as being truly reflective of what Christians believed. Serapion of Antioch stated shortly before the beginning of the third century, “We, brothers, receive both Peter and the other apostles as Christ, we reject the writings that falsely go under their names, since we are experienced and know that such were not handed down to us.”

The idea that there was no ‘orthodox’ Christianity until after the larger councils lacks evidential foundation. To claim that there was an openness between the various beliefs and that Christians were accepting of all who claimed the name is simply incorrect and easily demonstrated, again based on the surviving evidence.

Having examined the original sources in reverse chronological order, it is now possible to demonstrate, moving forward in time, the consistent message of a single Christianity. Clement of Rome appealed to the writings of Paul, doctrine, and a unified church. Ignatius warned against

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those who would be Christian in name only, false doctrines, and the corruption of the faith of God. Polycarp admonished against those who taught against the physicality, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Justin makes appeal to doctrine and points out that there were many groups claiming the name of Christian yet holding a variety of opinions (and those holding the various opinions were not persecuted for their belief). Irenæus called those systems that taught divergent doctrine heresy. Clement of Alexandria appealed to doctrine as coming from the Apostles. Tertullian noted how certain philosophers attempted to imitate Christian doctrine, twist Scripture, adulterate Christian revelation, and all post-date the origin of Christianity. Hippolytus called those who taught a different Christianity liars and heretics. Origin appeals to belief in doctrine, divinely inspired, by means of Scripture alone, citing both the Tanakh and the New Testament, appealing to the declaration of Christ Himself. Abductively, the best conclusion for the data is that a single Christianity existed from the beginning.

If the research stopped at this point, the challenge may be brought that the research has been sufficiently limited to guarantee the desired results if by no other means than the sample of historical writings admitted. One could argue that the data presented is objective and simply communicates clearly the truth, but data without context is meaningless. The established SPAC provides the context and a framework in which to understand the data presented. However, three groups evidenced a following during the same period as many of the writers above. Marcion, the Ebionites, and the Docetists all elicited a following and all claiming to be Christian. In the following chapter these three groups shall be assessed using Root Cause Analysis with the goal of identifying objectively and through the use of a non-theological tool whether or not these—individually or collectively—meet the criteria of the SPAC and should be considered Christian.
CHAPTER 4
FROM SPAC AND APOLOGETICS TO ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Chapter two of this research demonstrated that there was an early and singular Christianity as preached by Paul. This same chapter also showed how both Peter and Paul had used the deity, death, and resurrection message as a positive apologetic for Christianity. Chapter three demonstrated that this same message and apologetic was carried forward in the period under review by the writers of the early church. The evidence reviewed shows not only an early and orthodox Christianity but also an appeal by the church to a singular Christianity.

The existence of an orthodox Christianity has been shown to have been present from at least the time of Paul. However, scholars in recent history have made appeal to the existence of multiple Christianities until as late as perhaps Nicæa or Chalcedon. Because the thesis of this research runs counter to the idea of multiple Christianities existing concurrently, key points identified within Ebionism, Docetism, and Marcionism will be assessed using a non-theological tool in the attempt to identify objectively if a particular teaching excludes a group from being considered Christian. Because there are generally accepted beliefs related to what Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites taught, no effort will be made here to prove these beliefs to have
existed during the period in review. The question is whether one can demonstrate using a non-theological tool that those beliefs that denied the deity, death, or resurrection do not qualify to be called Christian because those beliefs constituted a deviation from, and thus different gospel from, the SPAC as presented by Paul.

If this secular tool can be used to show points of divergence from the gospel accurately and effectively as proclaimed by Paul, then the implication will be that an early, single Christianity can be identified from the beginning of the church age. The implication of such a finding would be that a clear distinction would be made between those who were Christian in the sense of Paul’s gospel and those who were not Christian at the same time and in the same sense.

It is conceded that much of what is known or stated about the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites comes from those writers in the early church who would be deemed orthodox by modern standards. Notwithstanding, this does not diminish or eliminate their testimony on the basis of an existing bias. Indeed, the Clementine Homilies are accepted as having an Ebionite leaning, and yet they are not dismissed out of hand because of a real or perceived bias. Beyond this, the purpose of this research is not an attempt to retrace ground already accepted; rather the intent is to examine in this chapter whether or not it is possible, based on accepted teachings of

293 There is no appreciable challenge to the existence of those who confessed the Law as the vehicle through which salvation came, and there is no dispute that people denied the eternal deity of Jesus (whether they deny any deity or they believe Jesus to have become a god such as the teachings of the Jehovah’s Witnesses). There is no appreciable challenge to the existence of those holding to a docetic view of Jesus, believing He was not of physical substance (as if His existence was but a shadow of the physical) or suggesting that Jesus was incapable of suffering, therefore He only appeared to have been crucified. For examples of writings of both of these groups see The Clementine Homilies, Recognitions, The Gospel of Philip, Second Treatise of the Great Seth, Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter, Gospel of Judas, Gospel of Peter, Acts of John, and Gospel of Basilides. As a result, there is no need given the thesis of this work to attempt to pursue demonstrating what Ebionites or Docetists believed and taught. A convincing argument has been published by Judith Lieu at the University of Cambridge that has caused the need to reconsider how Marcion’s teaching is understood in relation to the documents used. This will be addressed in more detail later in this chapter.
these three groups, to utilize a non-theological evidential assessment method to evaluate and determine if each of these would be considered Christian based on the accepted Pauline text.

Other Gospels

Ebionites

Lightfoot noted over a century ago that it was possible to identify two branches of Ebionism within the period of the early church. The first more closely resembled the Pharisaical religion and, in the opinion of Lightfoot, was the predominate strain of Ebionism encountered; while the other more closely followed the Essenic practices of asceticism and mysticism. As such it is clear that the group understood today as Ebionites, while dated as far back as the reign of Trajan, was in existence prior to that time.294 Two distinct pictures can be drawn from what is now known about the Ebionites of the first and early second centuries, namely that those of the Pharisaic strand insisted upon following the Law as the means of salvation, whereas the Essenic line held that the Word had “been incarnate more than just once, and thus there had been more Christs than one, of whom Adam was the first and Jesus the last.”295 Evidence remains through Paul’s letter to the Galatians and Luke’s information on the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) to demonstrate that there were, from an early time, those who held that Jesus may have been either prophet or messiah, but one was still required to fulfill the Law if one was to be saved.


295 Ibid., 326. See also Benjamin I. Simpson, “Ebionites,” ed. John D. Barry et al., The Lexham Bible Dictionary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016). Here Simpson points to some Ebionites holding to an adoptionistic Christology. McGrath makes an important point noting that both Ebionitism and Arianism denied the deity of Jesus, but on very different grounds. See Alister McGrath, Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 108. While conceded as a valid point, the focus of this research is not the “why” behind the denial of the Pauline gospel, whether in whole or part, but is on identifying whether or not a particular group was in agreement with that Pauline gospel or if they deviated on any point, thus teaching a different gospel.
From what remains it is possible to make the strong case that the early church considered the Ebionites to be a heretical group specifically on the grounds that they added to the gospel message as proclaimed, namely the addition of fulfilling the whole of the Law in order to be saved.\textsuperscript{296} There is a difference to be made between adhering to the Law out of respect and custom and adhering to the same with the belief that through obedience and work one could earn a right relationship with God. Petersen notes that the fathers depicted the Ebionites as Jews who abided by the Law and, at least in some cases, rejected the Virgin Birth in favor of Jesus being the biological son of both Mary and Joseph, with the Christ descending to Jesus at the point of baptism, yet Jesus remained fully man and not deity.\textsuperscript{297}

A significant flaw may be identified at this point in relation to Jesus being considered the biological offspring of both Mary and Joseph. It is true that the prophecies reaching back to the time of David’s reign as king included the teaching that one of David’s own lineage would be seated on the throne forever. Thus, if the lineage of Jesus is considered as presented in Matthew 1 and Luke 3, the line of both Joseph and Mary can be traced back to and through David. While both Joseph and Mary were of the line of David, and because the Ebionites followed the Tanakh, difficulty arises when one considers the prophecies of Jeremiah 22. In looking specifically at vv. 28-30, Jeremiah expressly states that none of Jehoiakim’s descendants would rule in Judah again. This is the same Jehoiakim that is listed in Matthew 1, yet this name is missing in the genealogy


detail of Luke 3. If Mary’s lineage does not go through Jehoiakim then no difficulties arise with respect to the prophecy.

The difficulty remains however, that if one accepts the Tanakh as authoritatively from God as the Jewish population did at that time, then one cannot allow for a ruler coming as a biological heir from the line of Jehoiakim without also allowing for error in Scripture since Jeremiah would have been wrong in his proclamation. The difficulty is alleviated if Joseph is not the physical father and the Virgin Birth is accepted as taught by the church. The difficulty is eliminated if one remains Jewish rather than becoming a Christian, as the thought that one could follow the Law as a means for obtaining a right relationship with God would not have changed, thus no need for a change in association. This is not an insignificant point in relation to who the Messiah would or could be, but to continue down this line of research is beyond the scope of this current work.

A different approach advanced by some Ebionites was an adoptionistic Christology. Already covered in chapter two of this work was the more developed explanation as to why an adoptionistic Christology fails to accord with the whole of Scripture and as such shall be considered as already refuted. Contra those texts deemed canonical and later considered within regula fide, the Ebionites composed and presented their own gospel that, by design, supported their preconceived notions of Jesus. If adoptionistic Christology fails to be the best

298 With respect to regula fide, it is important to note that the concept of an established and recognized “rule of faith” was not unique to Irenaeus and is also found in the writings of Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian (see Appendix C). Moreover, that an accepted rule of faith was in place and not a unique creation of the early Christians can be found in the use of the phrase, “law and the prophets,” which points to an even earlier Jewish belief that there was an established set of writings considered to be authoritative in relation to both orthodoxy and orthopraxy. The early church fathers made appeal to the law and the prophets in part as they tied together the proclaimed message of the coming of the Messiah and the message of the already-come Messiah (see Appendix D).

299 Irenæus, Adv. haer. 5.1.3.
explanation for the whole of the writings on who Jesus was understood to be, then one is right to question the hermeneutic employed to arrive at such a conclusion. To argue that ‘some’ believed Jesus to have been adopted, therefore it must be true is to argue from the position of speculation at best, or worse, from a logical fallacy.

To argue that the solution to a problem with a Christology that sees Jesus as being fully God and fully man (admittedly this was more fully articulated later) by denying deity is to employ a philosophical position rather than one based on evidence. In order for one to know that Jesus could not both be God and man at the same time and in the same sense would require that man be capable of removing himself from the system in which he exists and obtain a position outside the current system whereby he could obtain a God’s-eye view of both man and God. The claim of the Ebionites that Jesus was but a prophet and yet is the Messiah who will return to rule runs afoul on at least two fronts. The first has already been addressed through Jeremiah 22. The second is found in Deuteronomy 18. It has been demonstrated earlier in this research that the early church understood Jesus to be God, and that Jesus claimed to be God. He is acknowledged as having had the ability to perform wonders, inclusive of healings and raising people from the dead. He accepted worship from mankind prior to His death (John 9), an act no person or angel was allowed. Yet He proclaimed that He would rise from the dead as a sign

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301 Stated a bit differently, what man knows of God is what God has chosen to self-reveal. To claim that Jesus was both fully God and fully man is a non-falsifiable statement. The existence of the historical Jesus is only doubted by a very small minority of critical scholars. Christians claimed that Jesus performed acts that were deemed to be miracles, and Jewish sources imply that He did perform certain acts, but deemed His acts to be as a result of sorcery (see b. *Sanh* 6:1h, II.1.C). Thus, the issue was the interpretation of those acts performed by Jesus, and by what authority He performed those acts. In order to know, from an evidence perspective, that Jesus was not and could not have been both fully God and fully man would require man to have the ability to remove himself from the limitations found as being mere human and obtain a God’s-eye view of both humanity and God, and then to identify evidentially that either God is incapable of incarnation as a human or that He is incapable of existing fully in both natures.
affirming who He claimed to be. If Jesus was but a prophet and not God Himself, then He would have to be considered a false prophet and one not to be believed.

Difficulty arises for many in that the knowledge of the Ebionites remains sparse and said knowledge is based upon what their opponents proclaimed.\textsuperscript{302} Schaff declared over a century ago that what is found in the Apocryphal Gospels are late, are in part heretical, fail to agree with known history, are mutilations of earlier texts, or are attempts to ‘fill in the blanks’ where the writers of the new canonical texts might not have provided as much detail as man might have liked.\textsuperscript{303} The Gospel “\textit{According to the Hebrews},” of which some fragments still remain is one such textual corruption that, if this text truly existed in full, relied on Matthew as its original source document.\textsuperscript{304} Notwithstanding, some Ebionite information is yet available for review.

\textbf{The Clementine Homilies}

A widely recognized Ebionite text is that of the Clementine Homilies. Internal evidence supporting the text was not written by Clement of Rome is found where Peter allegedly is debating Simon the Magician and makes reference to the destruction of the Temple and how that condition (the destruction of the Temple) was visible to all at the time of the writing of this passage.\textsuperscript{305} Because Clement reported both Paul and Peter to have been executed because of their faith, and given the generally accepted teaching that both died during the reign of Nero, Peter

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\textsuperscript{304} Ibid., 610.

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would not have been able to make a statement indicating that he and others could have seen the
destruction of the Temple as an already completed historical act.

Again looking to *Homilies*, difficulties arise with the internal evidence and the Pauline
corpus. First, *H.* 5.21 takes a philosophical position related to the passibility of a deity, stating
that if one does suffer then that one is not deity.\(^{306}\) Second, one must consider what to do with *H.*
2.51-2.52 where the author stated that not all that is written in Scripture is true, espousing as an
example that once one is saved, whether looking to the Tanakh or to the writings that would
become the New Testament, it was not possible for that person to sin.\(^{307}\)

Of significant concern is the teaching in *H.* 8.6 and 8.7 that pursuing either Moses or
Jesus was sufficient for attaining justification with God. The writer states,

“For on this account Jesus is concealed from the Jews, who have taken Moses as their teacher,
and Moses is hidden from those who have believed Jesus…. Neither, therefore, are the Hebrews
condemned on account of their ignorance of Jesus, by reason of Him who has concealed Him, if,

\(^{306}\) Ibid., 260. The specific passage reads, “For Eros is not the leader of the gods,—he, I mean, who has to
do with lusts. For if he lusts willingly, he is himself his own suffering and punishment; and he who should suffer
willingly could not be a god.”

\(^{307}\) This belief leads to an epistemological difficulty: how one is to know what is true. This could be similar
to the issue found later in Islam where it is written that Allah is a deceiver of mankind as found in Surah 4:155-158:
*Therefore, for their breaking their covenant and their disbelief in the communications of Allah and their killing the
prophets wrongfully and their saying: Our hearts are covered;—nay! Allah set a seal upon them owing to their
unbelief, so they shall not believe except a few. And for their unbelief and for their having uttered against Mariam a
grievous calumny. And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Mariam, the messenger of Allah;
and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like Isa) and most surely those who
differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and
they killed him not for sure. Nay! Allah took him up to Himself; and Allah is Mighty, Wise.* and Surah 40:34: And
certainly Yusuf came to you before with clear arguments, but you ever remained in doubt as to what he brought;
until when he died, you said: Allah will never raise a messenger after him. Thus does Allah cause him to err who is
extravagant, a doubter. If God is supreme to all, and man may only know what God has chosen to reveal of Himself,
then how is man to know what God truly expects of humanity if He is one who deceives mankind? To follow this
line of argumentation would place the God of Christianity into the same category as that of the Greek and Roman
gods, capricious and who exhibits those practices the deities themselves forbid.
doing the things *commanded* by Moses, they do not hate Him whom they do not know.” Yet Paul indicated clearly that the gospel was tied to the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus and not to a belief in or following of Moses. Moreover, one cannot reconcile these two passages to the Pauline teaching in Romans 4 where he stated that Abram’s faith was credited to him as righteousness some twenty years before Abram would bear the mark of circumcision.

To affirm Moses as being equally viable as a means of attaining justification in the eyes of God would be to introduce a Pelagian soteriology and to deny the single gospel as presented by Paul and adhered to by the earliest church. Indeed, even the author of Homilies was inconsistent in his belief that either Moses or Jesus were sufficient for salvation in that he puts into the mouth of Peter that Jesus had come to save all (Then Peter answered, “I should agree with you, but that our Lord, who came for the salvation of all the world, being alone noble above all, submitted to the condition of a servant, that He might persuade us not to be ashamed to perform the ministrations of servants to our brethren, however well-born we may be.”). The author further affirmed that it was this same Jesus that died by crucifixion (For the Teacher Himself, being nailed to *the cross*, prayed to the Father that the sin of those who slew Him might be forgiven, saying, ‘Father, forgive them their sins, for they know not what they do.’). If Moses were sufficient for achieving salvation, then the crucifixion was not necessary.

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310 Pseudo-Clement of Rome, “The Clementine Homilies,” in Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries: The Twelve Patriarchs, Excerpts and Epistles, the Clementina, Apocrypha, Decretals, Memoirs of Edessa and
What is striking of this text is that there is no mention of the deity of Jesus nor any mention of His resurrection. A clear admonition to the following of the Law of Moses is found, as is a proposed two paths for salvation. The importance of this point is that what the Ebionites taught is found by their own pen and not that of the heresiologists. As a result, this text demonstrates that there were at least some Ebionites who taught a different gospel from that of Paul.

Recognitions

But salvation is in this, that you do His will of whom you have conceived a love and affection through the gift of God; lest that saying of His be addressed to you which He spoke, ‘Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not what I say?’ It is therefore the peculiar gift bestowed by God upon the Hebrews, that they believe Moses; and the peculiar gift bestowed upon the Gentiles is that they love Jesus.\(^ {311} \)

As with Homilies, one finds evidence within Recognitions that there was an appeal to salvation through either Moses or Jesus, saying, “It is therefore the peculiar gift bestowed by God upon the Hebrews, that they believe Moses; and the peculiar gift bestowed upon the Gentiles is that they love Jesus.”\(^ {312} \) With the above quote one finds that the path to salvation was tied to but a belief in Moses for the Hebrew population and a love for Jesus for the Gentile. This again presents a Pelagian soteriology. If Recognitions is accepted as but a literary work and not as an historical account, similar to what some would propose of Justin’s Dialogue with Trypho,

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and then with the idea that the story conveys the most important points the author desires to share on the topic, then the quote above could be understood as what the author believed and not what Peter taught. Thus, Recognitions offers a glimpse into a different gospel taught by those the heresiologists were writing against.

Docetists

At the root of all of them lies the denial of the truth and reality of the material, earthly, and corporal existence of Christ, with the concurrent assumption that he lived among humans only in appearance, our perception of him being no more than a delusion of the senses.

The earliest reference to this concept is found in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch (107) to the churches of Asia Minor, in which he warns them to beware of false teachers who maintain that Jesus Christ “only appeared to suffer” and thus to undergo birth, eating and drinking, persecution and crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, and resurrection in appearance only. In contrast, Ignatius stresses the connection that exists between the historical reality of Christ’s earthly life and his own martyrdom and hope of resurrection, and beyond that the faith and life of all Christians in general. Such false doctrine is already rejected in 1 John 4:2–3 and 2 John 7 with the confession that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.” It can therefore be assumed that the earliest amplifications of the Christological confession were added in order to refute Docetism.313

The Docetists presented a different challenge to the Pauline gospel, namely the denial of the physicality of Jesus. It is argued here that the denial is one based on philosophical arguments

and not on evidence. If the God of Christianity is a self-revealing God, then one is only able to use the information that God has given of Himself in determining the characteristics and attributes of that God. To presume God to be incapable of suffering or to conclude that if He is capable of suffering He is somehow diminished as being God is to place man’s finite concepts of God onto Him. While Ignatius provides information from his time showing the existence of those who would deny the physicality of Jesus, to believe such a denial of physicality to be limited to the person of Jesus would be mistaken, as the root issue was a belief that matter was inherently evil while the consciousness or spiritual was superior.314 Plato went so far as to teach that the soul of a human could not suffer, only the body suffers, then certainly a god could not suffer. Again, this argument is made on philosophical grounds and lacks any evidentiary support.

Beyond this most basic point, one must consider the implications of such a teaching in relation to Romans. In Rom 7:4 Paul states, “Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.” Recognizing that this verse is a conclusion of the preceding three, and then goes back into 6:15-23 as well, the summation affirms that only through death is one freed from obligation to the Law.315 The implication here is that one is not freed from the Law without the physical death and resurrection of Jesus. To deny the physicality

314 Two schools of thought from within Hinduism, Sāmkhya and Yoga, both existing centuries prior to the incarnation of Christ, taught a dualism between consciousness and matter. In *Phaedo* Plato addressed dualism between matter and spirit, suggesting that the body suffers while the spirit is incapable of pain or pleasure. See Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Harold North Fowler, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966). As such it is difficult if not impossible to frame the denial of physicality to a deity as something previously unheard of until Jesus.

of Jesus would render Paul’s message in Romans 7 meaningless since there would have been no
death and subsequently the Law would still be in place.

The Docetists, as the reader may recall, embraced a popular critique of Christianity which
saw in crucifixion an offence against pagan piety. Apart from being bad manners, it was
metaphysically impossible for the supreme deity to be directly involved in the evil realm
of matter. For the Docetists, divine impassibility ruled out any possibility of God's
involvement in human pain and suffering. On these grounds, the Docetic groups
contended that Christ's human experiences were putative and did not in any way involve
his divinity. The church staunchly opposed this move and insisted that the reality of
Christ's suffering was both historically undeniable and soteriologically significant. The
apostolic tradition, church’s sacramental practices and the death of the martyrs
cumulatively testified to the reality and centrality of the crucifixion for the faith. While
the logic of the church’s worship suggested that Christ was in some important sense
divine, the exact nature of Christ's divine status awaited more precise articulation in the
fourth century.316

From the 1st to the end of the 4th century, all heresies, beginning with Gnosticism and
ending with Macedonianism, were directed against the fact of the Incarnation or of the
Trinity, and embodied a denial either of the reality of the Human and Divine Natures in
the Incarnate Word, or of the existence of three Persons of one substance, power, and
eternity in the Godhead: of these, Gnosticism and Docetism soon died out.317

As indicated by both Ffoulkes and Gavrilyuk, the church from its earliest days recognized the
significance of Jesus being fully God and fully man, even if the terminology had not yet been
developed. Indeed, as challenges to Christianity were brought, the church has had to find ways of
articulating more precisely what it is to which she holds. If, as the Docetists claimed, there was
no physicality to Jesus, then there could not have been death by crucifixion, and it would follow
that there could be no physical resurrection. Yet according to Paul without this death and
resurrection one is still bound to the Law. In assessing the war waging between his flesh and
spirit, Paul stated in Rom 7:24-25, “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body

316 Paul L. Gavrilyuk, The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought (New York:
Oxford University Press, 2004), 173.

of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.” The question was not “what” could save man from his sinful condition, it was a question of “who” could save man. This salvation came through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and to deny either point as not having actually happened would be to alter the gospel as presented by Paul.

Marcionites

It has been already stated that Marcion rejected the Old Testament; this involved the rejection of great part of the New which bears witness to the Old. He only retained the Gospel of St. Luke (and that in a mutilated form), and ten Epistles of St. Paul, omitting the pastoral epistles. In defence of his rejection of other apostolic writings, he appealed to the statements of St. Paul in the epistle to the Galatians, that some of the older apostles had not walked uprightly after the truth of the gospel, and that certain false apostles had perverted the gospel of Christ. Marcion’s Gospel, though substantially identical, as far as it went, with our St. Luke’s, did not bear that Evangelist’s name. The later Marcionites said that it had been written by Christ, and when asked how then could it contain the history of Christ’s death and resurrection, answered that these portions had been added by St. Paul. That Marcion’s Gospel was, however, an abridgment of St. Luke was asserted by all the fathers from Irenæus down, and not doubted by any until quite modern times.318

The quote above provides an admittedly older view of Marcion’s position in relation to the Tanakh as well as the writings that would later become defined as the Christian New Testament, and arguably such is the view still held by many today. It could be easy to dismiss Marcion as not being a Christian if he jettisoned the Tanakh given that Christianity came out of Judaism. However, when considering Lieu’s argument for Marcion in light of the emerging canonical process, this picture requires at a minimum refocusing the lens through which Marcion is understood if not an outright change.

A further case for him as catalyst would appeal to his apparent combination of gospel and apostle, as the model for the Christian New Testament: according to some he coined that label in contrast to the ‘Old Testament.’ Contrary to such views, it is not at all evident that his gospel and ‘apostolikon’ formed a single corpus any more than they do in Irenæus; their status in relation to each other remains problematic, as too does the so-called ‘Antitheses,’ a work to which only Tertullian attests. At the same time the ‘Jewish’ scriptures continued to be necessary for his system, inasmuch as they demonstrated the multiple deficiencies of the Creator/Demiurge. It is anachronistic to speak of ‘Marcion’s Bible’ or ‘canon.’

The significant point from Lieu is that Marcion may not have accepted the Tanakh as being authoritative or as having any significance for the Christian, but the idea he completely discarded this same material is untenable. Without the Tanakh there would have been no basis upon which Marcion could have appealed to the God of Judaism as being the Demiurge. Marcion may not have liked what he read in the Tanakh, and there is no indication that he denied what was written in terms of the historicity contained therein. If we can no longer advance an argument of his completely abandoning the Tanakh, how is Marcionism to be understood in light of Paul’s gospel?

Arguably the lynchpin to Marcion’s theology rests in his conception the god to whom he ascribes creation. While he was not the first to advocate for a god of creation and then other gods or supernatural beings beyond, he did affirm that the god who created was not Jesus. Because Marcion affirmed Paul it is beneficial to examine what Paul had to say regarding God as Creator.

A cursory review of Rom 1:21-32 provides significant insight into who Paul believed the Christian God to be in relation to creation.

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320 As an example, Carpocrates pre-dated Marcion by as much as a century and taught that it was the angels who created the world, but not the divine who created.
For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

The focus of the passage above is who Paul believed God to be. In this passage he affirmed that God was known and knowable: God had not remained somehow hidden and concealed from humanity until the arrival of Jesus. Second, he indicated that mankind exchanged the glory of an incorruptible God, meaning that what people chose to do with respect to the known God was a conscious choice. Third, it was this same God who allowed mankind to go their chosen direction. Fourth, Paul indicated that the correct response of humanity was to worship this same God who was also the Creator. Based on the law of identity (A is A), in the passage above God, incorruptible God, and Creator all reference the same individual, meaning Paul saw no difference or distinction between God and the individual responsible for the act of creation.

Much difficulty arises with respect to Marcion’s theology on this point. Marcion denied Jesus as having been the Creator God, while Paul affirmed that the God to be worshiped was the Creator God. To the Corinthians Paul affirmed that there was only one God, and Jesus was the
Agent of Creation (1 Cor 8:4-6).\(^{321}\) Looking to the same passage in Corinthians, Paul affirmed that there were many so-called gods in v. 5, but never affirmed that these were true gods or that they existed in any real sense.

Notwithstanding his theology to have been expressed +80-100 years following Paul’s letter to the Romans, even Marcion’s teacher, Cerdo (also rendered as Cerdon), cannot be dated such that his teachings pre-date or would have been contemporaneous with Paul. This leaves Pauline writings firmly in the position of being rightly understood as the established SPAC.

The importance to this is especially sharp when considering recent scholarship that would argue for the superiority of Marcion and his theological teachings. Klinghardt challenges the credibility of the patristics in relation to Marcion, and in arguing for the primacy of Marcion’s Gospel over any of the four canonical works states,

This means: Luke edited the Marcionite Gospel. Since there is no need to postulate any intermediary state, this relation must be seen as Luke’s direct literary dependence on the Marcionite Gospel. We should not be surprised that this solution contradicts the patristic writers, who unanimously claim the priority of Luke. This simply confirms one of the basic rules of historical criticism: do not believe your sources’ claims only because they tell you so!\(^{322}\)

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\(^{321}\) In context the passage reads: “Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.” Verse 5 does not imply nor should it be read to infer that Paul believed there to exist a multiplicity of gods, rather he was merely affirming that in the minds of some there exist multiple gods. See also David K. Lowery, “1 Corinthians,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985).

\(^{322}\) Matthias Klinghardt, “Marcion’s Gospel and the New Testament: Catalyst or Consequence?” Journal of New Testament Studies 63 (2017): 318-333. It is interesting to note that by way of footnote 9 in his article Klinghardt points to Tertullian’s Adv. Marc. 4.4.1 and states that Tertullian reported the charge by the Marcionites that the gospel held by Tertullian and the church at large had been altered, and Klinghardt states he finds no reason to challenge the historicity of the counterclaim but rejects the initial claim on the grounds that one should not believe a source simply because they made a statement.
In similar fashion, of the patristics Beduhn states, “The place and significance of Marcion’s Gospel in the formation of the New Testament literature has been obscured by the persistence of what I call the Patristic Hypothesis about its origin, namely, the idea first put forward by Irenæus and Tertullian that Marcion created it by means of ideologically motivated editorial subtractions from Luke.”

Klinghardt’s argument for the primacy Marcion’s gospel is based on what he sees as the editorial process, believing Luke to have used Marcion’s gospel in the writing of what is now the third gospel in the canon. Klinghardt begs the question on two fronts. First, Luke is credited with having written Acts, a point not often challenged unless dating Acts in the middle of the second century. In Acts 1 the text indicates that this is the second document being sent to Theophilus by Luke. “Most scholars believe that Acts was written (by Luke or some other part-time associate of Paul) shortly after the Gospel, which would place it in the late 80s. A few scholars (including Pervo) put Acts considerably later, in the second century.”

Luke’s gospel is dated to ca. 85 by many scholars, with the dating of Acts having a similar dating. Brauch advocates for AD 85 and not much earlier for the penning of Acts, with Luke’s gospel just prior. The difficulty for Klinghardt on this point is that if Luke and Acts were penned in the 80s, then Marcion would have only been five to ten years old if pinning his date of birth to ca. 75. Thus, Marcion would have had to have penned his gospel as a very young child, then Luke would have had to have

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gotten that copy to redact. The timeline simply does not work out for the primacy of Marcion’s gospel over Luke’s.

The second and more problematic issue for Klinghardt’s thesis is that Marcion was not born until after the accepted seven letters of Paul had been penned and circulated. The reality is that Marcion’s gospel is different from Paul’s gospel. Marcion denied Jesus to have been the Creator God, while Paul affirmed Jesus as Creator, meaning they did not use the term “deity” at the same time and in the same sense. Returning to Paul’s message to the Galatians in AD 49, almost a quarter century before Marcion’s birth, there was a single gospel and any change or deviation to that gospel was not to be considered the same thing. Marcion was preaching a different god, thus a different gospel.

Beduhn’s concept of Patristic Hypothesis and the idea that the issues the early writers had with Marcion fails to convince as well and may also be guilty of begging the question. It is true that Irenæus was in France and Tertullian was in North Africa, thus distancing them both by time and by geography from Marcion. No extant material exists from either that would date to a time prior to Marcion’s death. However, these were not the first patristics to write against Marcion.

Justin presents a significant challenge to Beduhn’s easy dismissal of Irenæus and Tertullian. Because Justin wrote *I. Apol* ca. 150, and because he was in Rome, he was at the right place at the right time to have knowledge of Marcion and his followers.

And there is Marcion, a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive, and teaching his disciples to believe in some other god greater than the Creator. And he, by the aid of the devils, has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies, and to deny that God is the maker of this universe, and to assert that some other being, greater than He, has done greater works. All who take their opinions from these men, are, as we before said, called Christians; just as also those who do not agree with the philosophers in their doctrines, have yet in common with them the name of philosophers given to them.327

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Here Justin points to the deviation in the gospel as put forth by Marcion and his followers. Of equal importance is the comment that those who follow Marcion are called Christian, but their teachings are different in the same way philosophers hold different doctrines and yet are called by the name philosophers give.\textsuperscript{328} Justin’s point is reiterated when he says, “And, as we said before, the devils put forward Marcion of Pontus, who is even now teaching men to deny that God is the maker of all things in heaven and on earth, and that the Christ predicted by the prophets is His Son, and preaches another god besides the Creator of all, and likewise another son.”\textsuperscript{329}

The point here is not one of primacy in relation to gospels, whether canonical or Marcion’s version. The primacy of the Pauline literature has been established, without bringing the gospels into the discussion, and no evidence exists to demonstrate other written teachings to have pre-dated Paul.\textsuperscript{330} The question that now needs to be addressed is whether or not a non-theological tool, Root Cause Analysis, shows Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites to not be Christian as compared to the Pauline sources.

\textsuperscript{328} See also \textit{1Apol} 7 where Justin argues that while many may carry the name, not all are in fact Christian simply because they claimed the name.

\textsuperscript{329} Justin Martyr, \textit{1Apol} 58.

\textsuperscript{330} It is important to note that in saying “no evidence exists to demonstrate other written teachings to have pre-dated Paul” the reference is to known sources today. Fragments continue to be found as evidenced by the newly released information of a fragment from the gospel of Mark that has been dated to AD 80-110 per Craig Evans and Dan Wallace (https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-magazine/earliest-new-testament-manuscript-fragment-discovered). It is indeed possible that at some point a fragment or document may be discovered that pre-dates the Pauline literature. If that happens, then it would be appropriate to reassess the accepted Pauline texts as compared to the older text to determine if the SPAC remained consistent or if there was need for change.
The Root Cause Analysis Process

There are multiple tools available today that can assist an individual in identifying the root cause of virtually any undesirable condition or event. This dissertation utilizes the ABS Root Cause Analysis methodology, definitions, and Root Cause Map™ as a tool in the attempt to evaluate objectively why certain groups deviated from the SPAC as established by Paul.331

The methodology for this particular system requires that one introduce a single causal factor, then work that causal factor through the map in a systematic manner until a root cause is identified. An example of a causal factor in this research would include any teaching that deviated from the deity, death, or resurrection of Jesus. Next it is necessary to determine which causal factor types (nodes 2-6) the causal factor fits by definition. With the exception of nodes 5 and 6, each causal factor type has arrows indicating a need to identify which of the problem categories apply to the identified causal factor. If, by way of example, the causal factor does not meet the definition of an equipment or software issue (node 2), then that node is no longer an option to pursue along the Root Cause Map™ nor are the problem categories beneath node 2 viable paths to pursue. Once a problem category has been identified, the investigator moves to the next row to identify the major root cause category. As with the example using node 2 above, if the causal factor does not meet the definition of a major root cause category, the whole line of near root causes and intermediate causes are also eliminated. The investigation proceeds in this manner, working from top down then left to right to reach an intermediate root cause.

331 Lee N. Vanden Heuvel et al., Root Cause Analysis Handbook: A Guide to Efficient and Effective Incident Investigation, 3rd ed. (Brookfield, CT: Rothstein Associates, Inc., 2008). All definitions and explanations associated with the Root Cause Map™ are credited to this text. With respect to the root cause identifying why an undesired condition or event obtained, it should be noted that at this time there is no formal analysis in the vein of root cause that can offer an explanation as to why the right thing happened.
Once an intermediate root cause has been identified, that cause is transferred to node 224. From here it becomes necessary to evaluate whether the identified intermediate cause obtained as a result of an issue with the SPAC or from an individual not using the SPAC. Because a causal factor may have more than one root cause, once the root cause has been identified, immediately return to the last near root cause and continue working the causal factor through the balance of the Root Cause Map™ to ensure additional root causes are not missed.

**Causal Factors**

A causal factor may be understood as any condition or event where a difference is found between the desired and actual performance, and because of that difference the results expected pursuant to the SPAC do not occur. By way of example, the research will evaluate the core teaching of the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites as compared to the SPAC from Paul. From this point it can be shown that any deviation from the deity, death, or resurrection of Jesus is to be considered a causal factor. Additionally, because Christianity in general and Paul in particular utilized the Tanakh as Scripture and their source material pointing toward the coming of the Messiah, any rejection or denial of the Tanakh as authoritative Scripture would also be considered a causal factor.
Causal Factor Types and Problem Categories

Once a causal factor has been identified it is necessary to determine the type of problem and how to categorize that problem. With respect to the research within this dissertation it is possible to quickly narrow the understanding of the issue. Equipment and software issues focus on failure of equipment, software, material, or product used or generated and may be eliminated because the focus is on the surviving written documents. External factors are those factors that are outside the control of the people involved, such as weather, external events, or impact from other groups that affect the operations of another. Tolerable risk implies that the system functioned as designed and desired, yet the teachings of Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites deviated from the Pauline teachings, so this cannot be a valid path. Finally, to not be able to

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332 If the investigation were reversed it could be possible that this would result in being a valid path since the Christians had no control over what or how other groups represented Christianity. External factors as a category is rejected here because the investigation is not on how external groups impacted Christianity, rather the focus is on the deviation of the external groups from the original teachings.
determine the cause one must concede that the needed data either does not exist or is unavailable. Given the large amount of data surviving from AD 30-250 related to Christianity or how individuals viewed Christianity, this cannot be accepted as a possible conclusion.

With all other problem categories eliminated, the only remaining path is one evaluating what an individual or group did or did not do. Looking to the sub-categories, company personnel does not apply for two reasons. First, it could be argued that to appeal to company employees would be to superimpose a twenty-first century mindset or standard onto the first century population. Second, the teachings of the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites were inconsistent with each other as well as different from the Pauline material, meaning the groups were not homogenous. The same argumentation would appear to be appropriately applied to the idea of contract personnel as well, thus eliminating that possible path. This leaves third-party personnel as the only viable path for the investigation, where third-party may refer to visitors, members of the public, etc.

Major Root Cause Category

As one progresses through the Root Cause Map the details of the point under investigation become more granular. The purpose of the Major Root Cause Category is to begin identifying specific areas in which the investigation could reasonably continue with the goal of identifying specific points of deviation from the SPAC.
Figure 4.2. Major Root Cause Categories Irrelevant to This Research

The above image reflects Major Root Cause Categories that may be eliminated from consideration with respect to this research. Design issues seek answers related to input and output of equipment. Equipment Reliability examines issues related to the maintenance and upkeep of equipment. Material/Parts focuses on, in this case, issues related to papyri or ink, neither of which influences the text or teachings.

Procedure issues examine the step-by-step instructions related to how one completes a task, or what one is to do and in what order. Because the SPAC has been demonstrated as the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and because it is the SPAC that is under investigation, and because no action is required on the part of the reader in order for the SPAC to obtain, this is not a valid path for identifying a root cause for points of deviation.

Human factors address how a human and the issues related to equipment design, systems, and administrative process interrelate. As with procedures, how an individual responds or interrelates to the SPAC does not change the SPAC and therefore is not a valid path.

Personal Performance is also deemed to be an invalid path with respect to this investigation. When conducting a Root Cause Analysis for an event happening in recent history--
using the last week as an example—it may be possible to identify issues related to a particular individual that contributed significantly toward the causal factor obtaining, but personal performance is always to be a last option for identifying a root cause. Moreover, most if not all of the nodes associated with Personal Performance as a root cause path would require speculation on the part of the researcher.

Figure 4.3. Major Root Cause Categories Relevant to This Research

Having eliminated six of the Major Root Cause categories, five remain as possible paths for investigation. The first path focuses largely on equipment records, manuals, and maintenance history, but also includes a sub-category that seeks information from other documents and records. This path would include extant materials relevant to the current research.

Hazard/Defect Identification typically seeks issues related to equipment and processes related to the equipment, but may also be used to identify both proactive and reactive assessment of the reliability of the process or method under investigation. This path may include a focus on whether the individual(s) making changes to the SPAC assessed their points of deviation either before or after making a change, then understanding the implications of that change.

Because Paul stated that there was a singular gospel and that any change or deviation to that gospel constituted something different, both Training and Supervision are possible paths for
identifying root causes. In like manner, because there are surviving written documents that reflect the Ebionite, Docetist, and Marcionite teachings, the Communications path remains viable.

Near Root Cause and Intermediate Cause

With respect to the remaining portions of the map, the near root cause is the next step in the progression following the major root cause category. By way of example on how these moderate the flow of the investigation and conclusions, underneath the major category of verbal and informal written communication there are two near root causes, identified as colored ovals with the node number within that node. If the investigation tracks to node 197, then the only two possible intermediate causes (hexagon-shaped) would remain, nodes 198 and 199.

Methodologically, one cannot appeal to intermediate causes that fall beneath other near root causes or in other major root cause categories. After identifying the near and intermediate causes the investigator moves to the root cause type.333

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333 It is possible for the investigation to arrive at a near root cause and not be able to identify an intermediate cause. In such a case any conclusions are more tentative.
In node 224 the investigator would insert the identified intermediate cause or, if no intermediate cause was identified as meeting the definitions in the Root Cause Map™, they would insert the near root cause. It is at this point that the root cause is to be identified in relation to the existing SPAC. Two major groupings are provided, with the first focused on issues with the SPAC itself, and the second addressing the lack of use of the SPAC.

**Root Cause Analysis**

Processing the identified causal factors through the Root Cause Map™ yields four primary root causes or reasons where the teaching of certain groups deviated from the established SPAC as presented by Paul. If the root cause has been correctly identified, and then if that root cause is corrected, then one would expect the new outcome to be consistent with

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334 Over forty potential paths were initially identified, but most were dismissed. For a listing of paths considered but not listed here, see Appendix E.
the established SPAC. In presenting the root causes below, an explanation is included detailing why that node by definition fits the conditions being investigated and is an appropriate “stop” along the root cause path.

All root cause paths begin with nodes 1, 3, and 14 (entering the causal factor, front-line personnel issue, and third-party personnel issue) and as such is not necessary to further defend beyond what has already been presented earlier in this chapter. It is important to keep in mind that when seeking the root cause it has been presumed that an accepted standard has been identified, and all assessments are being made of the systems and decisions that deviated from that initially accepted standard. As such, the causal factors being run through the Root Cause Map™ are questions of the deviating system and its followers, not questions posed of the Pauline corpus or what has come to be known as orthodox Christianity.

Root Cause #1: Documentation Issue–Inaccurate

The first root cause path is associated with the surviving or known documentation.335 By definition, node 58 asks whether or not there were other records maintained, and if so if they

335 The root cause path here is 1, 3, 14, 58, 75, 76, 224, 230, 233.
were inaccurate or out of date. Given that it has already been demonstrated through the accepted Pauline corpus that the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus was accepted repeatedly through surviving documentation, the denial by some would be inaccurate when compared to the SPAC.336 Yet further detail is able to be gleaned at this point.

The next node on the path is 75, or other documents and records issues. This node asks the question of whether or not there was a failure to update documents as changes occurred. An example of where changes in the documentation or process might be found is in Romans 4 and 5 where Paul explains that salvation was through grace by faith and not by works. One cannot find in the Tanakh where salvation ever came through works, yet there are some who taught as the Ebionites that salvation was obtained through the complete adherence to the Law of Moses. Paul explained the sacrifice of Christ as being wholly sufficient and there no longer being need for the Law,337 and anchored his theological position in the Tanakh. This provided information on the change in thought and why that change was being made. A lack of evidence showing Paul’s position to be wrong would support the different teachings to be inaccurate.

The third node on this root cause path is 76, or documentation content inaccurate or incomplete. From the definition one seeks to identify whether there were errors or omissions in the content, if the documentation failed to reflect the current (post-crucifixion, post-resurrection)337

336 It is important here to remember that the methodology used for this research has been evidential in nature. It has been presented above that there were objections to some of the Christian teachings that are based on philosophical grounds, but here in order to maintain the integrity of the research it is necessary to maintain an evidential approach. The question to be answered is what evidence exists that would support the different teaching. If such evidence were to be found and deemed more credible than the evidence currently held, then a change in understanding and teaching would be warranted. However, evidence is required at this point or else the competing thought must be relegated to a philosophical viewpoint or to speculation, then giving that speculation the force of probability, which would be from a methodological perspective inappropriate and lack scholarly force

337 This is not to say Paul did not find value in the Law, rather it was his point that the Law was a tutor up until the time of Christ, but following the crucifixion and resurrection the place of the Law was now different since the final payment for sin had been made, remedying the former “passing over” of sins in the past.
status, or failed to contain all of the required information. Denial of deity, denial of the Creator God, or denial of the physical death and resurrection of Jesus would all constitute errors or omissions.

From this point one takes node 76 and moves that into node 224 in order to identify the actual root cause. Two options are available, both related to the SPAC. The first node seeks to identify if there was an issue with the SPAC itself. Noting that a philosophical objection was presented, but nothing of an evidential nature, node 225 through 229 are rightly excluded, meaning no evidential basis was found upon which to consider the SPAC to be incorrect. This leaves node 230, or an issue with the use of the SPAC. From here three options are available. The first of the three asks whether the individual(s) deviating from the SPAC were unaware of that SPAC. Because the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites all demonstrated knowledge of both the Tanakh and the writings that would become the Christian New Testament, this node (231) is not a valid stopping point.

The next node asks whether the SPAC had recently changed. Here one may challenge how the term “recently” is to be defined, especially when examining an event from two millennia ago. Notwithstanding, it is not possible for Ebionites, Docetists, or Marcionites to have existed prior to Christianity, lest one find Christianity existing before Christ. Adding to the strength of rejecting this as a root cause, all were aware of the theological changes presented post-resurrection of Jesus. The recent change was not the cause of the denial of the deity, death, or resurrection of Jesus.

This leaves one final node, 233, where the cause is identified as a failure to enforce the SPAC. There is abundant evidence to show the patristics to have refuted and condemned the denial of Jesus’ deity, death, and resurrection. The patristics defended the SPAC as it related to
Jesus, but the deviation is to be found in the errant teaching of others that denied and failed to teach the SPAC, or more specifically the gospel as presented by Paul, without deviation from that gospel. Pointing back to chapter two of this research it was demonstrated that Paul indicated that any change whatsoever to the gospel he was presenting was to present a different gospel. As a result groups were preaching and teaching a different gospel which made that teaching a different at the core. Similarity does not equate to sameness, so a different religious and theological system was presented, but that system was not the Christian belief system. The conditions found within the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites all reflect in the affirmative that within these groups the enforcement of the SPAC had been lax, failure to follow the SPAC went uncorrected or unpunished, and noncompliance with the SPAC as presented by Paul had been accepted by members within these three groups.

Root Cause #2: Documentation Issue–Missing Information

This root cause path also addresses issues with documentation and is consistent with the first root cause through node 75. As such this path explanation shall begin with node 77, or

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338 The root cause path here is 1, 3, 14, 58, 75, 77, 224, 230, 233.
documents not being available or missing. By definition one is seeking to understand if the
documentation of the different teachings were not available, missing, inconvenient to obtain,
difficult to locate, or did not exist. The issue at hand is whether or not one can find or produce
the documentation that evidentially refutes grounds on which the church held to these as core
and necessary. It is possible and indeed highly plausible that over time Christians, in an effort to
control the spread of errant teachings, destroyed documents that were not consistent with their
own teachings. To claim that all errant teachings were destroyed, however, would require
venturing into the realm of speculation. Further there is the challenge that patristic writers often
quoted or made reference to the teachings of those deemed to be errant, thus providing some
level of insight. An absence of total knowledge does not equate to the lack of all knowledge.
Therefore, it is possible to identify what others taught but no reference gives indication of why
that different teaching was to be considered correct and the Pauline gospel presentation was
incorrect or in need of change.

The next step as with the previous root cause is to take node 77 and place it into node 224
and begin the assessment for a root cause. As with the first identified root cause and for the same
reasons stated above, nodes 225 through 229 are dismissed.\textsuperscript{339} In turning to the root cause type,
the issue identified is one of not using the existing SPAC. The first possible root cause, that the
teachings of those who did not adhere to the SPAC was a result of being unaware of the SPAC
(node 231) is untenable since the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites needed the Tanakh and
what would become the New Testament writings in developing and presenting their own

\textsuperscript{339} Someone might suggest that node 228, SPAC confusing or contradictory, would be an appropriately
identified root cause. This root cause is rejected because there is no evidence that the writers of what would become
the New Testament were ever contradictory in their presentation of Jesus. He was presented both as wholly God and
wholly man. While such a condition is inconceivable to the human mind, the material presents a paradox and was
accepted as such. Appeals to philosophical objections are rejected and because of a lack of evidence showing the
Pauline teaching of Jesus’ humanity and deity to be incorrect results in this node not being a valid stop.
systems. In a similar fashion, node 232 fails to answer the root cause (had the SPAC recently changed) because the question attempting to be answered by this node is whether or not those who deviated from the SPAC were aware of the changes, more specifically the claim that God had intervened in the course of human history while taking on human flesh, that He had suffered crucifixion and physical death, and then He was physically raised from the dead. Surviving evidence indicates that the Ebionites denied the deity of Jesus while the Docetists denied the physical suffering and death of Jesus, and implicitly if Jesus did not die then He was not raised from the dead either. In similar fashion, Marcion was aware of the Hebrew teaching of one God who was responsible for Creation, and that Paul affirmed Jesus to be this same God. Evidential information does not support rejecting Jesus as Creator in favor of a multiplicity of gods.

With all other root causes plausibly dismissed, the only remaining option is a failure to enforce the SPAC (node 233). The Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites all had access to the Pauline corpus as well as other accepted Christian writings and yet their teachings did not conform to the single gospel as presented by Paul. The difference between this root cause and the prior is subtle, and distinction is necessary. The first makes appeal to the teaching which deviated from the established SPAC while this root cause makes appeal to the lack of documentation (evidence) to support the errant teachings. Stated differently, surviving evidence from those systems that deviated from the SPAC made appeal on philosophical grounds to their position but failed to demonstrate why the system on which Paul had established his SPAC was errant. The SPAC as presented by Paul was based on eyewitness testimony (his reported interaction with the other apostles in Galatians 1 and 2) as well as anchoring the Messiah’s coming, suffering, death, and resurrection to passages in the Tanakh while at the same time and in the same sense maintaining the monotheism of a single God.
Root Cause #3: Supervision Issue—Performance Not Corrected

The third root cause path identified is associated with supervision.\textsuperscript{340} This major root cause category (185) focuses on behaviors or actions of those who were in a position that would have allowed for the correction of errors. Of particular interest here are the definitions that seek to understand if supervisors failed to correct improper performance as well as whether or not personnel failed to work together as a coordinated team. Because the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites taught different positions on the deity, physical death, and physical resurrection of Jesus as compared to Paul, both questions are answered in the affirmative, validating this as an appropriate node for further seeking a root cause.

The next node seeks to understand whether there was an issue with supervision during work. More specifically, this node (192) asks if there was a lack of coordination between workers or if there were gaps in the work that was assigned to different team members. Because the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites considered themselves to be Christian, and all

\textsuperscript{340} The root cause path here is 1, 3, 14, 185, 192, 193, 224, 230, 233.
following Paul, other New Testament writers, the Tanakh, or some combination of these, the
SPAC was known by these groups, yet there was not a coordinated effort among these three or
those following the SPAC as presented by Paul. Because the teachings of those not adhering to
the SPAC did not promote a harmony between what Paul said and their own teachings, various
groups proposed mutually exclusive conditions.

Because various groups were proposing conditions or understandings related to the
reported deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and then these conditions were mutually
exclusive (either Jesus was God or He was not, either He physically died or He did not, either He
was physically resurrected or He was not), and then these proposed systems of belief failed to
adhere to the SPAC or to demonstrate on an evidential basis why the SPAC was in need of
modification (an issue with change control), resulting in the improper performance or teachings
not being corrected (node 193) such that they would either accord with the SPAC or demonstrate
why the SPAC was in error and in need of correction. This node is then taken to node 224 and
processed to identify the root cause.

It is conceivable that someone might believe the appropriate path here is to go to node
225 (an issue with the SPAC itself) and then proceed to node 229, the SPAC is incorrect. This
node seeks to understand if there were technical errors or incorrect facts in the SPAC itself. This
is an invalid stop along this root cause path given the current research. This research focuses, in
part, on an evidential methodology that seeks to identify whether or not there was a single
consistent SPAC taught by the church and begins with Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Thus, the
SPAC as presented is a reflection of what the earliest church held to be the core of Christianity,
but has not sought to defend whether or not the deity, physical death, or physical resurrection are
true and historically accurate events. Thus, to claim the SPAC to be incorrect would require
identifying on an evidential basis why the deity, death, or resurrection understanding by the church was incorrect and in need of modification.

The next node is 230 (SPAC not used), and proceeds to 233, SPAC enforcement issue. As with the previous root cause paths, each of these three groups were aware of and built their theologies off of material being used by the Christians: to claim a lack of knowledge of the SPAC is unconvincing. Additionally, to claim the SPAC had changed recently and as such they did not know of the change fails to convince. These conditions appropriately result in eliminating nodes 231 and 232, leaving an enforcement issue as the only remaining option.

**Root Cause #4: Communication Issue—Incorrect**

![Diagram showing root cause path](image)

Figure 4.8. Root Cause #4

The fourth root cause is associated with communications (196) within the various groups not adhering to the SPAC. Errors falling into this major category are typified by issues related to a failure to communicate, no means to communicate between groups; misunderstood communications; or incorrect, incomplete, or inadequate communication.\(^{341}\) Surviving documents from the period give evidence to the communication by those holding to the Pauline

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\(^{341}\) The root cause path here is 1, 3, 14, 196, 200, 206, 224, 230, 233.
SPAC refuting Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites. While one may claim that these documents were for in-house use only, meaning by those within what the followers of Paul believed to be the church, and then never shared with the outside groups, such a condition is plausible, but fails to convince and relies on speculation lacking an evidential basis. Because each of these three groups were aware of and used various elements from the SPAC and supporting documentation, to claim they were unaware of the differences being taught would be unfounded.

The near root cause can be identified as misunderstood or incorrect communication (node 200), followed by node 206, wrong instructions. The definition for this node asks simply if the information contained in the message was errant, inaccurate, or wrong. If the Pauline message is the SPAC against which all other teachings are to be assessed, then the answer is clearly in the affirmative. Node 206 is now moved to node 224 and the root cause can be identified.

There is not an issue identified here with the SPAC, so node 225 can be dismissed as the root cause type, and nodes 226 through 229 do not reflect the actual root cause. This moves the focus to an issue with the SPAC not being used (node 230), and as with the previous three root causes, ends with a SPAC enforcement issue at node 233. The Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites were aware that what they were communicating was not consistent with what the church was teaching, yet the leaders within those three groups did not make corrections or changes to what they were teaching to bring it in line with the teaching of the church.

**Summary of Thought to This Point**

The purpose of this chapter has been to review select key points of teaching from three variant gospels related to their view of the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and then to process those specific teachings through a Root Cause Map™ in an attempt to identify whether or not those teachings would be considered as consistent when compared to the gospel as
presented by Paul. This work is unique in that the attempt was to utilize a non-theological tool to assess the historical teachings of three variant groups and determine, if possible, whether or not they should be considered Christian.

Based on the book of Acts and the Jerusalem Council, it is plausible to believe that the church, by 49, already had experiences where there were some who believed that following the Law, inclusive of having circumcision as a requirement for entry into the church, existed. Without regard to when one dates the penning of this particular book, there is no evidence to indicate that the Jerusalem Council or the issue of circumcision was not an historical issue of discussion within +16-19 from the crucifixion of Jesus. The role of the Law would be addressed by Paul later when he wrote to the Romans, and while certainly important, the Ebionite teaching examined here involved their view of the deity of Jesus. Jesus could be deity or not be deity, but no middle ground exists whereby the gospel according to Paul allows for some demi-god type status. Thus, the Ebionite and Pauline gospels were not referencing the same person in the same sense, resulting in an Ebionite change to the Pauline gospel.

The Docetists were examined specifically in terms of their denial of the physicality of Jesus. While Paul affirmed the deity, physical death, and then the physical resurrection of Jesus, the docetic view was one where God was thought to be impassible, holding an idea that if a god were capable of suffering then they would not be a god. No evidential basis exists for such a claim, and it was presented that to deny physicality to Jesus on the grounds of possibility or impassibility is to employ a philosophical claim about the person of God. With Paul claiming Jesus to have physically died and then to have physically risen, the person of Jesus as presented by the Docetists and Paul are not the same, and as such results in a change to the Pauline gospel.
With respect to Marcionites, the key to understanding how the theological teaching varied from Paul is found in the person of Jesus. Marcion’s Demiurge was taught to be the creator of the universe, while Paul taught that Jesus was both God and the agent of creation. A clear line of demarcation has been shown to have existed whereby both Judaism and Christianity saw a firm and distinct bifurcation of Creator versus created, with the Creator to be worshiped. Marcion’s Jesus is not at the same time and in the same sense the same Jesus as advocated by Paul, and as such this key doctrinal point as held by Marcion and his followers makes their gospel different from the one presented by Paul.

The next key section focused on explaining the methodology for executing the Root Cause Analysis process. This laid out the general approach of moving from top to bottom, then left to right when using the Root Cause Map™ as well as explaining why certain major categories could rightly be eliminated from consideration. Examination of teachings from other groups as they related to the person of Jesus were examined, resulting in the identification of four root causes, or more specifically, four key points where the deviation changed the teaching such that the message being presented was no longer consistent with the SPAC.

The value of the work in this chapter is that while it is assessing a religious or theological issue, the methodology employed to arrive at the four proposed root causes does not necessitate one to be a Christian or to hold to any other religious belief system in order for the results to be accurate. The examination necessitated looking to what each group taught with respect to the person of Jesus, but the research was not an attempt to demonstrate the Pauline gospel to be true and historically accurate—just that this is what the early church taught and believed. The thesis was that from the beginning there was a single Christianity, and then that Christianity spread based on the use of a positive apologetic, namely the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
This research has remained consistent with the proposed methodological approach, namely the use of an evidential method where evidence was defined as a condition or event, objective in nature, knowable by those present, open to investigation by all others that, when rightly interpreted, corresponds to reality. Having established the SPAC to be the Pauline gospel, and then having shown the early church fathers to have proclaimed the same gospel, and then to have used a non-theological tool that relies on evidential input to demonstrate why the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites should be considered to have been teaching a different gospel, the question that must now be answered is, “So what?” The next chapter will address what can now be claimed with respect to the thesis as well as areas that require additional investigation.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

This research began with three key arguments. The first focused on evaluating whether or not historians have missed the true “why” behind the spread of Christianity. The second argument was the belief that through positive apologetics one could find justification for belief in and commendation of Christianity by the church. Finally, with respect to gnostic religions and what some would deem to be heretical, an argument would be made demonstrating that each offered system incorporated a significant change to one or more aspects of the deity, death, and resurrection reports.

The research yielded interesting observations that previously have not be taken into consideration when discussing the growth of the church. It was demonstrated that many have proposed the Pax romana, the diasporas, unification of language and culture, improved roads and shipping, morality, or the suffering servant as the reason, or causal factor, for the growth of the church. Indeed, each of the conditions listed by history scholars did play a role in the spread of Christianity, but these would have been contributing factors and not causal factors. If any one of these contributing factors had not been present at the time the church emerged, that absence would not have necessarily prevented Christianity from obtaining in the form known. Because none of these conditions were unique to Christianity there is no reason to believe they provided
Christians with a unique advantage over other religions. The research advanced from identifying the lacuna to evaluating the thesis, namely that the church grew as a result of a positive apologetic as advanced by Paul. 

This research focused on attempting to identify what the earliest church believed about itself. Rather than accepting an appeal to self-identification as the final arbiter of truth, only early church documents accepted by critical scholars were admitted for review. In looking to the accepted Pauline corpus it was demonstrated that as early as +16-19 years from the crucifixion there existed a clear communication that the gospel was the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and that any deviation whatsoever was to be rejected as being another gospel. The timing of Paul having written Galatians and the content within the first two chapters placed him in the right places geographically and at the right time in history to have known and interacted with the original apostles, and claimed that both he and the other apostles preached the same gospel message. It was further demonstrated that Paul held that there was but a single gospel, and any changes or modifications to that gospel made it something other than the Christian gospel. 

Paul affirmed the eternal deity of Jesus, His physical death, and His bodily resurrection as being the gospel. This high Christology was further demonstrated by Paul in 1 Thessalonians. With the same high Christology being found in his two earliest letters, and with only two years at most separating the letters, there is no reason to believe Paul’s Christological position was developed over time. Salvation was found to be tied to the message in 1 Cor 15:3-5, and through the use of *kurios, Christos, and nomen sacrum* the consistent high Christology expressed by Paul was also held by those who would today be considered orthodox in terms of their belief at the time.
It was also shown how both Peter and Paul used the gospel message as a positive apologetic in commending Christianity to non-Christians. Not only did they proclaim the gospel, but by way of three specific speeches from the book of Acts it was shown that both Peter and Paul used this same gospel to answer the “so what” question, or why the gospel mattered.

A twofold purpose in chapter three was to see if the patristic writers affirmed this same Christianity as taught by Paul and then, if they did, attempt to identify whether or not they made use of the SPAC as a positive apologetic. Sources from the church fathers again were limited to those where the dating and authorship is generally accepted by critical scholars.

In evaluating whether or not the SPAC was a later development, the research moved from later to earlier sources. The survey revealed a consistent appeal by those writers to the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus that was wholly consistent with Paul’s proclamation and that they used this gospel as a positive apologetic. While there are some who advocate no orthodox Christianity to have been present until at earliest the implementation of formal councils, such a position is untenable. Historical evidence revealed that the convening of councils was a normative practice between the Jerusalem Council and Nicea. It was also demonstrated that the patristics wrote of church discipline taking place, to include the excommunication of those who taught different gospels from the one advanced by Paul.

Chapter four introduced Root Cause Analysis in an effort to identify root causes associated with the proclamation of different gospels. After explaining how the selected methodology functions, deviations related to the SPAC were evaluated, with four root causes being identified. The first root cause showed the surviving documentation of Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites to be inaccurate when compared to the SPAC. The second root cause was associated with a lack of evidence by these three groups demonstrating why the Pauline
SPAC was in error and thus in need of correction. Third, those leaders from within these three groups did not correct the teaching within such that the teaching was brought in line with the established SPAC. Finally, the information communicated within these three groups as it related to the deity, death, and resurrection was wrong when compared to the SPAC.

Implications from the Research

The thesis of this research asserted that the church grew as a result of the proclamation of a positive apologetic, specifically the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Those factors that have historically been considered the reason for church growth have been found wanting, being contributing factors to the speed with which Christianity spread rather than being the reason(s) for that growth. By reassessing the growth of the church from AD 30-250 it was possible to find that not only did a single Christianity exist from the beginning, but also that there was a consistent positive apologetic in use by the church. The church understood that merely claiming the name of Christian did not equate to one actually being a Christian. Undoubtedly there are many Christians today who would have agreed with this statement, and many who would not. Arguably the key point would have been around the religious bias brought to the table by the researcher.

342 See Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed., ed. C. Peter Wagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 4. “Just as non-Christian populations are prodigiously growing, so the mere excess of births over deaths in the Christian community vastly increases the number of those who count themselves Christians rather than secularists, Marxists, Hindu, Buddhist, or followers of some other faith; while subsequent personal confession of Christ transforms hundreds of thousands of these every year into convinced Christians.” Having completed this research, this line from McGavran is concerning. How is one counted as a Christian simply because they were born into a particular household? To do so would appear to be to commit the same error that the Jewish leadership had done during the time of Christ, namely to believe that simply because one was of the lineage of Abraham they were automatically in a right relationship with God. It is the subsequent personal confession, the transference of trust from one’s own ability to do what is necessary to propitiate God’s wrath and enter into a right relationship, to a trust in what Jesus has already accomplished as the propitiation and means for justification.
Recognizing that the most likely source of dissent would be based on the idea that the findings were driven by religious bias, care was taken to use only those resources that the critical scholar has already admitted to the discussion. Beyond this point, by introducing Root Cause Analysis to the research it was possible to look at the accepted Pauline data, then to compare the Ebionite, Docetist, and Marcionite information against Paul’s work. The investigation focused on what was or was not present in the texts and gave no consideration to the possible religious implications. It is conceded that using Root Cause Analysis to investigate an historical event is best done as close to the time of an event as possible in order to have the best possible evidential sources, but a lack of total information does not equate to a lack of all information.

New ground has been broken through the use of Root Cause Analysis in evaluating the points of divergence by the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites. With the dating of Paul’s gospel it was possible to establish a Standard, Policy, and Administrative Control (SPAC) for what the earliest church held to be the distinctive teaching of Christianity. Because the material from Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites post-date Paul, it is appropriate to consider Paul’s gospel as the original, and the differing versions as derivative.

Because any root cause platform is designed to investigate historical issues where there was, or should have been, an established SPAC and any points of deviation, the tool was conducive to examining the extant data in an effort to identify whether or not one or more root causes could be identified demonstrating specific points of deviation. Care was taken to avoid appealing to root causes that necessitated speculation.

**Earning Salvation**

The difficulty with the Ebionite theology is twofold. First, they denied the deity of Jesus and saw Him as but a human that the Logos descended upon for a time, but that Jesus is not, was
not, and will not be God. This denial of deity automatically changes the gospel message. Second, when one emphasizes that they are to not only keep the whole of the Law as the means for attaining salvation, or that this is even a necessary part, they are changing the gospel. If one needs to keep the whole Law in order to attain salvation, then as an individual one becomes responsible for doing those things necessary to earn their way into a right relationship with God. Therefore, there is reason to trust in one’s own skills and abilities as it relates to attaining the right relationship with God. Such a platform of self-trust would make Christianity no different than every other religion in the world in that they all are man working to get to God rather than God having already solved the sin problem for man.

If the gospel message has been changed, and based on how not only Paul but also the post-apostolic writers taught, then the message proclaimed is not Christian, nor are the followers of that different gospel Christian. Because Paul’s gospel was the identified only source of salvation, no other method or system is capable of propitiating the wrath of God, leaving followers of a different gospel responsible to pay for their own sins. To consider the Ebionites to be Christian, or to label them as Christian heretics, is to misapply the title of Christian. The

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[343] Contra Pope Francis. See Pope Francis to The Christian Church, papal encyclical, Rome, 2013, *Apostolic Exhortation*, (Rome: Vatican, 2013). Accessed April 22, 2015, w2.vatican.va/content/Francesco/en/apostl_exhortatio-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html#interreligious_dialogue. It is important to note here that while the encyclical reflects the view of Francis, it is not binding on all within the Roman Catholic Church. Francis stated, “254. Non-Christians, by God’s gracious initiative, when they are faithful to their own consciences, can live “justified by the grace of God”, [199] and thus be “associated to the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ”, [200] But due to the sacramental dimension of sanctifying grace, God’s working in them tends to produce signs and rites, sacred expressions which in turn bring others to a communitarian experience of journeying towards God. [201] While these lack the meaning and efficacy of the sacraments instituted by Christ, they can be channels which the Holy Spirit raises up in order to liberate non-Christians from atheistic immanentism or from purely individual religious experiences. The same Spirit everywhere brings forth various forms of practical wisdom which help people to bear suffering and to live in greater peace and harmony. As Christians, we can also benefit from these treasures built up over many centuries, which can help us better to live our own beliefs.” If Francis were correct in this statement, then based on the Law of Non-contradiction, Paul must be incorrect in his claim that the gospel message is the sole source of salvation and means by which the wrath of God is satisfied and payment made for sin. The result of this would seem to imply that at best Francis ends up with a syncretistic Pelagian soteriology, or at worst, because mankind is incapable of living at all times consistently how (s)he claims to believe regardless of the religious or philosophical system chosen, salvation becomes impossible to attain.

182
Ebionites were, based on their teachings, more closely aligned to the Pharisaical sect within Judaism rather than Christianity. Does such a claim make Christianity an exclusivist system of belief that requires one to accept the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus in order to be Christian? The only reply must be an unqualified “yes” based on the evidence examined and the Law of Identity.

**A Trojan Horse**

The challenge to Docetism, at least in part, is its lack of any evidential grounding. It is but a philosophical appeal to the presumed impassibility of God. If God cannot suffer or feel pain, then the crucifixion becomes one of a mere human, albeit a morally good one. If God is incapable of suffering and the crucifixion was illusory then there was no propitiation of God’s wrath and mankind is still left with a sin-debt. If a human or angelic death could serve for the propitiation of God’s wrath in terms of the sin of humanity, then there is to be found a significant contradiction with the whole of Scripture, not just the Christian New Testament. Such a condition would be no different for the Docetist as it was for the Ebionite.

If the Logos descended upon the man Jesus at the point of baptism and then departed prior to death on the cross, then Foster’s point that the Logos had already participated in the suffering since the scourging had already taken place as well as having been nailed to the cross is highly significant in refuting the belief in the impassibility of Jesus. To employ the concept of the impassibility of God to Jesus, leaving man to work out his own salvation, would leave soteriology the handmaid to situational ethics and void of any objective standard by which to measured what is right or wrong. Eerily, Docetism leaves every man free to do what is right in his own eyes (see Judg 21:25). Under this view the death of Jesus never happened, meaning the resurrection could not have happened, leaving man in the position that he still must give account
and pay for his own sins. The gift allegedly has been presented to mankind, yet the gift in this case as with the gift by the Greeks to Troy is but a deception intended to mislead the recipients, a shell filled with a patiently waiting mass committed to destruction of those who would follow the Docetic teachings. There has been no reconciliation with God under this view and as such adherents cannot be considered Christian.

**Marcion**

Marcion continues to be one of the most significant figures in the first two hundred years of the church. By way of his jettisoning the authority of the Tanakh, he jettisoned the very foundation and source from which Christianity emerged. Without this anchor, Marcion was responsible for beginning a new religion, but that religion was not Christian. He did not advocate for the same God as identified in both the Tanakh and Pauline literature. He denied that Jesus was the Creator God, something Paul affirmed without question. Jesus declared that He and the Father were one, yet Marcion was willing to teach that the Father as revealed in the Tanakh was the Demiurge, an evil and lesser god than Jesus.

**Root Causes**

The surviving documentation from the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites are similar to Paul in many areas, but similarity is not sameness. All documents examined for the Ebionite, Docetist, or Marcionite positions post-dated the accepted Pauline corpus. Thus, it can be shown that the first root cause was inaccurate documentation since their documents did not convey the same gospel message.

From the perspective of root cause, the issue of religion or metaphysics is secondary since the goal is to evaluate whether or not the SPAC was followed and, if not, where the deviation occurred. In order to demonstrate this root cause to be invalid there is need to
demonstrate either that the material from one of these three divergent groups pre-dated Paul (resulting in a potentially new original source document SPAC) or that Paul was wrong and the historical events of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection did not happen, again based on an evidentiary foundation.

Second, the same documentation following Paul has been found to be missing information showing why Paul’s gospel was incorrect, that there was reason to change the SPAC, or that someone with the authority decided to make a change to the SPAC, and then based on evidentiary grounds. While Paul’s first letter may be dated to +16-19 years from the cross, he also made appeal that both he and the original apostles were preaching the same gospel. In Galatians he claimed to have been with and spoken directly to those who claimed to be eyewitnesses to the life, death, and resurrection. It was demonstrated that both Paul and Peter presented the gospel as an apologetic, indicating their belief was grounded on events they believed to have actually happened, thus an appeal to evidence.

Third, the leadership within each of these three groups had access to the Tanakh as well as to the writings that would become the Christian New Testament and yet they did not bring their teaching in line with that of Paul. Each of the three groups made use of the same material those who are now considered orthodox used, yet they presented a very different picture.

Finally, the communication in each of these groups was incorrect because it was not congruent with the earliest known sources that were being communicated. Seven Pauline sources were consistently used throughout this research. In Romans 6-8 Paul spoke of the goal of sanctification of the believer, or growth in Christ-likeness. If the sanctification process necessitates the death and resurrection of Jesus as Paul stated in Romans 7, then to have a Jesus that was but a phantasm, one who did not die, and subsequently because He did not die He did
not rise, then the sanctification process becomes different based on which teaching was being followed. The same issue holds if one taught Jesus to not be deity yet someone else taught He was actually God. Not only would incorrect communication constitute a change to the original gospel message, but that same incorrect communication would also be responsible for needing to change other areas of Paul’s teaching that have not yet been investigated. How Christ-likeness is to be understood and pursued is inextricably tied to what the gospel message proclaims.

Potential Objections

Causal Overdetermination

Some Christians might question whether the research is guilty of causal overdetermination. By way of example, if one were playing billiards and one of the balls fell into a pocket, to claim the ball fell because it was struck by another ball would be causal overdetermination because the explanation fails to take into account the action of a moral agent that first struck a ball, then that ball struck the one that fell. The methodological approach to this research has been evidential in nature, which has excluded certain pieces from this specific discussion by design. One such exclusion has been any consideration of the person and role of the Holy Spirit. As such and with a caveat, it is conceded to the Christian audience that the challenge of causal overdetermination may be accurate.

The caveat offered is that the investigation results are not invalid because the person and work of the Holy Spirit were not evaluated in this research. Available data demonstrated the early church believed in the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and that belief was demonstrated to have carried on consistently throughout the period under review. This was the gospel message proclaimed, and this was the message through which salvation was offered.
Returning to the designated definition for what constituted evidence in this research (Evidence will be defined as a condition or event objective in nature, knowable by those present, open to investigation by all others, whereby when rightly interpreted, corresponds to reality), it was difficult to conceive of a way in which to include the Holy Spirit while maintaining adherence to the methodological approach selected. By way of limiting the examination of material that has been accepted by both believer and skeptic alike, and then using a widely accepted methodology for evaluating historical events that identifies root causes for points of deviation from the SPAC, objectivity within the research has been maintained.

Donald McGavran, arguably one of the most significant voices in the twentieth century in the Church Growth Movement said, “The multiplication of churches nourished on the Bible and full of the Holy Spirit is *sine qua non* in carrying out the purposes of God…. While this was all done in the context of biblical understanding that Jesus said, ‘I will build my church,’ only passing attention was given to the role of the Holy Spirit in church growth.”

The Holy Spirit is neither a condition nor an event, yet His works would rightly be considered conditions or events, and those conditions or events would necessarily be congruent with the data already examined. Difficulty remains for the researcher in being able to show conditions or events that are the result of the Holy Spirit working within the course and scope of human history that would be accepted by both believer and skeptic alike without being charged with special pleading. On this point additional research should be pursued.

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344 Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed., ed. C. Peter Wagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 6-8. A cursory examination of available titles focused on church growth and the Holy Spirit shows much work in the last ten years that focuses on the Holy Spirit and specific denominations and there were some identifying the work of the Holy Spirit from a Reformed perspective, but sources focused on the universal church growth were not immediately located.

345 Within the seven Pauline texts there are 112 references to the person of the Holy Spirit in seventy-four verses. See Rom 1:4; 2:29; 5:5; 7:6; 8:2; 8:4-6; 8:9-11; 8:13-16; 8:23; 8:26-27; 9:1; 14:17; 15:13; 15:16; 15:19;
Disproportionate Sources

It is possible someone might attempt to argue that this research does not seek out a wide range of other views, including views from other religions, and present them equally, thus weakening the argument and conclusion. Such a claim fails to convince. First, there were clearly established limitations, delimitations, and a thesis that narrowed and established the research direction. Second, the author cannot be faulted for not writing on or going in a direction that was not intended. Third, this research used information and sources that are widely accepted from an historical perspective by both Christian and critic alike. It is unreasonable to believe a Christian scholar bears a greater burden of proof, such as using documents that even the skeptics admit they do not have, in order for the proposed point to be considered.

Following the examination of the accepted Pauline and patristic texts, the research employed the use of Root Cause Analysis to identify points of divergence from the SPAC. By way of using a non-theological tool designed to investigate historical events and incidents it was shown that the teaching of three groups in particular was not consistent with the earliest teaching within the church. As a result of the methodology used, this challenge fails to convince.

Limited Sources Concedes Too Much to the Skeptics

It is possible that some Christians will claim that by way of limiting the Christian sources admissible in this research the work concedes too much to the skeptics. Two responses are warranted here.

First, by limiting the Christian sources to only those that even the skeptics will allow the researcher avoided the challenge of special pleading or to deviating from the stated methodological approach. This research was never intended to demonstrate the deity, death, or resurrection of Jesus, rather the focus was to show that this was what the earliest church, then those who subsequently followed, taught. Other scholars have already worked out effective arguments for the historicity of these three points.

Second, the thesis was demonstrated throughout the research to be valid. Because the research did not make appeal to books the critics contest, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, eschatology, or any other source that lacks the same level of objectivity and acceptance as found here, the results are less likely to be effectively challenged. This research should only be the beginning, however, and additional work is warranted for the Christian audience in particular. Since the thesis was demonstrated to be valid using only the limited sources, the question remains as to what the results would look like if the balance of the New Testament writings were included. A single positive apologetic was used in this research, but a question remains when adding the balance of the New Testament whether or not there are other positive apologetic messages used. One additional thought is that if there was a single positive apologetic used in the New Testament, could one conduct a similar research project and determine if any positive apologetic(s) arguments are found consistently within the full canon, inclusive of the Tanakh.

The Events are too far in the Past to Allow for the use of Root Cause Analysis

Root Cause Analysis is a tool designed specifically to evaluate historical events and incidents and by design requires evidence in order to be effective. A lack of total information does not equate to a lack of any information. Conclusions were reached using sources that are generally accepted as being historical by both Christian and skeptic alike. Care was taken to
ensure that speculation was not given the force of plausibility (or possibility) as is evidenced by only offering four root causes in the research and then Appendix C detailing forty-five possible root cause paths that were considered and rejected due to a belief that those paths would currently require too much speculation on the part of the researcher in order to build any type of a case for those paths.

A second defense against this type of objection is that it would appear historians have been making appeal to root cause even if they did not realize they were doing it. To claim that the church grew because of good roads, common language, or any of the other offerings by historians was to appeal to the cause, or the “why” behind the church growth. While others may have made this move without realizing it and then informally, this research employs a formal systematic methodology and offers a positional strength of argumentation not previously identified. As archaeologists and laymen alike continue to find and identify relevant source documentation, additional research should continue to be done using a formal Root Cause Analysis methodology as a means of identifying points of divergence and the cause(s) for those divergences.

The Role of Defensive Apologetics

This research has not ventured into the realm of evaluating the different defensive apologetics employed by the church in the period under review. Additional research is warranted in this field in an effort to better understand if there was a commonality in how a particular line of argumentation was used. By way of example, was one argument more effective when used in a syncretistic society as opposed to a strict monotheistic society. The research would need, in part, to also be able to identify where defensive apologetics were used and then see if there remains any evidential material that would demonstrate church growth where those defensive
apologetics were used. It is suggested that while the church grew through the use of a positive apologetic, defensive apologetics plausibly may have helped set the stage such that the deity, death, and resurrection message was at least heard.

Implications for the Church Today

What, then, can be said with respect to the implications of this research for the church today? Theory can be a beautiful thing, but what happens when the rubber meets the road? Research completed to this point demonstrates that the earliest church, contrary to what some may believe today, did not accept others as being Christian unless those individuals affirmed the eternal deity, physical death, and physical resurrection of Jesus. No sources have been identified that pre-date Paul, and any source from before the crucifixion would automatically be rightly dismissed as needing Christianity to have existed prior to Christianity existing. Christianity was tied to the consistent and repeated teaching of the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The accepted Pauline corpus shows clearly that even for those who were already considered Christian there was continued preaching, teaching, and reinforcement of these key points.

To superimpose a twenty-first-century-mindset upon the writers of the first three centuries such that it is believed that definitions can be changed is bad methodology. It is questioned as to why there would be some who feel the need to do this to biblical sources or sources that affirm Christianity, yet with other ancient works such as Plato there is not seen the same disregard for the author’s meaning. Clearly the worldview of the individual is at play when one believes they determine the meaning of the text and that the author’s intent and message is passé; that somehow today’s scholars know more about what the original author intended than the author did. Such is a dangerous road to take, as our students immediately have the right to do the same with the works of current scholars.
The Pauline literature revealed that there was but one gospel message, and salvation was tied to that one message. Any adjustment or change to the gospel made the message being taught something different, but not Christian. The patristics made clear that there were those who denied the deity, death, or resurrection and would claim the name of Christian, yet the church did not accept them as Christian and did not call them Christian. Even in light of this clearly exclusivist attitude, the church grew.

Two key points can be drawn from this. First, the church must once again find and exercise that spirit of discernment that refuses to acknowledge any who would claim the name of Christian as being a Christian. The Jehovah’s Witnesses deny the eternal deity and bodily resurrection of Jesus meaning they are not Christian. Likewise, the Mormons teach a plurality of gods, meaning they are not Christian. Indeed, any body of individuals who would claim the title of Christian and preach or teach anything but the eternal deity, bodily death, and bodily resurrection are teaching a different gospel and, based on Paul and the earliest church, are not Christian even if they believe themselves to be. Accepting a plurality of views on this point as being acceptable is to deny the original message and replace it with something more palatable to our own desires.

Second, this research should cause the Christian to examine their own local body of believers. Presuming that this body does teach the eternal deity, physical death, and bodily resurrection, what then is the focus of the ministry? Various ministries are certainly of value in reaching individuals, but if in the end the message people are not hearing clearly and continuously is the deity, death, and resurrection, could it be that this is at least in part why the church is not growing in many areas today as it did in the past? The church grew in a period when it was not socially acceptable to be a Christian and when the government saw Christianity
as but one of many acceptable religious views. The church grew in a time when those holding judicial authority could impose punishment on those who would adhere to the Christian teachings and the person of Christ. More research should be done in this area, but if the church successfully grew in the first three centuries through the repeated use of the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus, then using that as a positive apologetic, then why would the same not work today as opposed to programmatic approaches?
## Appendix A

### Crucifixion of Jesus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ignatius</td>
<td>I Eph 9 (Long)</td>
<td>From his power Jesus Christ will deliver you, who has founded you upon the rock, as being chosen stones, well fitted for the divine edifice of the Father, and who are raised up on high by Christ, who was crucified for you, making use of the Holy Spirit as a rope, and being borne up by faith, while exalted by love from earth to heaven, walking in company with those that are undefiled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignatius</td>
<td>I Eph 10 (Long)</td>
<td>And let us imitate the Lord, “who, when He was reviled, reviled not again;” when He was crucified, He answered not; “when He suffered, He threatened not;” but prayed for His enemies, “Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignatius</td>
<td>I Eph 16 (Short)</td>
<td>If, then, those who do this as respects the flesh have suffered death, how much more shall this be the case with any one who corrupts by wicked doctrine the faith of God, for which Jesus Christ was crucified!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignatius</td>
<td>Smyr 3 (Long)</td>
<td>And I know that He was possessed of a body not only in His being born and crucified, but I also know that He was so after His resurrection, and believe that He is so now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aristides</td>
<td>Apol. 2</td>
<td>This Jesus, then, was born of the race of the Hebrews; and he had twelve disciples in order that the purpose of his incarnation might in time be accomplished. But he himself was pierced by the Jews, and he died and was buried; and they say that after three days he rose and ascended to heaven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1 Apol 13</td>
<td>Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, who also was born for this purpose, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judæa, in the times of Tiberius Cæsar; and that we reasonably worship Him, having learned that He is the Son of the true God Himself, and holding Him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third, we will prove.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1 Apol 21</td>
<td>And when we say also that the Word, who is the first-birth of God, was produced without sexual union, and that He, Jesus Christ, our Teacher, was crucified and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 31</td>
<td>In these books, then, of the prophets we found Jesus our Christ foretold as coming, born of a virgin, growing up to man’s estate, and healing every disease and every sickness, and raising the dead, and being hated, and unrecognised, and crucified, and dying, and rising again, and ascending into heaven, and being, and being called, the Son of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 32</td>
<td>For of all races of men there are some who look for Him who was crucified in Judæa, and after whose crucifixion the land was straightway surrendered to you as spoil of war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 35</td>
<td>There are the following predictions:—“Unto us a child is born, and unto us a young man is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulders;” which is significant of the power of the cross, for to it, when He was crucified, He applied His shoulders, as shall be more clearly made out in the ensuing discourse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 36</td>
<td>And this the Jews who possessed the books of the prophets did not understand, and therefore did not recognise Christ even when He came, but even hate us who say that He has come, and who prove that, as was predicted, He was crucified by them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 38</td>
<td>And that all these things happened to Christ at the hands of the Jews, you can ascertain. For when He was crucified, they did shoot out the lip, and wagged their heads, saying, “Let Him who raised the dead save Himself.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 41</td>
<td>And again, in another prophecy, the Spirit of prophecy, through the same David, intimated that Christ, after He had been crucified, should reign, and spoke as follows: “Sing to the Lord, all the earth, and day by day declare His salvation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 42</td>
<td>The words cited above, David uttered 1500 years before Christ became a man and was crucified; and no one of those who lived before Him, nor yet of His contemporaries, afforded joy to the Gentiles by being crucified. But our Jesus Christ, being crucified and dead, rose again, and having ascended to heaven, reigned; and by those things which were published in His name among all nations by the apostles, there is joy afforded to those who expect the immortality promised by Him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 46</td>
<td>But who, through the power of the Word, according to the will of God the Father and Lord of all, He was born of a virgin as a man, and was named Jesus, and was crucified, and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, an intelligent man will be able to comprehend from what has been already so largely said.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 50</td>
<td>Accordingly, after He was crucified, even all His acquaintances forsook Him, having denied Him; and afterwards, when He had risen from the dead and appeared to them, and had taught them to read the prophecies in which all these things were foretold as coming to pass, and when they had seen Him ascending into heaven, and had believed, and had received power sent thence by Him upon them, and went to every race of men, they taught these things, and were called apostles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 53</td>
<td>For with what reason should we believe of a crucified man that He is the first-born of the unbegotten God, and Himself will pass judgment on the whole human race, unless we had found testimonies concerning Him published before He came and was born as man, and unless we saw that things had happened accordingly—the devastation of the land of the Jews, and men of every race persuaded by His teaching through the apostles, and rejecting their old habits, in which, being deceived, they had their conversation; yea, seeing ourselves too, and knowing that the Christians from among the Gentiles are both more numerous and more true than those from among the Jews and Samaritans?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 61</td>
<td>And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>1Apol 67</td>
<td>But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>2Apol 6</td>
<td>For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world, and in your city, many of our Christian men exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men, though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and those who used incantations and drugs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td>Adv. haer. 3.12.2</td>
<td>For David has not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. haer.</em> 3.16.5</td>
<td>Now this is He who was born of Mary; for He says: “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected, and crucified, and on the third day rise again.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. haer.</em> 3.18.2</td>
<td>And again, writing to the Corinthians, he declares, “But we preach Christ Jesus crucified;” and adds, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. haer.</em> 3.19.3</td>
<td>For as He became man in order to undergo temptation, so also was He the Word that He might be glorified; the Word remaining quiescent, that He might be capable of being tempted, dishonoured, crucified, and of suffering death, but the human nature being swallowed up in it (the divine), when it conquered, and endured [without yielding], and performed acts of kindness, and rose again, and was received up [into heaven].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. haer.</em> 4.23.2</td>
<td>For this reason, also, Philip, when he had discovered the eunuch of the Ethiopians’ queen reading these words which had been written: “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb is dumb before the shearer, so He opened not His mouth: in His humiliation His judgment was taken away;” and all the rest which the prophet proceeded to relate in regard to His passion and His coming in the flesh, and how He was dishonoured by those who did not believe Him; easily persuaded him to believe on Him, that He was Christ Jesus, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and suffered whatsoever the prophet had predicted, and that He was the Son of God, who gives eternal life to men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. haer.</em> 5.12.5</td>
<td>And that he, the apostle, was the very same person who had been born from the womb, that is, of the ancient substance of flesh, he does himself declare in the Epistle to the Galatians: “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles,” it was not, as I have already observed, one person who had been born from the womb, and another who preached the Gospel of the Son of God; but that same individual who formerly was ignorant, and used to persecute the Church, when the revelation was made to him from heaven, and the Lord conferred with him, as I have pointed out in the third book, preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, his former ignorance being driven out by his subsequent knowledge: just as the blind men whom the Lord healed did certainly lose their blindness, but received the substance of their eyes perfect, and obtained the power of vision in the very same eyes with which they formerly did not see; the darkness being merely driven away by the power of vision, while the substance of the eyes was retained, in order that, by means of those eyes through which they had not seen, exercising again the visual power, they might give thanks to Him who had restored them again to sight. And thus, also, he whose withered hand was healed, and all who were healed generally, did not change those parts of their bodies which had at their birth come forth from the womb, but simply obtained these anew in a healthy condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. haer.</em> 5.18.1</td>
<td>Now we have repeatedly shown that the incarnate Word of God was suspended upon a tree, and even the very heretics do acknowledge that He was crucified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Ap. Preaching</em> 34</td>
<td>And for this cause the Word spake by Isaiah the prophet, announcing beforehand that which was to come—therefore are they prophets, because they proclaim what is to come: by him then spake the Word thus: <em>I refuse not, nor gainsay: I gave my back to scourging, and my cheeks to smiting; and my face I turned not away from the shame of spitting.</em> So then by the obedience wherewith He obeyed <em>even unto death</em>, hanging on the tree, He put away the old disobedience which was wrought in the tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Ap. Preaching</em> 66</td>
<td>So then, that the Son of God should be born, and in what manner born, and where He was to be born, and that Christ was the one eternal King the prophets thus declared. And again they told beforehand concerning Him how, sprung from mankind, He should heal those whom He healed, and raise the dead whom He raised, and be hated and despised and undergo sufferings and be put to death and crucified, even as He was hated and despised and put to death.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Ap. Preaching</em> 68</td>
<td>Now David was never tormented, but Christ (was), when the command was given that He should be crucified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Ap. Preaching</em> 69</td>
<td>Now those took away to themselves the judgment who crucified Him, and when they had done this to Him believed not on Him: for through that judgment which was taken away by them they shall be destroyed with torments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Ap. Preaching</em> 74</td>
<td>For Herod the king of the Jews and Pontius Pilate, the governor of Claudius Caesar, came together and condemned Him to be crucified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Ap. Preaching</em> 80</td>
<td>For at His crucifixion the soldiers parted His garments as they were wont; and the garments they parted by tearing; but for the vesture, because it was woven from the top and was not sewn, they cast lots, that to whomsoever it should fall he should take it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Ap. Preaching</em> 82</td>
<td>And at His crucifixion, when He asked a drink, they gave Him to drink vinegar mingled with gall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Ap. Preaching</em> 97</td>
<td>By the invocation of the name of Jesus Christ, crucified under Pontius Pilate, there is a separation and division among mankind; and wheresoever any of those who believe on Him shall invoke and call upon Him and do His will, He is near and present, fulfilling the requests of those who with pure hearts call upon Him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td><em>Paed. 2.8</em></td>
<td>And they crowned Jesus raised aloft, testifying to their own ignorance. For being hard of heart, they understood not that this very thing, which they called the disgrace of the Lord, was a prophecy wisely uttered: “The Lord was not known by the people” which erred, which was not circumcised in understanding, whose darkness was not enlightened, which knew not God, denied the Lord, forfeited the place of the true Israel, persecuted God, hoped to reduce the Word to disgrace; and Him whom they crucified as a malefactor they crowned as a king.</td>
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<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td>Strom. 1.18</td>
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<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Apol. 21</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Jud. 10</td>
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<td>Adv. Jud. 13</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Jud. 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De praesc. Haer. 13</td>
<td>Now, with regard to this rule of faith—that we may from this point acknowledge what it is which we defend—it is, you must know, that which prescribes the belief that there is one only God, and that He is none other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing through His own Word, first of all sent forth; that this Word is called His Son, and, under the name of God, was seen “in diverse manners” by the patriarchs, heard at all times in the prophets, at last brought down by the Spirit and Power of the Father into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and, being born of her, went forth as Jesus Christ; thenceforth He preached the new law and the new promise of the kingdom of heaven, worked miracles; having been crucified, He rose again the third day; (then) having ascended into the heavens, He sat at the right hand of the Father; sent instead of Himself the Power of the Holy Ghost to lead such as believe; will come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of everlasting life and of the heavenly promises, and to condemn the wicked to everlasting fire, after the resurrection of both these classes shall have happened, together with the restoration of their flesh.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Marc. 3.19</td>
<td>Now, David himself did not suffer this cross, nor did any other king of the Jews; so that you cannot suppose that this is the prophecy of any other’s passion than His who alone was so notably crucified by the nation. Now should the heretics, in their obstinacy, reject and despise all these interpretations, I will grant to them that the Creator has given us no signs of the cross of His Christ; but they will not prove from this concession that He who was crucified was another (Christ), unless they could somehow show that this death was predicted as His by their own god, so that from the diversity of predictions there might be maintained to be a diversity of sufferers, and thereby also a diversity of persons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Marc. 4.42</td>
<td>Moreover two malefactors are crucified around Him, in order that He might be reckoned amongst the transgressors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Marc. 4.43</td>
<td>For the same thing was said by the angels to the women: “Remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered up, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De carne Chr. 6</td>
<td>Never did any angel descend for the purpose of being crucified, of tasting death, and of rising again from the dead. Now, since there never was such a reason for angels becoming embodied, you have the cause why they assumed flesh without undergoing birth. They had not come to die, therefore they also (came not) to be born. Christ, however, having been sent to die, had necessarily to be also born, that He might be capable of death; for nothing is in the habit of dying but that which is born.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De carne Chr. 24</td>
<td>They too who crucified Him shall see and acknowledge Him; that is to say, His very flesh, against which they spent their fury, and without which it would be impossible for Himself either to exist or to be seen; so that they must blush with shame who affirm that His flesh sits in heaven void of sensation, like a sheath only, Christ being withdrawn from it; as well as those who (maintain) that His flesh and soul are just the same thing, or else that His soul is all that exists, but that His flesh no longer lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De res. 26</td>
<td>For how can words of this kind of exhortation and invitation be suitable for that Jerusalem which killed the prophets, and stoned those that were sent to them, and at last crucified its very Lord?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Prax. 28</td>
<td>To the same effect are the words of Peter: “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ,” that is, Anointed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Prax. 29</td>
<td>But when we assert that Christ was crucified, we do not malign Him with a curse; we only re-affirm the curse pronounced by the law:4 nor indeed did the apostle utter blasphemy when he said the same thing as we.</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De Pat. 3</td>
<td>I pass by in silence (the fact) that He is crucified, for this was the end for which He had come; yet had the death which must be undergone need of contumelies likewise?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De virg. Vel. 1</td>
<td>The rule of faith, indeed, is altogether one, alone immoveable and irreformable; the rule, to wit, of believing in one only God omnipotent, the Creator of the universe, and His Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised again the third day from the dead, received in the heavens, sitting now at the right (hand) of the Father, destined to come to judge quick and dead through the resurrection of the flesh as well (as of the spirit).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De pud. 14</td>
<td>And what kind of invidiousness is the pungency of humility? “To God I give thanks that I have baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius, lest any say that I have baptized in mine own name.” “For neither did I judge to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De pud. 17</td>
<td>For if we have been buried together in the likeness of His death, why, we shall be (in that) of (His) resurrection too; knowing this, that our old man hath been crucified together with Him.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>De princ. 3.2.1</td>
<td>Nay, he says that the Saviour even was crucified by the princes of this world, who shall come to nought, whose wisdom also, he says, he does not speak.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>De princ. 3.3.1</td>
<td>The holy apostle, wishing to teach us some great and hidden truth respecting science and wisdom, says, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of the world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of the world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>Cont. Cels. 1.7</td>
<td>Moreover, since he frequently calls the Christian doctrine a secret system (of belief), we must confute him on this point also, since almost the entire world is better acquainted with what Christians preach than with the favourite opinions of philosophers. For who is ignorant of the statement that Jesus was born of a virgin, and that He was crucified, and that His resurrection is an article of faith among many, and that a general judgment is announced to come, in which the wicked are to be punished according to their deserts, and the righteous to be duly rewarded?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>Cont. Cels. 1.13</td>
<td>Now by these words it is clearly shown that it is by the wisdom of God that God ought to be known. But as this result did not follow, it pleased God a second time to save them that believe, not by “folly” universally, but by such foolishness as depended on preaching. For the preaching of Jesus Christ as crucified is the “foolishness” of preaching, as Paul also perceived, when he said, “But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and wisdom of God.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 1.31</td>
<td>For did not the disciples of Jesus see, when they ventured to prove not only to the Jews from their prophetic Scriptures that this is He who was spoken of by the prophets, but also to the other heathen nations, that He who was crucified yesterday or the day before underwent this death voluntarily on behalf of the human race,—that this was analogous to the case of those who have died for their country in order to remove pestilence, or barrenness, or tempests?</td>
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<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 2.16</td>
<td>And perhaps it was on this account that He hastened His departure from the body, that He might preserve it, and that His legs might not be broken, as were those of the robbers who were crucified with Him. “For the soldiers brake the legs of the first, and of the other who was crucified with Him; but when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead, they brake not His legs.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 2.33</td>
<td>And with regard to the eclipse in the time of Tiberius Caesar, in whose reign Jesus appears to have been crucified, and the great earthquakes which then took place, Phlegon too, I think, has written in the thirteenth or fourteenth book of his Chronicles.”</td>
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<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 2.35</td>
<td>There was not only a portent from heaven—the eclipse of the sun—but also the other miracles, which show that the crucified One possessed something that was divine, and greater than was possessed by the majority of men.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 2.44</td>
<td>And, in the second place, we assert that this very comparison has been somehow foretold in the Gospels; since God was numbered with the transgressors by wicked men, who desired rather a “murderer” (one who for sedition and murder had been cast into prison) to be released unto them, and Jesus to be crucified, and who crucified Him between two robbers. Jesus, indeed, is ever crucified with robbers among His genuine disciples and witnesses to the truth, and suffers the same condemnation which they do among men.</td>
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<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 2.56</td>
<td>For each one of the heroes respectively mentioned might, had he wished, have secretly withdrawn himself from the sight of men, and returned again, if so determined, to those whom he had left; but seeing that Jesus was crucified before all the Jews, and His body slain in the presence of His nation, how can they bring themselves to say that He practised a similar deception with those heroes who are related to have gone down to Hades, and to have returned thence?</td>
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And be not surprised if all the multitudes who have believed on Jesus do not behold His resurrection, when Paul, writing to the Corinthians, can say to them, as being incapable of receiving greater matters, “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified;” which is the same as saying, “Hitherto ye were not able, neither yet now are ye able, for ye are still carnal.”

For as He had power to lay it down, He laid it down when He said, “Father, why hast Thou forsaken Me? And when He had cried with a loud voice, He gave up the ghost,” anticipating the public executioners of the crucified, who break the legs of the victims, and who do so in order that their punishment may not be further prolonged.

No sensible person could suppose that these last words were spoken in reference to His bodily presence, which was open to the view of all; otherwise all those who said, “Crucify him, crucify him,” and Pilate, who had power over the humanity of Jesus, were among those who saw God the Father, which is absurd.
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<tr>
<td>Clement</td>
<td>1 Clem 24</td>
<td>Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord continually proves to us that there shall be a future resurrection, of which He has rendered the Lord Jesus Christ the first-fruits by raising Him from the dead. Let us contemplate, beloved, the resurrection which is at all times taking place. Day and night declare to us a resurrection. The night sinks to sleep, and the day arises; the day [again] departs, and the night comes on. Let us behold the fruits [of the earth], how the sowing of grain takes place. The sower goes forth, and casts it into the ground; and the seed being thus scattered, though dry and naked when it fell upon the earth, is gradually dissolved. Then out of its dissolution the mighty power of the providence of the Lord raises it up again, and from one seed many arise and bring forth fruit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement</td>
<td>1 Clem 26</td>
<td>Do we then deem it any great and wonderful thing for the Maker of all things to raise up again those that have piously served Him in the assurance of a good faith, when even by a bird He shows us the mightiness of His power to fulfil His promise? For [the Scripture] saith in a certain place, “Thou shalt raise me up, and I shall confess unto Thee;” and again, “I laid me down, and slept; I awaked, because Thou art with me;” and again, Job says, “Thou shalt raise up this flesh of mine, which has suffered all these things.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clement</td>
<td>1 Clem 42</td>
<td>The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God. Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits [of their labours], having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe. Nor was this any new thing, since indeed many ages before it was written concerning bishops and deacons. For thus saith the Scripture in a certain place, “I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polycarp</td>
<td>Poly 1</td>
<td>I have greatly rejoiced with you in our Lord Jesus Christ, because ye have followed the example of true love [as displayed by God], and have accompanied, as became you, those who were bound in</td>
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chains, the fitting ornaments of saints, and which are indeed the
diadems of the true elect of God and our Lord; and because the
strong root of your faith, spoken of in days long gone by, endureth
even until now, and bringeth forth fruit to our Lord Jesus Christ,
who for our sins suffered even unto death, [but] “whom God raised
from the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave.” “In whom,
though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with
joy unspeakable and full of glory;” into which joy many desire to
enter, knowing that “by grace ye are saved, not of works,” but by
the will of God through Jesus Christ.

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<th>Polycarp</th>
<th>Poly 2</th>
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<td>“Wherefore, girding up your loins,” “serve the Lord in fear” and truth, as those who have forsaken the vain, empty talk and error of the multitude, and “believed in Him who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and gave Him glory,” and a throne at His right hand. To Him all things in heaven and on earth are subject. Him every spirit serves. He comes as the Judge of the living and the dead. His blood will God require of those who do not believe in Him. But He who raised Him up from the dead will raise up us also, if we do His will, and walk in His commandments, and love what He loved, keeping ourselves from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, falsewitness; “not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing,” or blow for blow, or cursing for cursing, but being mindful of what the Lord said in His teaching: “Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again; and once more, “Blessed are the poor, and those that are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God.”</td>
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<th>Polycarp</th>
<th>Poly 7</th>
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<td>“For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist;” and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan. Wherefore, forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning; “watching unto prayer,” and persevering in fasting; beseeching in our supplications the all-seeing God “not to lead us into temptation,” as the Lord has said: “The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Polycarp</th>
<th>Poly 9</th>
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<td>For they loved not this present world, but Him who died for us, and for our sakes was raised again by God from the dead.</td>
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<td>Polycarp</td>
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<td>Ignatius</td>
<td>I Eph 20</td>
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<td>Ignatius</td>
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<td>Ignatius</td>
<td>I Phld Intro</td>
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<td>Ignatius</td>
<td>I Phld 8</td>
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<td>Ignatius</td>
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<td>Ignatius</td>
<td>ISmyr 1 (Short)</td>
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<td>Ignatius</td>
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<td>Ignatius</td>
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<td>Ignatius</td>
<td>ISmyr 12 (Short)</td>
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<td>Justin</td>
<td>1 Apol 31</td>
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<td>Justin</td>
<td>1 Apol 45</td>
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<td>Justin</td>
<td>1 Apol 50</td>
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<td>Justin</td>
<td>1 Apol 63</td>
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<td>Justin</td>
<td>1 Apol 67</td>
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| Irenæus  | Adv. Haer. 1.10.1 | The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: [She believes] in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father “to gather all things in one,” and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess” to Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send “spiritual wickednesses,” and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian
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<tr>
<th>Irenæus</th>
<th><em>Adv. Haer.</em> 3.4.2</th>
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<td>To which course many nations of those barbarians who believe in Christ do assent, having salvation written in their hearts by the Spirit, without paper or ink, and, carefully preserving the ancient tradition, believing in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things therein, by means of Christ Jesus, the Son of God; who, because of His surpassing love towards His creation, condescended to be born of the virgin, He Himself uniting man through Himself to God, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again, and having been received up in splendour, shall come in glory, the Saviour of those who are saved, and the Judge of those who are judged, and sending into eternal fire those who transform the truth, and despise His Father and His advent.</td>
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<th>Irenæus</th>
<th><em>Adv. Haer.</em> 3.5.1</th>
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<td>Since, therefore, the tradition from the apostles does thus exist in the Church, and is permanent among us, let us revert to the Scriptural proof furnished by those apostles who did also write the Gospel, in which they recorded the doctrine regarding God, pointing out that our Lord Jesus Christ is the truth, and that no lie is in Him. As also David says, prophesying His birth from a virgin, and the resurrection from the dead, “Truth has sprung out of the earth.”</td>
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<th>Irenæus</th>
<th><em>Adv. Haer.</em> 3.12.1</th>
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<td>The Apostle Peter, therefore, after the resurrection of the Lord, and His assumption into the heavens, being desirous of filling up the number of the twelve apostles, and in electing into the place of Judas any substitute who should be chosen by God, thus addressed those who were present: “Men [and] brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was made guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us: … Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and, His bishoprick let another take;”—thus leading to the completion of the apostles, according to the words spoken by David.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Irenæus</th>
<th><em>Adv. Haer.</em> 3.13.1</th>
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<td>And again, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, when he had recounted all those who had seen God after the resurrection, he says in continuation, “But whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed,” acknowledging as one and the same, the preaching of all those who saw God after the resurrection from the dead.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. Haer.</em> 3.18.2</td>
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<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. Haer.</em> 3.22.1</td>
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<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. Haer.</em> 4.26.1</td>
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<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. Haer.</em> 5.7.1</td>
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<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. Haer.</em> 5.10.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. Haer.</em> 5.31.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Himself says, “As Jonas remained three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth.” Then also the apostle says, “But when He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?” This, too, David says when prophesying of Him, “And thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell;” and on His rising again the third day, He said to Mary, who was the first to see and to worship Him, “Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to the disciples, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and unto your Father.”

If, then, the Lord observed the law of the dead, that He might become the first-begotten from the dead, and tarried until the third day “in the lower parts of the earth;” then afterwards rising in the flesh, so that He even showed the print of the nails to His disciples, He thus ascended to the Father;—[if all these things occurred, I say], how must these men not be put to confusion, who allege that “the lower parts” refer to this world of ours, but that their inner man, leaving the body here, ascends into the super-celestial place? For as the Lord “went away in the midst of the shadow of death,” where the souls of the dead were, yet afterwards arose in the body, and after the resurrection was taken up [into heaven], it is manifest that the souls of His disciples also, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event; then receiving their bodies, and rising in their entirety, that is bodily, just as the Lord arose, they shall come thus into the presence of God. “For no disciple is above the Master, but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.” As our Master, therefore, did not at once depart, taking flight [to heaven], but awaited the time of His resurrection prescribed by the Father, which had been also shown forth through Jonas, and rising again after three days was taken up [into heaven], so ought we also to await the time of our resurrection prescribed by God and foretold by the prophets, and so, rising, be taken up, as many as the Lord shall account worthy of this [privilege].

After the accusation of such a witness, and his invocation of God, what else remains for the unbelieving than judgment and condemnation? And the Lord, with ceaseless assiduity, exhorts, terrifies, urges, rouses, admonishes; He awakes from the sleep of darkness, and raises up those who have wandered in error. “Awake,” He says, “thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,”—Christ, the Sun of the Resurrection, He “who was born before the morning star,” and with His beams bestows life.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td><em>Strom.</em> 1.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accordingly to the Corinthians (for this is not the only instance), while discoursing on the resurrection of the dead, he makes use of a tragic Iambic line, when he said, “What advantageth it me if the dead are not raised?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td><em>Strom.</em> 4.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Wherefore the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed; that is, the word of faith which we preach: for if thou confess the word with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td><em>Strom.</em> 6.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whence also Peter, in his Preaching, speaking of the apostles, says: “But we, unrolling the books of the prophets which we possess, who name Jesus Christ, partly in parables, partly in enigmas, partly expressly and in so many words, find His coming and death, and cross, and all the rest of the tortures which the Jews inflicted on Him, and His resurrection and assumption to heaven previous to the capture of Jerusalem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Apol</em> 48</td>
<td></td>
<td>There will be doubts, perhaps, as to the power of God, of Him who hung in its place this huge body of our world, made out of what had never existed, as from a death of emptiness and inanity, animated by the Spirit who quickens all living things, its very self the unmistakable type of the resurrection, that it might be to you a witness—nay, the exact image of the resurrection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Jud.</em> 13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Because no one at all of human beings was conscious of the nativity of Christ at His conception, when as the Virgin Mary was found pregnant by the word of God; and because “His life was to be taken from the land.” Why, accordingly, after His resurrection from the dead, which was effected on the third day, did the heavens receive Him back? It was in accordance with a prophecy of Hosea, uttered on this wise: “Before daybreak shall they arise unto Me, saying, Let us go and return unto the Lord our God, because Himself will draw us out and free us. After a space of two days, on the third day”—which is His glorious resurrection—He received back into the heavens (whence withal the Spirit Himself had come to the Virgin) Him whose nativity and passion alike the Jews have failed to acknowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De praesc.</em> <em>Haer.</em> 22</td>
<td></td>
<td>After the same fashion, too, (I suppose,) were they ignorant to whom, after His resurrection also, He vouchsafed, as they were journeying together, “to expound all the Scriptures.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De praesc. Haer. 23</em></td>
<td>Now they certainly would not have been surprised at his having become a preacher instead of a persecutor, if his preaching were of something contrary; nor, moreover, would they have “glorified the Lord,” because Paul had presented himself as an adversary to Him. They accordingly even gave him “the right hand of fellowship,” as a sign of their agreement with him, and arranged amongst themselves a distribution of office, not a diversity of gospel, so that they should severally preach not a different gospel, but (the same), to different persons, Peter to the circumcision, Paul to the Gentiles. Forasmuch, then, as Peter was rebuked because, after he had lived with the Gentiles, he proceeded to separate himself from their company out of respect for persons, the fault surely was one of conversation, not of preaching. For it does not appear from this, that any other God than the Creator, or any other Christ than (the son) of Mary, or any other hope than the resurrection, was (by him) announced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De praesc. Haer. 33</em></td>
<td>For by this method they will be more easily reprobated, when they are detected to have been even then in existence, or at any rate to have been seedlings of the (tares) which then were. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, sets his mark on certain who denied and doubted the resurrection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De praesc. Haer. 36</em></td>
<td>One Lord God does she acknowledge, the Creator of the universe, and Christ Jesus (born) of the Virgin Mary, the Son of God the Creator; and the Resurrection of the flesh; the law and the prophets she unites in one volume with the writings of evangelists and apostles, from which she drinks in her faith.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc. 1.21</em></td>
<td>Some disputed about eating idol sacrifices, others about the veiled dress of women, others again about marriage and divorce, and some even about the hope of the resurrection; but about God no one disputed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc. 3.8</em></td>
<td>Christ’s death, wherein lies the whole weight and fruit of the Christian name, is denied, although the apostle asserts it so expressly as undoubtedly real, making it the very foundation of the gospel, of our salvation, and of his own preaching. “I have delivered unto you before all things,” says he, “how that Christ died for our sins, and that he was buried, and that He rose again the third day.” Besides, if His flesh is denied, how is His death to be asserted; for death is the proper suffering of the flesh, which returns through death back to the earth out of which it was taken, according to the law of its Maker? Now, if His death be denied, because of the denial of His flesh, there will be no certainty of His resurrection. For He rose not, for the very same reason that He died not, even because He possessed not the reality of the flesh, to which as death accrues, so does resurrection likewise. Similarly, if Christ’s resurrection be nullified, ours also is destroyed. If Christ’s resurrection be not realized, neither shall that be for which Christ...</td>
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came. For just as they, who said that there is no resurrection of the
dead, are refuted by the apostle from the resurrection of Christ, so,
if the resurrection of Christ falls to the ground, the resurrection of
the dead is also swept away. And so our faith is vain, and vain also
is the preaching of the apostles. Moreover, they even show
themselves to be false witnesses of God, because they testified that
He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise. And we remain in our
sins still. And those who have slept in Christ have perished;
destined, forsooth, to rise again, but peradventure in a phantom
state, just like Christ.

| Tertullian | *Adv. Marc.* 3.9 | It was truly human, because of the truthfulness of God, who can
neither lie nor deceive, and because (angelic beings) cannot be
dealt with by men in a human way except in human substance: it
was withal unborn, because none but Christ could become
incarnate by being born of the flesh in order that by His own
nativity He might regenerate our birth, and might further by His
death also dissolve our death, by rising again in that flesh in which,
that He might even die, He was born. |
|---|---|---|
| Tertullian | *Adv. Marc.* 3.14 | For this is what He says: “Ride on prosperously in Thy majesty”—
advancing His word into every land, so as to call all nations:
destined to prosper in the success of that faith which received Him,
and reigning, from the fact that He conquered death by His
resurrection. |
| Tertullian | *Adv. Marc.* 3.19 | However, I will show him the death, and burial, and resurrection of
my Christ all indicated in a single sentence of Isaiah, who says,
“His sepulture was removed from the midst of them.” Now there
could have been no sepulture without death, and no removal of
sepulture except by resurrection. |
| Tertullian | *Adv. Marc.* 4.21 | Now, whosoever of all these He might have been, He certainly was
not raised up for the purpose of announcing another god after His
resurrection. |
| Tertullian | *Adv. Marc.* 4.43 | For of this incident it is said by Hosea: “To seek my face they will
watch till day-light, saying unto me, Come, and let us return to the
Lord: for He hath taken away, and He will heal us; He hath
smitten, and He will bind us up; after two days will He revive us:
in the third day He will raise us up.” For who can refuse to believe
that these words often revolved in the thought of those women
between the sorrow of that desertion with which at present they
seemed to themselves to have been smitten by the Lord, and the
hope of the resurrection itself, by which they rightly supposed that
all would be restored to them? But when “they found not the body
(of the Lord Jesus),” “His sepulture was removed from the midst of
them,” according to the prophecy of Isaiah. “Two angels however,
appeared there.” For just so many honorary companions were
required by the word of God, which usually prescribes “*two
witnesses.*” Moreover, the women, returning from the sepulchre,
and from this vision of the angels, were foreseen by Isaiah, when he says, “Come, ye women, who return from the vision;” that is, “come,” to report the resurrection of the Lord.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tertullian</th>
<th><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 5.13</th>
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<td>It may be contended that Christ’s body is indeed a body, but not exactly flesh. Now, whatever may be the substance, since he mentions “the body of Christ,” whom he immediately after states to have been “raised from the dead,” none other body can be understood than that of the flesh, in respect of which the law was called (the law) of death.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Tertullian</th>
<th><em>De res. 44</em></th>
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<td>Therefore that life is meant which “has broken the adamantine gates of death and the brazen bars of the lower world,”—a life which thenceforth has been and will be ours. Lastly, it is to be manifested in the body. When? After death. How? By rising in our body, as Christ also <em>rose in His.</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>Tertullian</th>
<th><em>De res. 46</em></th>
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<td>But why am I resorting to knotty arguments, when the apostle treats the subject with perfect plainness? “For if,” says he, “the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you;” so that even if a person were to assume that the soul is “the mortal body,” he would (since he cannot possibly deny that the flesh is this also) be constrained to acknowledge a restoration even of the flesh, in consequence of its participation in the selfsame state.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Tertullian</th>
<th><em>Adv. Prax.</em> 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Him <em>we believe</em> to have been sent by the Father into the Virgin, and to have been born of her—being both Man and God, the Son of Man and the Son of God, and to have been called by the name of Jesus Christ; <em>we believe</em> Him to have suffered, died, and been buried, according to the Scriptures, and, after He had been raised again by the Father and taken back to heaven, to be sitting at the right hand of the Father, <em>and</em> that He will come to judge the quick and the dead; who sent also from heaven from the Father, according to His own promise, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost. That this rule of faith has come down to us from the beginning of the gospel, even before any of the older heretics, much more before Praxeas, <em>a pretender</em> of yesterday, will be apparent both from the lateness of date which marks all heresies, and also from the absolutely novel character of our new-fangled Praxeas.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Tertullian</th>
<th><em>Adv. Prax.</em> 25</th>
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<tr>
<td>We have, moreover, in that other Gospel a clear revelation, i.e. <em>of the Son’s distinction from the Father,</em> “My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” and again, (in the third Gospel,) “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” But even if (we had not these passages, we meet with satisfactory evidence) after His resurrection and glorious victory over death.</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Prax.</em> 28</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De bapt.</em> 11</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De bapt.</em> 13</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De bapt.</em> 19</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De pat.</em> 9</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De mon.</em> 13</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De pud.</em> 16</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De pud. 17</td>
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<td>The Romans, moreover,—what learning is more impressed upon them than that there must be no dereliction of the Lord after believing? “What, then, say we? Do we persevere in sin, in order that grace may superabound? Far be it. We, who are dead to sin, how shall we live in it still? Are ye ignorant that we who have been baptized in Christ have been baptized into His death? Buried with Him, then, we have been, through the baptism into the death, in order that, as Christ hath risen again from the dead, so we too may walk in newness of life. For if we have been buried together in the likeness of His death, why, we shall be (in that) of (His) resurrection too; knowing this, that our old man hath been crucified together with Him. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall live, too, with Him; knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, no more dieth, (that) death no more hath domination over Him.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Origen</th>
<th>De princ. Pref 4</th>
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<td>Secondly, That Jesus Christ Himself, who came (into the world), was born of the Father before all creatures; that, after He had been the servant of the Father in the creation of all things—“For by Him were all things made”—He in the last times, divesting Himself (of His glory), became a man, and was incarnate although God, and while made a man remained the God which He was; that He assumed a body like to our own, differing in this respect only, that it was born of a virgin and of the Holy Spirit: that this Jesus Christ was truly born, and did truly suffer, and did not endure this death common (to man) in appearance only, but did truly die; that He did truly rise from the dead; and that after His resurrection He conversed with His disciples, and was taken up (into heaven).</td>
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<tr>
<th>Origen</th>
<th>De princ. 1.2.4</th>
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<td>This Son, accordingly, is also the truth and life of all things which exist. And with reason. For how could those things which were created live, unless they derived their being from life? or how could those things which are, truly exist, unless they came down from the truth? or how could rational beings exist, unless the Word or reason had previously existed? or how could they be wise, unless there were wisdom? But since it was to come to pass that some also should fall away from life, and bring death upon themselves by their declension—for death is nothing else than a departure from life—and as it was not to follow that those beings which had once been created by God for the enjoyment of life should utterly perish, it was necessary that, before death, there should be in existence such a power as would destroy the coming death, and that there should be a resurrection, the type of which was in our Lord and Saviour, and that this resurrection should have its ground in the wisdom and word and life of God.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Origen</strong></td>
<td><em>De princ.</em> 1.3.2</td>
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<td>Now, what the Holy Spirit is, we are taught in many passages of Scripture, as by David in the first-fifty Psalms, when he says, “And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me;” and by Daniel, where it is said, “The Holy Spirit which is in thee.” And in the New Testament we have abundant testimonies, as when the Holy Spirit is described as having descended upon Christ, and when the Lord breathed upon His apostles after His resurrection, saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit;” and the saying of the angel to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon thee;” the declaration by Paul, that no one can call Jesus Lord, save by the Holy Spirit.</td>
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<th><strong>Origen</strong></th>
<th><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 1.7</th>
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<td>Moreover, since he frequently calls the Christian doctrine a secret system (of belief), we must confute him on this point also, since almost the entire world is better acquainted with what Christians preach than with the favourite opinions of philosophers. For who is ignorant of the statement that Jesus was born of a virgin, and that He was crucified, and that His resurrection is an article of faith among many, and that a general judgment is announced to come, in which the wicked are to be punished according to their deserts, and the righteous to be duly rewarded? And yet the mystery of the resurrection, not being understood, is made a subject of ridicule among unbelievers.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Origen</strong></th>
<th><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 1.31</th>
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<td>And besides this, one may well wonder how it happened that the disciples—if, as the calumniators of Jesus say, they did not see Him after His resurrection from the dead, and were not persuaded of His divinity—were not afraid to endure the same sufferings with their Master, and to expose themselves to danger, and to leave their native country to teach, according to the desire of Jesus, the doctrine delivered to them by Him.</td>
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<th><strong>Origen</strong></th>
<th><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 1.70</th>
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<td>Moreover, it appears indubitable that after His resurrection He ate a piece of fish; for, according to our view, He assumed a (true) body, as one born of a woman.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Origen</strong></th>
<th><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 2.2</th>
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<tr>
<td>These were many of the subjects which He had to explain to them; but as He saw that it was a work of exceeding difficulty to root out of the mind opinions that have been almost born with a man, and amid which he has been brought up till he reached the period of maturity, and which have produced in those who have adopted them the belief that they are divine, and that it is an act of impiety to overthrow them; and to demonstrate by the superiority of Christian doctrine, that is, by the truth, in a manner to convince the hearers, that such opinions were but “loss and dung,” He postponed such a task to a future season—to that, namely, which followed His passion and resurrection.</td>
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<td>Origen</td>
<td>Cont. Cels. 2.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>Cont. Cels. 2.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>Cont. Cels. 2.59</td>
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<td>Origen</td>
<td>Cont. Cels. 2.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>Cont. Cels. 2.68</td>
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<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 2.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 3.2</td>
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<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 5.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 6.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Dem. Apol. Preaching</em> 38</td>
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</table>
And this is our Lord Jesus Christ truly fulfilled, when He gloriously achieved our redemption, that He might truly raise us up, setting us free unto the Father.

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<tr>
<th>Irenæus</th>
<th>Dem. Apol. Preaching 39</th>
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<td>So then those who take away redemption from man, and believe not God that He will raise them from the dead, these also despise the birth of our Lord, which He underwent on our behalf, that the Word of God should be made flesh in order that He might manifest the resurrection of the flesh, and might have pre-eminence over all things in the heavens, as the first-born and eldest offspring of the thought of the Father, the Word, fulfilling all things, and Himself guiding and ruling upon earth.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Irenæus</th>
<th>Dem. Apol. Preaching 41</th>
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<td>His disciples, the witnesses of all His good deeds, and of His teachings and His sufferings and death and resurrection, and of His ascension into heaven after His bodily resurrection—these were the apostles, who after (receiving) the power of the Holy Spirit were sent forth by Him into all the world, and wrought the calling of the Gentiles, showing to mankind the way of life, to turn them from idols and fornication and covetousness, cleansing their souls and bodies by the baptism of water and of the Holy Spirit; which Holy Spirit they had received of the Lord, and they distributed and imparted It to them that believed; and thus they ordered and established the Churches.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Irenæus</th>
<th>Dem. Apol. Preaching 41</th>
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<tr>
<td>By faith and love and hope they established that which was foretold by the prophets, the calling of the Gentiles, according to the mercy of God which was extended to them; bringing it to light through the ministration of their service, and admitting them to the promise of the fathers: to wit, that those who thus believed in and loved the Lord, and continued in holiness and righteousness and patient endurance, the God of all had promised to grant eternal life by resurrection of the dead; through Him who died and rose again, Jesus Christ, to whom He has delivered over the kingdom of all existing things, and, the rule of quick and dead, and also the judgment.</td>
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### Appendix C

#### Rule of Faith

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Quote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td>Misc. 4.15</td>
<td>Whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God”—what you are commanded to do by the rule of faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td>Misc. 7.15</td>
<td>There being demonstration, then, it is necessary to condescend to questions, and to ascertain by way of demonstration by the Scriptures themselves how the heresies failed, and how in the truth alone and in the ancient Church is both the exactest knowledge, and the truly best set of principles (αἱ ἰρεσίς).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td>Misc. 7.16</td>
<td>And if it appears that conflicting dogmas draw some away, these must be taken out of the way, and recourse is to be had to those who reconcile dogmas, and subdue by the charm of the Scriptures such of the untutored as are timid, by explaining the truth by the connection of the Testaments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De praesc. haer. 3</td>
<td>But what if a bishop, if a deacon, if a widow, if a virgin, if a doctor, if even a martyr, have fallen from the rule (of faith), will heresies on that account appear to possess the truth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De praesc. haer. 12</td>
<td>Let our “seeking,” therefore be in that which is our own, and from those who are our own, and concerning that which is our own,—that, and only that, which can become an object of inquiry without impairing the rule of faith.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De praesc. haer 13</td>
<td>Now, with regard to this rule of faith—that we may from this point acknowledge what it is which we defend—it is, you must know, that which prescribes the belief that there is one only God, and that He is none other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing through His own Word, first of all sent forth; that this Word is called His Son, <em>and</em>, under the name of God, was seen “in diverse manners” by the patriarchs, heard at all times in the prophets, at last brought down by the Spirit and Power of the Father into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and, being born of her, went forth as Jesus Christ; thenceforth He preached the new law and the new promise of the kingdom of heaven, worked miracles; having been crucified, He rose again the third day; (then) having ascended into the heavens, He sat at the right hand of the Father; sent instead of Himself the Power of the Holy Ghost to lead such as believe; will come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of everlasting life and of the heavenly promises, and to condemn the wicked to everlasting fire, after the resurrection of both these classes shall have happened, together with the restoration of their flesh.</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De praesc. haer 14</td>
<td>To know nothing in opposition to the rule (of faith), is to know all things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De praesc. haer. 26</td>
<td>Although, even supposing that among intimate friends, so to speak, they did hold certain discussions, yet it is incredible that these could have been such as to bring in some other rule of faith, differing from and contrary to that which they were proclaiming through the Catholic churches,—as if they spoke of one God in the Church, (and) another at home, and described one substance of Christ, publicly, (and) another secretly, and announced one hope of the resurrection before all men, (and) another before the few; although they themselves, in their epistles, besought men that they would all speak one and the same thing, and that there should be no divisions and dissensions in the church, seeing that they, whether Paul or others, preached the same things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De praesc. haer. 27</td>
<td>Since, therefore, it is incredible that the apostles were either ignorant of the whole scope of the message which they had to declare, or failed to make known to all men the entire rule of faith, let us see whether, while the apostles proclaimed it, perhaps, simply and fully, the churches, through their own fault, set it forth otherwise than the apostles had done. All these suggestions of distrust you may find put forward by the heretics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Marc. 1.20</td>
<td>For they allege that Marcion did not so much innovate on the rule (of faith) by his separation of the law and the gospel, as restore it after it had been previously adulterated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Marc. 3.1</td>
<td>This is most easily proved by an examination of both the apostolic and the heretical churches, from which we are forced to declare that there is undoubtedly a subversion of the rule (of faith), where any opinion is found of later date,—a point which I have inserted in my first book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Marc. 4.2</td>
<td>Then, at last, having conferred with the (primitive) authors, and having agreed with them touching the rule of faith, they joined their hands in fellowship, and divided their labours thenceforth in the office of preaching the gospel, so that they were to go to the Jews, and St. Paul to the Jews and the Gentiles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Marc. 4.5</td>
<td>Let us see what milk the Corinthians drank from Paul; to what rule of faith the Galatians were brought for correction; what the Philippians, the Thessalonians, the Ephesians read by it; what utterance also the Romans give, so very near (to the apostles), to whom Peter and Paul conjointly bequeathed the gospel even sealed with their own blood.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Marc. 4.36</td>
<td>He, who knew all this of Himself, and wished others to know it also, endowed the faith of this man—although it was already gifted with a better sight, and although it was in possession of the true light—with the external vision likewise, in order that we too might learn the rule of faith, and at the same time find its recompense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Herm. 1</td>
<td>He is a thorough adulterer, both doctrinally and carnally, since he is rank indeed with the contagion of your marriage-hacks, and has also failed in cleaving to the rule of faith as much as the apostle’s own Hermogenes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Herm. 33</td>
<td>And even if Matter had previously existed, we must have believed that it had been really made by God, since we maintained (no less) when we held the rule of faith to be, that nothing except God was uncreated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Prax. 2</td>
<td>That this rule of faith has come down to us from the beginning of the gospel, even before any of the older heretics, much more before Praxeas, a pretender of yesterday, will be apparent both from the lateness of date which marks all heresies, and also from the absolutely novel character of our new-fangled Praxeas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Prax.</em> 3</td>
<td>The simple, indeed, (I will not call them unwise and unlearned,) who always constitute the majority of believers, are startled at the dispensation (of the Three in One), on the ground that their very rule of faith withdraws them from the world’s plurality of gods to the one only true God; not understanding that, although He is the one only God, He must yet be believed in with His own οἰκονομία.</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Prax.</em> 9</td>
<td>Bear always in mind that this is the rule of faith which I profess; by it I testify that the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit are inseparable from each other, and so will you know in what sense this is said.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Prax.</em> 20</td>
<td>But I must take some further pains to rebut their arguments, when they make selections from the Scriptures in support of their opinion, and refuse to consider the other points, which obviously maintain the rule of faith without any infraction of the unity of the Godhead, and with the full admission of the Monarchy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De virg.</em> Vel. 1</td>
<td>The rule of faith, indeed, is altogether one, alone immoveable and irrefor- mable; the rule, to wit, of believing in one only God omnipotent, the Creator of the universe, and His Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised again the third day from the dead, received in the heavens, sitting now at the right (hand) of the Father, destined to come to judge quick and dead through the resurrection of the flesh as well (as of the spirit).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De mon.</em> 2</td>
<td>For the adversary spirit would be apparent from the diversity of his preaching, beginning by adulterating the rule of faith, and so (going on to) adulterating the order of discipline; because the corruption of that which holds the first grade, (that is, of faith, which is prior to discipline,) comes first.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De jejun.</em> 1</td>
<td>It is these which raise controversy with the Paraclete; it is on this account that the New Prophecies are rejected: not that Montanus and Priscilla and Maximilla preach another God, nor that they disjoin Jesus Christ (from God), nor that they overturn any particular rule of faith or hope, but that they plainly teach more frequent fasting than marrying.</td>
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## Appendix D

### Law and the Prophets

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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ignatius</td>
<td><em>IPhil 6 (Longer)</em></td>
<td>If any one preaches the one God of the law and the prophets, but denies Christ to be the Son of God, he is a liar, even as also is his father the devil, and is a Jew falsely so called, being possessed of mere carnal circumcision.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ignatius</td>
<td><em>ISmyr 6 (Longer)</em></td>
<td>And again, “A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ignatius</td>
<td><em>ISmyr 7 (Longer)</em></td>
<td>It is fitting, therefore, that ye should keep aloof from such persons, and neither in private nor in public to talk with them; but to give heed to the law, and the prophets, and to those who have preached to you the word of salvation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. Haer. 1.3.6</em></td>
<td>And it is not only from the writings of the evangelists and the apostles that they endeavour to derive proofs for their opinions by means of perverse interpretations and deceitful expositions: they deal in the same way with the law and the prophets, which contain many parables and allegories that can frequently be drawn into various senses, according to the kind of exegesis to which they are subjected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. Haer. 1.27.1</em></td>
<td>Cerdo was one who took his system from the followers of Simon, and came to live at Rome in the time of Hyginus, who held the ninth place in the episcopal succession from the apostles downwards. He taught that the God proclaimed by the law and the prophets was not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.</td>
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<td>Irenæus</td>
<td><em>Adv. Haer. 1.27.2</em></td>
<td>Marcion of Pontus succeeded him, and developed his doctrine. In so doing, he advanced the most daring blasphemy against Him who is proclaimed as God by the law and the prophets, declaring Him to be the author of evils, to take delight in war, to be infirm of purpose, and even to be contrary to Himself.</td>
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Irenæus  | *Adv. Haer.* 2.11.1 | It is easy to prove from the very words of the Lord, that He acknowledges one Father and Creator of the world, and Fashioner of man, who was proclaimed by the law and the prophets, while He knows no other, and that this One is really God over all; and that He teaches that that adoption of sons pertaining to the Father, which is eternal life, takes place through Himself, conferring it [as He does] on all the righteous.

Irenæus  | *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.2 | These have all declared to us that there is one God, Creator of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ, the Son of God.

Irenæus  | *Adv. Haer.* 3.10.2 | For who else is there who can reign uninterruptedly over the house of Jacob for ever, except Jesus Christ our Lord, the Son of the Most High God, who promised by the law and the prophets that He would make His salvation visible to all flesh; so that He would become the Son of man for this purpose, that man also might become the son of God?

Irenæus  | *Adv. Haer.* 3.12.7 | He thus clearly indicates, that He whom Cornelius had previously feared as God, of whom he had heard through the law and the prophets, for whose sake also he used to give alms, is, in truth, God.

Irenæus  | *Adv. Haer.* 4.4.2 | Christ had come to fulfil it: wherefore “the law and the prophets were” with them “until John.”

Irenæus  | *Adv. Haer.* 4.5.1 | God, therefore, is one and the same, who rolls up the heaven as a book, and renewes the face of the earth; who made the things of time for man, so that coming to maturity in them, he may produce the fruit of immortality; and who, through His kindness, also bestows [upon him] eternal things, “that in the ages to come He may show the exceeding riches of His grace;” who was announced by the law and the prophets, whom Christ confessed as His Father.

Irenæus  | *Adv. Haer.* 4.6.6 | But by the law and the prophets did the Word preach both Himself and the Father alike [to all]; and all the people heard Him alike, but all did not alike believe.
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<th>Author</th>
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<th>Translation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td>Adv. Haer. 4.9.3</td>
<td>For, being driven away from Him who truly is [God], and being turned backwards, he shall be for ever seeking, yet shall never find out God; but shall continually swim in an abyss without limits, unless, being converted by repentance, he return to the place from which he had been cast out, confessing one God, the Father, the Creator, and believing [in Him] who was declared by the law and the prophets, who was borne witness to by Christ, as He did Himself declare to those who were accusing His disciples of not observing the tradition of the elders: “Why do ye make void the law of God by reason of your tradition? For God said, Honour thy father and mother; and, Whosoever curseth father or mother, let him die the death.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td>Adv. Haer. 4.12.2</td>
<td>But that this is the first and greatest commandment, and that the next [has respect to love] towards our neighbour, the Lord has taught, when He says that the entire law and the prophets hang upon these two commandments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td>Adv. Haer. 4.34.2</td>
<td>Wherefore He said, “Think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law and the prophets till all come to pass.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irenæus</td>
<td>Adv. Haer. 4.34.2</td>
<td>To this effect also Paul, His apostle, says in the Epistle to the Romans, “But now, without the law, has the righteousness of God been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; for the just shall live by faith.” But this fact, that the just shall live by faith, had been previously announced by the prophet</td>
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<td>Irenæus</td>
<td>Adv. Haer. 5.17.2</td>
<td>It is evident, therefore, that the Israelites glorified Him who has been proclaimed as God by the law and the prophets, who is also the Father of our Lord; and therefore He taught men, by the evidence of their senses through those signs which He accomplished, to give glory to God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td>Paed. 3.12</td>
<td>Then from these He infers, “on this hang the law and the prophets.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td>Misc. 2.8</td>
<td>But since God deemed it advantageous, that from the law and the prophets, men should receive a preparatory discipline by the Lord, the fear of the Lord was called the beginning of wisdom, being given by the Lord, through Moses, to the disobedient and hard of heart.</td>
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<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td>Misc. 2.15</td>
<td>Thus also, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself;” for it is said, “On these commandments the law and the prophets hang and are suspended.”</td>
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<td><strong>Clement of Alexandria</strong></td>
<td>Misc. 2.16</td>
<td>And since God pities richly, being good, and giving commands by the law and the prophets, and more nearly still by the appearance of his Son, saving and pitying, as was said, those who have found mercy; and properly the greater pities the less; and a man cannot be greater than man, being by nature man; but God in everything is greater than man; if, then, the greater pities the less, it is God alone that will pity us.</td>
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<td><strong>Clement of Alexandria</strong></td>
<td>Misc. 4.1</td>
<td>It will naturally fall after these, after a cursory view of theology, to discuss the opinions handed down respecting prophecy; so that, having demonstrated that the Scriptures which we believe are valid from their omnipotent authority, we shall be able to go over them consecutively, and to show thence to all the heresies one God and Omnipotent Lord to be truly preached by the law and the prophets, and besides by the blessed Gospel.</td>
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<td><strong>Clement of Alexandria</strong></td>
<td>Misc. 4.25</td>
<td>And the perfect propitiation, I take it, is that propitious faith in the Gospel which is by the law and the prophets, and the purity which shows itself in universal obedience, with the abandonment of the things of the world; in order to that grateful surrender of the tabernacle, which results from the enjoyment of the soul.</td>
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<td><strong>Clement of Alexandria</strong></td>
<td>Misc. 5.6</td>
<td>It was otherwise requisite that the law and the prophets should be placed beneath the Lord’s head, because in both Testaments mention is made of the righteous.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clement of Alexandria</strong></td>
<td>Misc. 5.8</td>
<td>This, then, is the type of “the law and the prophets which were until John;” while he, though speaking more perspicuously as no longer prophesying, but pointing out as now present, Him, who was proclaimed symbolically from the beginning, nevertheless said, “I am not worthy to loose the latchet of the Lord’s shoe.”</td>
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<td><strong>Clement of Alexandria</strong></td>
<td>Misc. 5.14</td>
<td>For the Saviour, in enjoining to love God and our neighbour, says, “that on these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets.”</td>
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<td><strong>Clement of Alexandria</strong></td>
<td>Misc. 6.11</td>
<td>You may take music in another way, as the ecclesiastical symphony at once of the law and the prophets, and the apostles along with the Gospel, and the harmony which obtained in each prophet, in the transitions of the persons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td>Misc. 6.15</td>
<td>“But all things are right,” says the Scripture, “before those who understand,” that is, those who receive and observe, according to the ecclesiastical rule, the exposition of the Scriptures explained by Him; and the ecclesiastical rule is the concord and harmony of the law and the prophets in the covenant delivered at the coming of the Lord.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td>Misc. 7.1</td>
<td>And the law and the prophets witness of the Lord.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clement of Alexandria</td>
<td>Misc. 7.16</td>
<td>Our Gnostic then alone, having grown old in the Scriptures, and maintaining apostolic and ecclesiastic orthodoxy in doctrines, lives most correctly in accordance with the Gospel, and discovers the proofs, for which he may have made search (sent forth as he is by the Lord), from the law and the prophets.</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Jud. 8</td>
<td>And justly does the evangelist write, “The law and the prophets (were) until John” the Baptist. For, on Christ’s being baptized, that is, on His sanctifying the waters in His own baptism, all the plenitude of bygone spiritual grace-gifts ceased in Christ, sealing as He did all vision and prophecies, which by His advent He fulfilled. Whence most firmly does he assert that His advent “seals visions and prophecy.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Adv. Jud. 13</td>
<td>And thus, the former gifts of grace being withdrawn, “the law and the prophets were until John,” and the fishpool of Bethsaida until the advent of Christ: thereafter it ceased curatively to remove from Israel infirmities of health; since, as the result of their perseverence in their frenzy, the name of the Lord was through them blasphemed, as it is written: “On your account the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles:” for it is from them that the infamy (attached to that name) began, and (was propagated during) the interval from Tiberius to Vespasian.</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De praesc. haer. 8</td>
<td>“They have,” says He, “Moses and Elias,”—in other words, the law and the prophets, which preach Christ; as also in another place He says plainly, “Search the Scriptures, in which ye expect (to find) salvation; for they testify of me;” which will be the meaning of “Seek, and ye shall find.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>De praesc. haer. 36</td>
<td>One Lord God does she acknowledge, the Creator of the universe, and Christ Jesus (born) of the Virgin Mary, the Son of God the Creator; and the Resurrection of the flesh; the law and the prophets she unites in one volume with the writings of evangelists and apostles, from which she drinks in her faith.</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em></td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>There is another consideration: since he will at his second advent come after Him, that as he at His first coming took hostile proceedings against the Creator, destroying the law and the prophets, which were His, so he may, to be sure, at his second coming proceed in opposition to Christ, upsetting His kingdom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em></td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>And so in this manner the law and the prophets were until John, but the dews of divine grace were withdrawn from the nation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>These all start with the same principles of the faith, so far as relates to the one only God the Creator and His Christ, how that He was born of the Virgin, and came to fulfil the law and the prophets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em></td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>For if the Gospel, said to be Luke’s which is current amongst us (we shall see whether it be also current with Marcion), is the very one which, as Marcion argues in his <em>Antitheses</em>, was interpolated by the defenders of Judaism, for the purpose of such a conglomeration with it of the law and the prophets as should enable them out of it to fashion their Christ, surely he could not have so argued about it, unless he had found it (in such a form).</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em></td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>For it is certain that the whole aim at which he has strenuously laboured even in the drawing up of his <em>Antitheses</em>, centres in this, that he may establish a diversity between the Old and the New Testaments, so that his own Christ may be separate from the Creator, as belonging to this rival god, <em>and</em> as alien from the law and the prophets.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em></td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>But since both the place and the work of illumination according to the prophecy are compatible with Christ, we begin to discern that He is the subject of the prophecy, which shows that at the very outset of <em>His ministry</em>, He came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but rather to fulfil them; for Marcion has erased the passage as an interpolation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em></td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Therefore Christ belonged to John, and John to Christ; while both belonged to the Creator, and both were of the law and the prophets, preachers and masters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.17</td>
<td>So long, then, were the Jews cognisant of no other god but Him, beside whom they knew none else; nor did they call upon any other than Him whom alone they knew. This being the case, who will He clearly be that said, “Why callest thou me Lord, Lord?” Will it be He who had as yet never been called on, because never yet revealed; or He who was ever regarded as the Lord, because known from the beginning—even the God of the Jews? Who, again, could possibly have added, “and do not the things which I say?” Could it have been He who was only then doing his best to teach them? Or He who from the beginning had addressed to them His messages both by the law and the prophets? He could then upbraid them with disobedience, even if He had no ground at any time else for His reproof. The fact is, that He who was then imputing to them their ancient obstinacy was none other than He who, before the coming of Christ, had addressed to them these words, “This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart standeth far off from me.”</td>
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<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.22</td>
<td>For, says he, He establishes the words of His Son, when He says, “This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him.” Therefore, even if there be made a transfer of the obedient “hearing” from Moses and Elias to Christ, it is still not from another God, or to another Christ; but from the Creator to His Christ, in consequenc of the departure of the old covenant and the supervening of the new. “Not an ambassador, nor an angel, but He Himself,” says Isaiah, “shall save them;” for it is He Himself who is now declaring and fulfilling the law and the prophets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.25</td>
<td>But after all, it is, I presume, the edification rather than the demolition of the law and the prophets which we have thus far found effected in Christ.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.33</td>
<td>He continued his pupillage up to the time of John, and then proceeded forthwith to announce the kingdom of God, saying: “The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is proclaimed.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.33</td>
<td>Just as if we also did not recognise in John a certain limit placed between the old dispensation and the new, at which Judaism ceased and Christianity began—without, however, supposing that it was by the power of another god that there came about a cessation of the law and the prophets and the commencement of that gospel in which is the kingdom of God, Christ Himself.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

234
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tertullian</th>
<th><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.33</th>
<th>So that, if the old course has ceased and the new has begun, with John intervening between them, there will be nothing wonderful in it, because it happens according to the purpose of the Creator; so that you may get a better proof for the kingdom of God from any quarter, however anomalous, than from the conceit that the law and the prophets ended in John, and a new state of things began after him.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.33</td>
<td>“More easily, therefore, may heaven and earth pass away—as also the law and the prophets—than that one tittle of the Lord’s words should fail.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.33</td>
<td>Since even <em>then</em> by Isaiah it was Christ, the Word and Spirit of the Creator, who prophetically described John as “the voice of one crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord,” and as about to come for the purpose of terminating thenceforth the course of the law and the prophets; by their fulfilment and not their extinction, and in order that the kingdom of God might be announced by Christ, He therefore purposely added the assurance that the elements would more easily pass away than His words fail; affirming, as He did, the further fact, that what He had said concerning John had not fallen to the ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.34</td>
<td>Marcion, however, violently turns the passage to another end, and decides that both the torment and the comfort are retributions of the Creator, reserved in the next life for those who have obeyed the law and the prophets; whilst he defines the heavenly bosom and harbour to belong to Christ and his own god.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.36</td>
<td>This very precept, however, about giving to the poor, was very largely diffused through the pages of the law and the prophets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.36</td>
<td>This verity of the gospel then stands unimpaired: “I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but rather to fulfill them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.36</td>
<td>That Jesus was descended from that (alien) god (of Marcion), to subvert the Creator and overthrow the law and the prophets?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 4.39</td>
<td>Since the beneficent Deity had premised that these things must needs come to pass, although so terrible and dreadful, as they had been predicted by the law and the prophets, therefore He did not destroy the law and the prophets, when He affirmed that what had been foretold therein must be certainly fulfilled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Passage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 5.2</td>
<td>Now, if the Creator indeed promised that “the ancient things should pass away,” to be superseded by a new course of things which should arise, whilst Christ marks the period of the separation when He says, “The law and the prophets were until John”—thus making the Baptist the limit between the two dispensations of the old things then terminating—and the new things then beginning, the apostle cannot of course do otherwise, (coming as he does) in Christ, who was revealed after John, than invalidate “the old things” and confirm “the new,” and yet promote thereby the faith of no other god than the Creator, at whose instance it was foretold that the ancient things should pass away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Adv. Marc.</em> 5.8</td>
<td>From Judah were taken away “the wise man, and the cunning artificer, and the counsellor, and the prophet;” that so it might prove true that “the law and the prophets were until John.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De Carn. Chr.</em> 7</td>
<td>And did not Christ, whilst preaching and manifesting God, fulfilling the law and the prophets, and scattering the darkness of the long preceding age, justly employ this same form of words, in order to strike the unbelief of those who stood outside, or to shake off the importunity of those who would call Him away from His work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>Scorp.</em> 8</td>
<td>That person himself, at the close of the law and the prophets, and called not a prophet, but a messenger, is, suffering an ignominious death, beheaded to reward a dancing-girl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td><em>De pud.</em> 6</td>
<td>Yet I must necessarily prescribe you a law, not to stretch out your hand after the old things, not to look backwards: for “the old things are passed away,” according to Isaiah; and “a renewing hath been renewed,” according to Jeremiah; and “forgetful of former things, we are reaching forward,” according to the apostle; and “the law and the prophets (were) until John,” according to the Lord.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>De princ.</em> Pref. 4</td>
<td>This just and good God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself gave the law, and the prophets, and the Gospels, being also the God of the apostles and of the Old and New Testaments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>De princ.</em> 1.3.1</td>
<td>We, however, in conformity with our belief in that doctrine, which we assuredly hold to be divinely inspired, believe that it is possible in no other way to explain and bring within the reach of human knowledge this higher and diviner reason as the Son of God, than by means of those Scriptures alone which were inspired by the Holy Spirit, i.e., the Gospels and Epistles, and the law and the prophets, according to the declaration of Christ Himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Extract</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>De princ. 1.3.1</td>
<td>Of the existence of the Holy Spirit no one indeed could entertain any suspicion, save those who were familiar with the law and the prophets, or those who profess a belief in Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>De princ. 2.5.1</td>
<td>Now, since this consideration has weight with some, that the leaders of that heresy (of which we have been speaking) think they have established a kind of division, according to which they have declared that justice is one thing and goodness another, and have applied this division even to divine things, maintaining that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is indeed a good God, but not a just one, whereas the God of the law and the prophets is just, but not good; I think it necessary to return, with as much brevity as possible, an answer to these statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>De princ. 3.1.9</td>
<td>For it behoves every one who maintains the truth of what is recorded in Scripture, and who desires to show that the God of the law and the prophets is just, to render a reason for all these things, and to show how there is in them nothing at all derogatory to the justice of God, since, although they deny His goodness, they admit that He is a just judge, and creator of the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>De princ. 4.1.6</td>
<td>For before the advent of Christ it was not altogether possible to exhibit manifest proofs of the divine inspiration of the ancient Scripture; whereas His coming led those who might suspect the law and the prophets not to be divine, to the clear conviction that they were composed by (the aid of) heavenly grace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>Cont. Cels. 1.45</td>
<td>Nevertheless, admit that ye have no proof to offer for Moses, and then listen to our defence of Jesus derived from the law and the prophets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>Cont. Cels. 1.45</td>
<td>It is shown from the declarations concerning Jesus, contained in the law and the prophets, that both Moses and the prophets were truly prophets of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>Cont. Cels. 1.46</td>
<td>For the law and the prophets are full of marvels similar to those recorded of Jesus at His baptism, viz., regarding the dove and the voice from heaven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>Cont. Cels. 2.5</td>
<td>And this result shows itself among those who are able to see the grandeur of the ideas contained in the law and the prophets, and who are able to commend them to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 2.6</td>
<td>Jesus, then, is the Son of God, who gave the law and the prophets; and we, who belong to the Church, do not transgress the law, but have escaped the mythologizings of the Jews, and have our minds chastened and educated by the mystical contemplation of the law and the prophets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 2.38</td>
<td>Now, in answer to this, we say that we blame the Jews, who have been brought up under the training of the law and the prophets (which foretell the coming of Christ), because they neither refute the arguments which we lay before them to prove that He is the Messiah, adducing such refutation as a defence of their unbelief; nor yet, while not offering any refutation, do they believe in Him who was the subject of prophecy, and who clearly manifested through His disciples, even after the period of His appearance in the flesh, that He underwent these things for the benefit of mankind; having, as the object of His first advent, not to condemn men and their actions before He had instructed them, and pointed out to them their duty, nor to chastise the wicked and save the good, but to disseminate His doctrine in an extraordinary manner, and with the evidence of divine power, among the whole human race, as the prophets also have represented these things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 2.76</td>
<td>Celsus, in adopting the character of a Jew, could not discover any objections to be urged against the Gospel which might not be retorted on him as liable to be brought also against the law and the prophets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 2.76</td>
<td>For in the writings of the law and the prophets God makes use of threats and revilings, when He employs language of not less severity than that found in the Gospel, such as the following expressions of Isaiah: “Woe unto them that join house to house, and lay field to field;” and, “Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink;” and, “Woe unto them that draw their sins after them as with a long rope;” and, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil;” and, “Woe unto those of you who are mighty to drink wine;” and innumerable other passages of the same kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 7.10</td>
<td>For the prophecies were recorded and preserved by men living at the time, that those who came after might read and admire them as the oracles of God, and that they might profit not only by the warnings and admonitions, but also by the predictions, which, being shown by events to have proceeded from the Spirit of God, bind men to the practice of piety as set forth in the law and the prophets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td><em>Cont. Cels.</em> 7.18</td>
<td>Celsus, with all his boasts of universal knowledge, has here fallen into the most vulgar of errors, in supposing that in the law and the prophets there is not a meaning deeper than that afforded by a literal rendering of the words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hippolytus</td>
<td><em>Ref. 9.25</em></td>
<td>And they affirm that He who was thus sent forth by God is not this Christ (whom they are looking for); but they confess that another Messiah will come, who as yet has no existence; and that he will usher in some of the signs which the law and the prophets have shown beforehand, whereas, regarding the rest (of these indications), they suppose that they have fallen into error.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hippolytus</td>
<td><em>Ref. 10.16</em></td>
<td>In this manner he composed his treatises against the law and the prophets, and attempts to abolish them as if they had spoken falsehoods, and had not known God.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix E: Root Cause Paths Considered and Rejected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causal Factor Considered</th>
<th>Root Cause Path by Node Number</th>
<th>Root Cause Path by Node Name</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Jesus as not Deity</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 94</td>
<td>Hazard/Defect Identification and Analysis Issue</td>
<td>Speculative - To appeal here would be to presuppose the same type of management of change as found today as well as presupposing the various groups had thoroughly worked out the theological implications of their position compared to the Pauline teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Jesus as not Deity</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 172, 175</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; No Training; Training Requirements Not Completed</td>
<td>Speculative - This presupposes there was a formal training program in place as well as presupposing the training was incomplete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Jesus as not Deity</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 176, 179</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; Training Implementation Issue; Laboratory/Practical Training Issue</td>
<td>Speculative - This presupposes there was a formal praxis training program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Jesus as not Deity</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 176, 183</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; Training Implementation Issue; Training Resources Issue</td>
<td>Speculative - This presupposes formal training resources to have been produced and available for use during training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jesus as not Deity</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 185, 186, 191</td>
<td>Supervision Issue; Preparation Issue; Responsibility/Authority Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jesus as not Deity</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 207, 221</td>
<td>Personnel Performance Issue; Disregard for Company Procedures/Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jesus was biological offspring of Mary and Joseph</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 94</td>
<td>Hazard/Defect Identification and Analysis Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jesus was biological offspring of Mary and Joseph</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jesus was biological offspring of Mary and Joseph</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 196, 197, 199</td>
<td>Verbal and Informal Written Communication Issue; No Communication or not Timely; Communication not Timely/Not Performed</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Jesus was biological offspring of Mary and Joseph</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 196, 200, 205</td>
<td>Verbal and Informal Written Communication Issue; Communication Misunderstood/Incorrect; Other Misunderstood Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal and Informal Written Communication Issue; Communication Misunderstood/Incorrect; Other Misunderstood Communication</td>
<td>Speculative – This would presuppose the Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites to have held to the Pauline gospel, but the communication was simply incorrect or misunderstood by others. This is inconsistent with surviving evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jesus was biological offspring of Mary and Joseph</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 207, 221</td>
<td>Personnel Performance Issue; Disregard for Company Procedures/Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personnel Performance Issue; Disregard for Company Procedures/Policies</td>
<td>Plausible, but rejected as speculation because this necessitates the ability to identify specific individuals and to have knowledge of not only what they were thinking, but also that the deviation was deliberate and willful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Christ descended on Jesus at His baptism</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 94</td>
<td>Hazard/Defect Identification and Analysis Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hazard/Defect Identification and Analysis Issue</td>
<td>Speculative – To appeal here would be to presuppose the same type of management of change as found today as well as presupposing the various groups had thoroughly worked out the theological implications of their position compared to the Pauline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The Christ descended on Jesus at His baptism</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 172, 173</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; No Training; Decision Not to Train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; No Training; Decision Not to Train</td>
<td>Speculative - One would have difficulty short of finding documentation to try to prove the case that there was an active decision not to train on or consistently with the Pauline corpus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Evidence Sources</td>
<td>Issue/Issue Description</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Christ descended on Jesus at His baptism</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 176</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; Training Implementation Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The Christ descended on Jesus at His baptism</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 185, 186, 187</td>
<td>Supervision Issue; Preparation Issue; Job Plan/Instructions to Workers Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The Christ descended on Jesus at His baptism</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 185, 186, 191</td>
<td>Supervision Issue; Preparation Issue; Responsibility/Authority Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Christ descended on Jesus at His baptism</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 196, 197, 199</td>
<td>Verbal and Informal Written Communication Issue; No Communication or not Timely; Communication not Timely/Not Performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The Christ descended on Jesus at His baptism</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 207, 221</td>
<td>Personnel Performance Issue; Disregard for Company Procedures/Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The Christ Departed Jesus before Death at the end of</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 185, 186, 187</td>
<td>Supervision Issue; Preparation Issue; Job Plan/Instructions to Workers Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Crucifixion</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The Christ Departed Jesus before Death at the end of the Crucifixion</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 185, 186, 191</td>
<td>Supervision Issue; Preparation Issue; Responsibility/Authority Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Speculative - This presupposes one can identify who the leaders were within the various groups as well as ignoring the role of those who preceded (i.e., Cerdon in the case of Marcion).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The Christ Departed Jesus before Death at the end of the Crucifixion</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 196, 197, 199</td>
<td>Verbal and Informal Written Communication Issue; No Communication or not Timely; Communication not Timely/Not Performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Speculative – No evidence exists to suggest communication was delayed or improperly withheld.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Jesus was not human</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 94</td>
<td>Hazard/Defect Identification and Analysis Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Speculative - To appeal here would be to presuppose the same type of management of change as found today as well as presupposing the various groups had thoroughly worked out the theological implications of their position compared to the Pauline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Jesus was not human</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 172, 173</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; No Training; Decision Not to Train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Speculative - One would have difficulty short of finding documentation to try to prove the case that there was an active decision not to train on or consistently with the Pauline corpus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jesus was not human</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 176, 177</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; Training Implementation Issue; Training Program Design/Development Issue</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Jesus was not human</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 176, 178</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; Training Implementation Issue; Classroom Training Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Jesus was not human</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 176, 179</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; Training Implementation Issue; Laboratory/Practical Training Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Jesus was not human</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 176, 178</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; Training Implementation Issue; Training Resources Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Jesus was not human</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 176, 178</td>
<td>Supervision Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Jesus was not human</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 176, 178</td>
<td>Personnel Performance Issue; Disregard for Company Procedures/Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Jesus did not Die</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 94, 98, 100</td>
<td>Hazard/Defect Identification and Analysis Issue; Change Control Issue; No Change Assessment Performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Jesus did not Die</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 94, 98, 101</td>
<td>Hazard/Defect Identification and Analysis Issue; Change Control Issue; Change Assessment Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Jesus did not Die</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 94, 104, 105</td>
<td>Hazard/Defect Identification and Analysis Issue; Change Control Issue; Analysis Not Performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Jesus did not Die</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 94, 110</td>
<td>Hazard/Defect Identification and Analysis Issue; Reactive Risk/Safety/Reliability/Quality/Security Analysis Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Jesus did not Die</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 172, 175</td>
<td>Training/Personnel Qualification Issue; No Training; Training Requirements Not Completed</td>
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<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 176, 177</td>
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<td>1, 3, 14, 171, 176, 178</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>1, 3, 14, 207, 221</td>
<td>Personnel Performance Issue; Disregard for Company Procedures/Policies</td>
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<td>Jesus did not Physically Rise from the Dead</td>
<td>1, 3, 14, 94, 98, 100</td>
<td>Hazard/Defect Identification and Analysis Issue; No Change Assessment Performed</td>
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4Q130 Phylactery C.
4Q135 Phylactery H.
4Q136 Phylactery I.
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