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978-1-107-12796-8 - When Paul Met Jesus: How an Idea Got Lost in History

Stanley E. Porter

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WHEN PAUL MET JESUS

Did Paul ever meet Jesus or hear him teach? A century ago, a curious assortment of scholars – William Ramsay, Johannes Weiss, and James Hope Moulton – thought that he had. Since then, their idea has virtually disappeared from New Testament scholarship, to be revived in this monograph. *When Paul Met Jesus* is an exercise in both biblical exegesis and intellectual history. After examining the positive arguments raised, it considers the negative influence of Ferdinand Christian Baur, William Wrede, and Rudolf Bultmann on such an idea, as they drove a growing wedge between Jesus and Paul. In response, Stanley E. Porter analyzes three passages in the New Testament – Acts 9:1–9 and its parallels, 1 Corinthians 9:1, and 2 Corinthians 5:16 – to confirm that there is New Testament evidence that Paul encountered Jesus. The implications of this discovery are then explored in important Pauline passages that draw Jesus and Paul back together again.

STANLEY E. PORTER is President, Dean, Professor of New Testament, and Roy A. Hope Chair in Christian Worldview at McMaster Divinity College. He has written and edited numerous books, and his recent publications include *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice* and *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric: Theory and Practice in the Hellenistic Context* (with Bryan R. Dyer, Cambridge University Press).

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McMaster Divinity College, Ontario



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*This book is gratefully dedicated to the earlier
memory of
William Ramsay,
Johannes Weiss, and
James Hope Moulton,
and, more recently and with heartfelt thanks, to the
School of Theology and Christian Ministry at Point
Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, California*

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Preface

I wish to thank a number of people who have made this monograph possible. First and last in priority must be my wife, Wendy. It was she who, nearly twenty years ago, found an obscure journal in a used bookstore that prompted my further and continuing thinking about the possibilities suggested in this volume. She was also the one who kept reminding me of the opportunities of transforming this fascinating notion – that Paul had met Jesus – into a book that explored the issues at greater length. I was very glad that she could be with me when the lectures that have now become this monograph were first delivered.

I also wish to thank the School of Theology and Christian Ministry at Point Loma Nazarene University for extending to me the honor of being the H. Orton Wiley Lecturer for 2014 and providing the opportunity to prepare the lectures that have become this monograph. Those of us who have been in Church of the Nazarene circles realize what an immense occasion this is. I specifically wish to acknowledge the invitation extended by Dr. Brad Kelle – not once but twice, when I could not take up the first invitation because of serious health issues. Thank you, Brad, for finding a way to invite me a second time and for providing a tremendous experience. I have given invited lecture series at a number of institutions over the years – but this is the first (and only) time that I have been invited to do so at an institution from which I graduated. I am honored. I am also grateful to the professors that I studied with at Point Loma College (as it was then called), only one of whom is still active on the faculty. The education I received was first-rate, and I have never believed myself to be anything less than fully prepared for any academic venture because of my attending Point Loma (although I admit that I pursued a degree in English, rather than religion). The occasion of these lectures provided the opportunity to see some of those with whom I had studied when I was an undergraduate, including Dr. Mike McKinney, Ruben Welch, Herb Prince, and probably some others I have forgotten. I was also able to see again and enjoy the

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company of my longtime colleague Dr. Ron Benefiel, former president of Nazarene Theological Seminary and now dean of the school, and to meet many new friends. I am very thankful for invigorating dialogue, incisive questions and comments, and excellent hospitality, from not only Brad, but also Dr. John Wright, Dr. Kara Lyons-Pardue, Dr. Robert Smith, and Dr. Rebecca Laird, as well as the other faculty members that I met and enjoyed time with on several different occasions. I also had the opportunity to meet and talk with a number of students, some of them theology majors contemplating further study and others considering forms of ministry. Wendy and I were treated marvelously during our time on what still must be the most beautiful undergraduate campus in North America (simply note the difference in weather in February between Ontario, Canada, and San Diego, California). I also gladly accepted the invitation to speak in the university chapel during my time there, and I am very thankful for those who attended (even if it was required) and those who helped to make the chapel service meaningful.

This occasion also provided the opportunity for my mother and one of my two sisters to attend the lectures and for us to spend some time together, something we have not had many occasions to do in recent years. I also thank you two for your interest in the talks, but more than that for your support of your son or brother and for taking joy and even pride in his accomplishments.

I wish to thank Laura Morris of Cambridge University Press for being an entirely supportive and encouraging editor throughout this process, from first enquiry to finished product. Laura is an ideal editor for any author, and she has helped to make this a better book than it would have been. Thank you Laura for your encouragement and support along the way. I also wish to thank the three anonymous reviewers for the Press for their opinions and constructive ideas. I have tried where possible to take their helpful suggestions into account and incorporate their several useful comments in order to make this a better monograph on an intriguing topic. There may be those who object to what I am arguing here, some who may even accuse me of being a fundamentalist or literalist because I dare to revive the notion – held by scholars who could hardly be labeled such – that Paul had met Jesus. I would just remind those inclined to such labeling that there is nothing literalistic or fundamentalistic about such a proposal – as there is no specific place in the New Testament where such a meeting is clearly depicted. I simply ask my readers to approach the topic with an inquisitive and enquiring mind, not one that has already made itself up regardless of the facts.

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Throughout all of this, I have continued to be supported by my own institution, McMaster Divinity College, and my colleagues and fellow administrators there. As president of such an excellent institution, I must rely on exceptional collaborators to allow me to have some spare time to continue to do New Testament scholarship when I am not engrossed in full-time administrative duties.

I finally wish to conclude where I began, with thanks to my wife, Wendy. She not only sparked the original idea, but she has lived with it until its completion, with her strong and undying support and love.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BEvT	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibTrans</i>	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BLG	Biblical Languages: Greek
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	CBQ Monograph Series
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament
<i>CQR</i>	<i>The Church Quarterly Review</i>
CTL	Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics
EFN	Estudios de filología neotestamentaria
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>The Expository Times</i>
<i>FN</i>	<i>Filología Neotestamentaria</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HNTC	Harper's New Testament Commentaries
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>

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<i>JGRChJ</i>	<i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LBS	Linguistic Biblical Studies
LNTS	Library for New Testament Studies
MeyerK	Meyer Kommentar
NCB	New Century Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTM	New Testament Monographs
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTT	New Testament Theology
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RV	Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher
SBG	Studies in Biblical Greek
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	SNTS Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
SymBU	Symbolae Biblicae Upsalienses
<i>TBl</i>	<i>Theologische Blätter</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament