

4. The testimony of Paul

All [the Gospels] were written long after the death of Jesus, and also after the epistles of Paul, which mention almost none of the alleged facts of Jesus's life.

Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (2006)

That the Gospels were written long after the death of Jesus is a charge often levied against Christian believers. I shall discuss this question in the next chapter. For now, I want to deal with the second part of Dawkins's allegation: that St Paul – whose existence no one seriously disputes, nor when he died – did not mention most of the 'alleged facts of Jesus's life'. As so often with the professor's sweeping statements, this turns out to be a serious distortion of the truth.

It is true that Paul does not present either a narrative of the life of Christ nor recall His teachings in a Gospel format of sayings, dialogue and parables. As we must remember, he was not there to witness these events. He is recorded for the first time in the Acts of the Apostles in 34 AD at the execution of St Stephen – the first Christian martyr – by stoning:

Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. (Acts 7:57-58)

Saul was Paul's Jewish name: although a devout young Jew from a Pharisee family, he was also a Roman citizen with the Roman name of Paul. As his part in the death of Stephen indicates, he was a vigorous persecutor of Christians. But he was converted early, not long after this first martyrdom, possibly in 35 AD. As the Acts of Apostles recounts, the resurrected Christ appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus. He was thus one of the very first Christian converts and intimately associated with the disciples Jesus chose; the dramatic account of

Saul/Paul being struck blind by the Lord was given to the author of Acts by Paul himself.

It should be hardly surprising, then, that Paul in his Epistles is clearly very familiar with all the material of the witness testimonies found in the Gospels. Those Gospels include that of St John, which modern scholars – wrongly, in my opinion – insist on dating to several decades after the death of Paul. Whether Paul knew this material via oral or written transmission is impossible to say; but the extent to which he was attuned to all the sayings, teachings and traditions of the canonical Gospels certainly undermines theories that attempt to re-order, re-date and fragment their composition.

What follows is my own harmonisation of Paul and the Gospels taken from my reading of the Book of Romans. This long epistle is described by the Bible scholar N. T. Wright as ‘by common consent [Paul’s] masterpiece ... a work of massive substance, presenting a formidable intellectual challenge while offering a breathtaking theological and spiritual vision’. It was written in the 50s AD, within about 20 years of the death of Jesus – and no serious scholar disputes that Paul himself was the author. As the historical evidence is so good, this allows me tentatively to triangulate back to my deduction that all of the Gospels were written before the 60s AD, if not the 50s.

I shall leave the main discussion of the dating the Gospels for later. For now, it is enough to note that Paul was very willing to quote from Old Testament sources and to report New Testament witness testimonies from events, teaching and sayings in the canonical Gospels. But not once does he refer to any document that might be the Q source, for whose existence there is no direct evidence at all.

Chapter 1

1.1. Paul makes the claim he was an apostle and that he was selected for this by Christ, as were the other authors of the Gospels. This would imply that he at least knew of the other apostles in order to claim that title, and indeed that he knew of the existence of the Gospels. John 6:70, 8:18, 15:16 tells of how the apostles were chosen, exactly as Paul was chosen by Jesus. Paul also refers to his calling to preach the Gospel of Christ not the

Gospel about Christ. Paul emphatically is stating it's Christ's Gospel and not a commentary about Jesus Christ.

- 1.2. Paul points out that Jesus promised via the prophets of old. I count 230 predictions of Christ in the Old Testament – see the Chapter 6 where these are all listed.
- 1.3. In many passages of His coming and those who would be sent to preach His message, Paul claims here to be one of them.
- 1.4. Paul confirms that Christ was born of the flesh, as predicted in the Old Testament. The genealogies of Matthew 1:6, 16, and Luke 1:27 confirm the status of the father (legal) and mother (legal/natural) of Christ, and his apostle colleague John, in 1 John 4:2.3, confirms that being born of the flesh is a matter of absolute orthodoxy. This demonstrates Paul's knowledge of the other Gospels, or at least their oral, if not written teachings. Jesus was “declared Son of God”. This is a phrase used at least 30 times, if not more, in the Gospels to define Jesus, suggesting at least some knowledge of these written or oral teachings. Also in this passage, Jesus is “declared to be the Son of God with the power according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the power of resurrection from the dead”. Matthew, in 3:16, Luke in 4:1, and John, in 3:34, all assert His submission to the Holy Spirit. The resurrection is confirmed by various verses in all the Gospels a total of 20 times. Again, this suggests great concordance with Paul and his apostle colleagues, and his deep knowledge and understanding of the Gospel events. This power of resurrection was from the whole dead as was taught in John 11:25, John 5:25-29, by Jesus.
- 1.5. Paul confirms: “we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name”. Matthew, in 7:13,14, and 22-27, propounds this, as does Jesus's half-brother, James, in 2:17-20. There are many predictions that Jesus would come on behalf of the gentiles as well. These are listed in my 218 prophetic predictions section. Paul would, of course, be familiar with the latter, as a Pharisee, and I strongly suspect the former too.
- 1.6. Paul mentions here those “whom you are also called of Jesus Christ”, as Matthew writes in 20:16.

- 1.7. Paul mentions to those in Rome that they are “called to be saints” and are “beloved of God”. Matthew 11:28, and John 7:37 also confirm this calling and general drawing towards God.
- 1:9. Paul also knew as did John report in John 4:24, that God needs to be worshiped with your spirit.
- 1.10. The “will of God” is confirmed as the mover of events (see Matthew 6:10 and the Luke-authored Acts 21:11-14).
- 1.14. Paul declares himself a “debtor” to the “Greeks ... barbarians”, thus confirming what was said in John 4:4-42: that the Gospel knows no social/class boundaries. Also, that he must minister to them all, as confirmed in Luke’s Acts 9:15.
- 1:16 Paul writes “For I am not ashamed [regarding the repeated beatings, attempted killing, imprisonment that he underwent] of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” The power or omnipotence of God is confirmed, as in Matthew 28:18 and John 1:12, establishing it is only God driving this power to overcome sin. The salvation of lost-ness with the Gospel is written about in Matthew 18:11 and Luke 14:26. Believing creates salvation first, as affirmed in John 8:31 and 14:21-24. The start point was the Jews in Israel, which Matthew documents in 15:24, and therefore to the whole world, as in John 4:22 and Acts 13:46. Above all, Matthew 10:28 declares Jesus to have the power over all salvation, as Paul understands it. John 1:11 also teaches us Jesus first came for the Jew, then the gentiles, much as Paul is confirming here.
- 1:17 Paul teaches “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.” Only God is fully righteous: John 17:25 and 1 John 2:1 show this, with Matthew 5:48 noting that no man can hope to achieve such perfection. Only via the Gospels can we come to God: this is the central message of these passages and Paul is clearly aware of them.
- 1:18 Paul teaches “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.” This is explained in John 3:36.

- 1:20. Paul reiterates that which was reported by Luke in Acts 8:26-39: that you have no “excuse” but to observe His “invisible attributes” that are for all to see in creation : Acts 14:15-17.
- 1.21. Paul reminds us “they did not glorify Him” was exemplified in Acts 12:22-23 as well as the subsequent punishment for not glorifying. Also, Paul mentions here: “nor were they thankful”. Refusing to recognize that what was good came from God is once again observed in Acts 14:15-17 and in Matthew 5:45. Man’s “hearts were darkened” as they searched for man-made truths (John 3:19-20).
- 1.24. Paul addresses the way in which God will only abandon you once you have fully abandoned Him. Matthew 15:14 and Acts 7:38-42 and 14:16 address this as well.
- 1.25. The “lie” or the knowing abandonment of God is addressed by Paul and also by John in the same fashion in John 8:44.

Chapter 2

- 2.1. Paul points out - as did Matthew in 5:20-22, 27-28, 7:1-3 , 15:13 and Luke in 18:21 - that if you are self-righteous you in effect condemn yourself in the overlooking of your own sin.
- 2:2 John 8:16 reports the words of Jesus as being the only judge, much as Paul understands Jesus to be the only righteous judge.
- 2.4. Paul teaches that looking down on someone, or underestimating their value, shows disrespect to the “goodness” God deposits in all of us. Matthew in 5:4 and Luke in Acts 14:15-17 address this as well.
- 2.5. Paul teaches the “hardness” in your heart will go against you when you are judged. Matthew 19:8, Mark 3:5, 6:52, 18:17 and John 12:40 all deal with it this way. The most famous of all the uses of the phrase “hardness” of your heart of course relates to how Pharaoh’s heart was continually hardened in the Exodus narrative. Pharaoh was judged harshly!
- 2.6-10. Paul reminds us you will be judged by your deeds. John 5:28-29 addresses this in the same way. It is an eternal judgment: again, John writes in similar vein in John 17:3.
- 2.11. Paul teaches God is always impartial: Luke, in Acts 10:34, observes this.

- 2.12. Paul teaches those outside the Jewish legal system will be judged, especially those gentiles who do know the moral law of God. Matthew 11:20-23 deals with this point in the same fashion.
- 2.15. Paul teaches don't hide from your consciousness as ignoring it will eventually snuff it out. Luke reports it thus in Acts 23:1 and 24:16.
- 2.16. As with all bar Mark, Paul teaches that Jesus Christ's Gospel is His, divinely given, and it is the reference point for all judgment. Matthew 6:4-6, 18, Luke 8:17 and John 5:23 also deal with it this way, suggesting that nothing is secret from Him.
- 2.17. Paul explains to us how Jews thought they were morally more advanced, as they had the Law, but Jesus taught that His law was set at an even higher standard so this was not so, and they had better up their game. Matthew 3:7-9, John 8:31-34, 40-59 write in this fashion as well.
- 2.19-20. Paul explains how the Jews were wrong to think they were superior to teach the gentile (deemed blind, babes etc). Matthew 23:24-28 is more expansive concerning this line of thought, but Paul's genesis of it lies in that Gospel. Paul also makes mention of the words said in Matthew 15:14 concerning the blind leading the blind. The Pharisees thought they lend the gentiles (the blind), in reality they were only leading their blind selves.

Chapter 3

- 3.10. Paul uses the generalised "As it is written", as Matthew does in 4:4, 6, and 7, and 10 when introducing Old Testament quotes.
- 3.11. In choosing this Old Testament passage, Paul is teaching that the real hope for man is that God does seek him and that man does not seek his own interests. John, in 6:37 and 44 writes it this manner too.
- 3.13. As with the above, Paul is teaching that foul words reveal a dark, dank, smelly heart ... Matthew 12:34-35 and 15:18 similarly attest to this.
- 3.25. Paul reminds us of the purpose of the crucifixion and that Christ was the propitiation of our sins, publically executed at Calvary for all to see underscoring the message that to be as near sinless as possible, we need Christ. 1 John 2:2 reports it thus as well. It seems hard to fathom that Paul

plucked this little nugget out of the imagination of his head to create a new religious movement.

Chapter 4

- 4.4 Paul teaches that good works, or any works will just accumulate a debt or wages, whereas grace is a free gift and not dependant on work. The parable of the Minas, reported in Luke 19:16 shows how a good steward of His earthly goods, is rewarded as that stewards had faith. This is contrasted with the stewards who did not have faith and is condemned.
- 4.5. Paul teaches only when you know you are “ungodly” will you be considered a candidate to be “justified”, much as Luke says in 5:32.
- 4.9. Paul anticipates the Jewish Christian attacks on gentiles not being circumcised and allowed into the church by pointing out that blessedness comes to both the circumcised and uncircumcised, as in Luke’s Acts 15:19-29.
- 4.11. Paul confirms, much as John 8:37-39 does, that Abraham had his faith and received the covenant whilst he was uncircumcised. Abraham was the father of all who followed in faith.
- 4.13 Paul teaches that it is Jesus who comes to fulfil the law and the promise of the covenant as per the teaching in Matthew 5:17.

Chapter 5

- 5.1. Paul teaches “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ.” John 3:36 says much the same: faith first, which gives peace; good works are of secondary importance in the ranking here.
- 5.3. Paul teaches Christ will reward those who suffer “tribulations” for Him, as told in Matthew 5:10-12 and John 15:20.
- 5.5. Paul teaches that God pours out His love into our hearts, and that love is evidence of our connection with Him. It is given as a gift by the Holy Spirit. John 7:38-39 teaches us that as well.

- 5.6. As with all the Gospel writers bar Mark, Paul teaches that Christ died for the ungodly. These Gospel writers teach this as well: Matthew 5: Matthew 23:33-35, 27:4-8,24,25, John 6:53-56, Luke's Acts 5:28.
- 5.18. Paul teaches that one man's righteousness (Christ's) is a free gift to us all; everyone else is disobedient by nature, so behaving in obedience to Christ's teaching makes this gift possible. John 4:34, 5:30 and 6:38 teaches this.
- 5.19. The disobedience of one man, Adam, started the endless cycle of sin which is only able to be terminated by one man, Jesus. Matthew 26:28 confirms this as does Mark 10:45.

Chapter 6

- 6.3. "Baptized into Jesus Christ." Paul is showing, metaphorically, that if you have faith you will be immersed into the work of Christ and His person. Mark 16:16 and Luke 7:30 make the same point. This is totally new teaching, and Paul could only have formulated it from the Gospels/direct witnesses.
- 6.14. "Sin shall not have dominion." Paul is teaching if you submit to Christ and resist all lustful temptations, that is what Christ has come for. Then you are "not under law but under grace". The latter point is made by Matthew 5:17-19 when Christ makes it clear he is not jettisoning the Mosaic Law, but fulfilling it.

Chapter 7

- 7.2-3 Paul teaches if a woman becomes a widow, she is released from the law of marriage; she is not released from the Law if she is married and commits the same act (taking another man): she is an adulteress. Matthew, as always via Christ, in 5:31-32 and 19:3-12 fully address these points.
- 7.4. Paul teaches you are made "dead to the Law" and alive in Christ if you follow Him in all ways. You shall bear "fruit" or be productive for God when this happens (see John 15:1-2).

Chapter 8

- 8.4. Paul teaches don't proceed according to the flesh [your human-ness], but use the Spirit as your life's guiding star. Luke 1:6 and 1 John 1:7 say the same. Paul teaches that God sent His Son, who is sinless, to be with us in the flesh so He would fulfil the law and allow all of us to have a strong spirit. John 1:14 teaches of this incarnation of God in the flesh of Jesus.
- 8.13. In a similar vein, Paul teaches, "put to death the deeds of the body" or you will die with sin - whereas the Spirit gives you the continuous power to put sin behind you. As Luke 22:40 records.
- 8.14. Paul teaches you are "led by the Spirit," by circumstance, as in Acts 16:7, and by Scripture to focus your mind Luke 24:44-45, you become "sons of God" as He gives you His assurance that you are adopted into His family, as expressed in Matthew 5:9 and Luke 20:36.
- 8.15. In the "fear of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'" the former was the Aramaic for 'daddy' as in the only Gospel usage of this term in Mark 14:36. Paul uses this to show that you don't need to have a haunting fear of death if you trust in God the Father of all.
- 8.16. Paul observes the power of the Spirit driving the witnessing of Him (Jesus as God), as in Acts 1:8.
- 8.17. Paul teaches if you have faith in Christ you are an heir of God as in Matthew 25:34. What is more, as an heir - unlike under Jewish law - you are in joint ownership. Matthew 25:21 and John 17:22 lay this out. You will also suffer with and for Christ: Matthew 5:10-12 and John 15:18-21 testify to this.
- 8.18. Paul teaches "the glory which shall be revealed in us" when we are resurrected is a point John makes as well in 1 John 3:2.
- 8.29. Paul teaches "conformed to the image of His Son"- that is, if we believe (see also 1 John 3:2).
- 8.35. Paul teaches that "the love of Christ" for us is what will keep us from trial and tribulation, although we believe we will still be persecuted because of our belief in Him, as in Matthew 5:10-12.

Chapter 9

9.30-32 Paul teaches that your Jewish heritage and observance of the law will get you nowhere - only faith will achieve this. Jew or Gentile, those terms become irrelevant if you believe in Christ. John 8:21-24 and 16:8-11 make much the same points.

Chapter 10

- 10:1. Paul never gives up praying to God for the salvation of his fellow Israelites, despite being preacher to the gentiles. See John 4:22 and Acts 1:8.
- 10.2. Paul does not doubt their “zeal for God,” which we see in Acts 22:3 and 26:4-5.
- 10:5-8. Paul teaches that the man who is righteous shall live by the law. Faith will only get you there as we will all never attained to the standard of perfect righteousness. Jesus teaches this in Matthew 7:14, Matthew 18:8-9.
- 10.9. Paul teaches that Christ is resurrected (all the Gospels attest to this in various places).
- 10.15 Paul references a passage from Isaiah 52:7 prophesying how there will be preachers of the “gospel of peace” as there were when Jesus commissioned His apostles in Matthew 10:5-10.
- 10:16. Paul reminds us that the Gospel is a command to believe in Jesus and these apostles had not been listened to: Acts 6:7 says as much. This signifies that by the time of Paul’s writings, they must have been extant.
- 10:17. Paul teaches that faith comes through hearing the Word of God. Matthew 28:19-20 attests to Christ giving the Apostles the commission to get people listening, as does the Lukean Acts 20:21.
- 10:18. Psalm 19 .4 is cited by Paul, showing, David’s understanding that God’s revelation reaches the entire earth. Matthew 24:14 and John 1:9 say the same.
- 10:21. Paul highlights a passage from Isaiah to show that Israel was always disobedient: this time, the Gospels were the truth. The vineyard parable comes to mind, from Matthew 21:33-46 and Luke 14:15-24: the parable of the Great Supper.

Chapter 11

- 11.5. Paul observes that there is a remnant of Jewish believers. See Acts 2:41 and 4:4.
- 11.7. Paul points out how Israel has been blinded, or has had its heart hardened, as in Matthew 19:8.
- 11.11. Paul shows how God has caused jealousy by giving grace even to the Gentiles so that the Jews could come back to Him. Matthew 8:11-12, and The Parable of the Wedding Feast in 22:1-14, and Luke's Acts : 13:46-47 and 28:25-28 say much the same.
- 11.13. Paul confirms his status as "apostle to the gentiles" as in Acts 18:6, 22:21, and 26:17-18.
- 11.16 Paul teaches in a parable format that the "first fruit" of the offering was holy, set aside for God. The root (Abraham or King David) and the branches, all the patriarchs, were also holy and that gentiles could be grafted and seeds could be propagated into this very root system. Jesus teaches this in Matthew 13:31-33 Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:8-19 John 15:1-15
- 11.17. Paul suggests the olive tree having its branches cut off (Israel) and new ones grafted (the gentiles) onto the "root and fatness" so all can partake in the goodness of God. Matthew 21:43 uses a similar analogy.
- 11.22. Paul teaches if you recognize and accept, and "if you continue" in God's salvation, your striving will be rewarded. John 8:31 and 15:5-6 express the same points.
- 11.25 Paul teaches that the Jewish heart had hardened to the faith in Jesus, but some would break out of this paralysis. They will all be grafted back onto the olive tree of faith at some point in the future when the gentile time has come. Jesus taught this in Matthew 13:11, 24:14.
- 11.28. Paul reminds all that the Gospel is actually mentioned as being an enemy of the Jews, signifying at least one of them must have been written or being taught at the time.

Chapter 12

- 12.6. Paul teaches when grace was given, it was used as a gift prophetically, as in Luke's Acts 11:27-28 and 21:9-11.
- 12.7. Paul teaches grace gave the gifts of ministry and teaching, as in the Lukean Acts 20:35, and 18:24-25.
- 12.8. "he who gives with liberality" is Paul's exhortation to give with no strings attached, because this way you do it for the glory of God. Matthew 6:2, Acts of Luke, 2:44-45 and 4:37-5:11 lay this out too. Mercy from you is also given cheerfully, so as not to be burdensome to the receiver. Luke 4:18-19 is an additional Gospel reference to this idea.
- 12.9. Paul teaches the spirit-filled life is characterized by love, as in Matthew 22:37. And not hypocrisy, to which it is contrasted in Matthew 6:2.
- 12.10. Paul teaches brotherly love is the right way, as opposed to self-love. See John 13:35, 1 John 3:10 and 17-19.
- 12.11. Paul teaches that the above mentioned love is given as "fervent in spirit" as in Acts 18:25. Jesus teaches in Luke 12:49 that He comes with fervent and hot spirit. John the Baptist in Matthew 3:11 teaches that Jesus will come like fire to Baptise.
- 12.12. Paul teaches that the disciples/followers need to remain steadfast in prayer: see Acts 2:42.
- 12.13. Paul also shows that whilst they are remaining steadfast they must be distributing their chattels with the needs of your fellow believers in mind is the method for conducting your life. See Acts 2:42-44. Showing hospitality, especially to other believers, is paramount. Luke 14:12-14 says this.
- 12.14. Paul teaches "Bless those who persecute you." A Gospel theme of Luke 6:27-33 and 23:34, and Matthew 5:44.
- 12.15. And also rejoice when there is good news for others and show compassion when there is bad: as in Luke 19:41-44 and John 11:35.
- 12.16. And "Be of the same mind toward one another," as in Acts 10:34.
- 12.18. Paul teaches like Jesus did in Matthew 5:39-40, that we must live in peace together.

Chapter 13

- 13.4. Paul teaches that government, if it does not conflict with God's law, is good, therefore submit to it. Government alone can use the sword. Matthew 26:52 and Acts 25:11 are also about this matter.
- 13.6. Paul also teaches pay your tax to God's ministers: Matthew 22:17-21 and Matthew 17:24-27 are specifically about this.
- 13.7. Paul very much repeats the seminal teaching of Jesus render up what you owe to Government. Matthew's famous passage on this appears in Matthew 22:21.
- 13.8. Paul teaches like Jesus to "Love one another" - both Christian and Jew - as in Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:27-35 and 6:28-34, and John 13:34-35.
- 13.9. Paul teaches some of the key teaches Jesus took from the Old Testament "love your neighbour as yourself": Matthew 22:39 and Luke 10:25-37 also focus on this.
- 13.10. Paul teaches that Jesus' overriding message of loving others is the "fulfilment' of the Law". This is stated in Matthew 7:12.
- 13.11. Paul teaches the age of the day of the Lord is nearing and that all followers should prepare themselves, now they are aware, by having faith and leading as righteous life as possible, for the coming of Jesus. Jesus spelled out His teachings on this matter in Matthew 24:1-51 Mark 13:1-7, Luke 21:5-36. It should be noted that Jesus in Mark 13:32 makes this very clear that no one knows when, so Paul should only be understood as meaning *now that we do believe*, we are closer to salvation, when that is, no one knows.
- 13.13. Paul teaches that all followers should walk properly in a manner pleasing to God. Luke 1:6 covers this.

Chapter 14

- 14.14. Paul underscores that his own teachings come only from Jesus "I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Mark 7:15 and Acts 10:15 make the same point.
- 14.17. Paul teaches that the Kingdom of God is where God rules your heart in peace, as in Acts 1:3.

14.22-23 Paul teaches, much as Jesus did in Mark 2:25-28, Matthew 12:1-8, Luke 6:1-5, that if you don't have faith and eat via the Pharisees understanding of the law, you will perish, so eat from faith.

Chapter 15

- 15.1. Paul teaches the strong must be prepared to carry the weak, as in Acts 21:35 and 15:10.
- 15.3. Paul quotes a Psalm that reiterated Christ is not there to please Himself, but in trying to please God and accomplish His bidding a lot of men will hate Him. John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38, 8:25, and 27-29 is all about this.
- 15.7. Paul teaches receive into your fellowship as Christ received sinners and all varieties of the socially condemned. Matthew 10:24 reminds us of this point.
- 15.8 Paul teaches that Jesus has come to serve. Jesus teaches this in Matthew 20:28.
- 15.16. Paul again (10:1) confirms that he is Minister primarily to the Gentiles, as in the above verse.
- 15.22. Paul is hindered by the Holy Spirit from visiting a place, as in Acts 16:7.
- 15:30-31. Paul asked for prayers to be said for him as he knew trouble lay ahead in Jerusalem for him, as in Acts 21:17-20, 21:10-11 and 23:11.
- 15:32. Paul received the joy he was looking for upon his arrival at Rome: see Acts 28:15.

Chapter 16

- 16:17. Paul teaches us to avoid those who cause doctrinal divisions: Matthew 24:24 and Luke's Acts 20:27-32 say the same.
- 16:25-27. The closing benediction echoes Matthew 6:13 and Luke 19:37-38.

Paul, as far as we are aware, wrote 13 letters. Admittedly, Romans, the first displayed in the Bible, is the most 'meaty' of them all, and if we include the writings of Luke's Acts (although not a Gospel, it was written by a Gospel author, I maintain) we have at least 100 Paulean verses out of a total of 433, meaning

that approximately 25% of the text draws directly from these sources, with multiple links to the Gospels in this one letter alone.ⁱ As these are direct, contemporary witness testimonies to the Life of Christ, his works, sayings and teachings (and those of the Holy Spirit), Dawkins's quote at the top of this section must be one of the most off-the-mark of all of his comments in *The God Delusion*, which nevertheless has gained a degree of common currency as we move deeper into a secular world. But Paul, as a non-witness, could only have relied on these extant Gospel (witness testimonies) works to write this letter.

Also, if my reading of Paul and deductions about his sources are correct, those New Testament scholars who date the writing of the Gospels from years to several decades after the death of Christ are much mistaken. I can see at least 40 reference points in Paul to John's Gospel, which modern tradition has suggested was written possibly 30-50 years later, with the wildest estimates placing it some 150 years later as a counter-attack against the Gnostics of the time.

Later, when I raise a fuller discussion of the Gospels' dates of authorship, I have to conclude that the much earlier dating of Paul is most significant. These Gospels must have been written in the late 40s to the early 60s at the latest. They were witness testimonies, and were the only ones. For sure they were the only ones attested to by the next generation of Church leaders, as we will see in the next chapter. So thank you, Dawkins, for prompting me to investigate this vast Paulean anchorage within the existing Christian teachings of his day.

As Paul can only have obtained his sources from the extant Gospel writers, orally or written, this prompts me to take a fuller look at the dating of all the Gospels.

ⁱ W D Davies writes on p 137

In an exhaustive survey of the relationship between Paulinism and the Logia of Jesus, Resch has pointed out the amazing number of places where Paul echoes or offers parallels to the Evangelists. The following table reveals this;

Number of Parallels to the Synoptics

<i>In 1 Thessalonians</i>	63
<i>2 Thessalonians</i>	25
<i>1 Corinthians</i>	214
<i>2 Corinthians</i>	99
<i>Galatians</i>	88
<i>Romans</i>	270
<i>Colossians</i>	81
<i>Ephesians</i>	127
<i>Philemon</i>	10
<i>Philippians</i>	58
<i>Acts</i>	61
<i>Total</i>	1096"

I am delighted I am in good company in seeing this connectivity between Jesus as teacher and Paul as student. You would have thought that such work would have killed once and for all any suggestion that Paul was the “creator of Christianity as we know it,” but hey hoe, these misunderstandings are sent to try us!