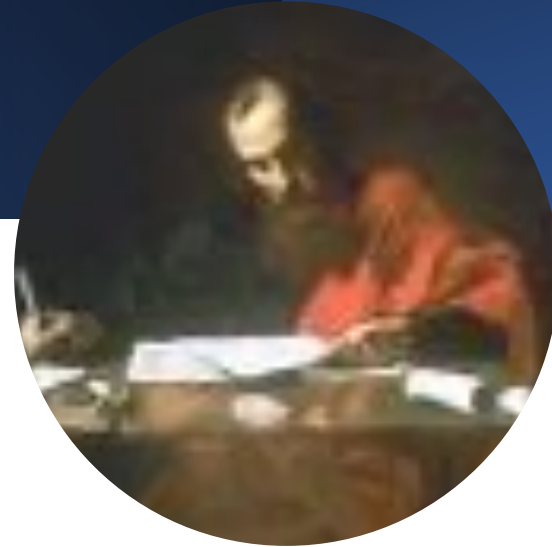
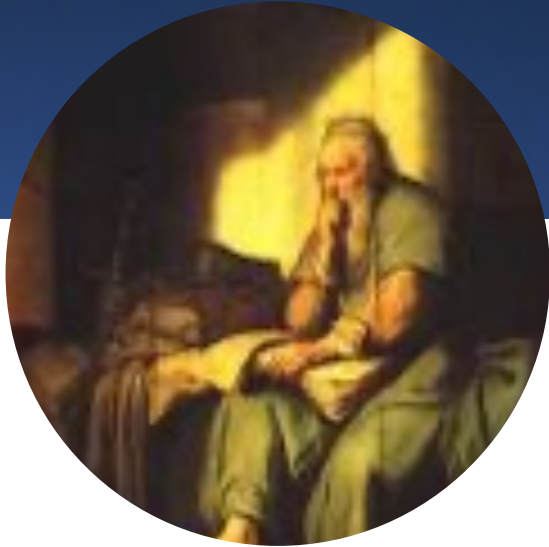


The top half of the image features a dark blue background with abstract, overlapping geometric shapes, including a large circle and various rectangular and triangular forms in lighter shades of blue.

Paul

Apostle and Theologian



Introduction

Paul is the most well-represented writer in the New Testament: many of his letters are included in the canon; he is also the main figure from Acts 9 onwards.

Paul's letters are the expression of the faith of one man and of his commitment to preaching the gospel.

His convictions stem from his claim to have seen the risen Christ and to have received the gospel as a result of divine revelation.

Important Factors

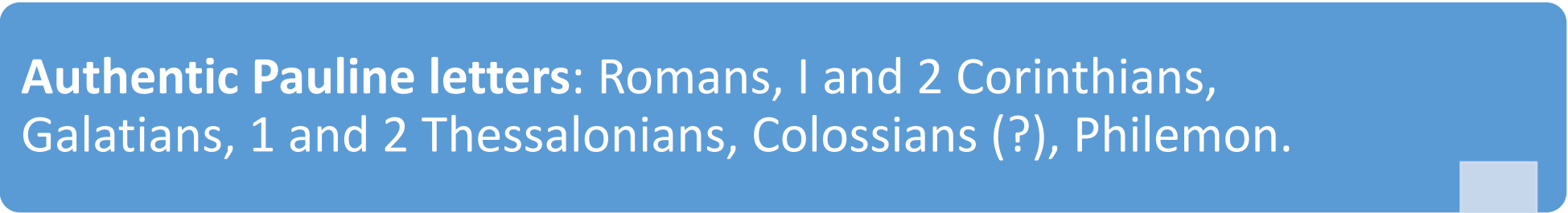
He was a practical rather than a systematic theologian: his teaching stemmed from his responses to situations in different faith communities.

Paul offers the *earliest* written testimony in the NT.

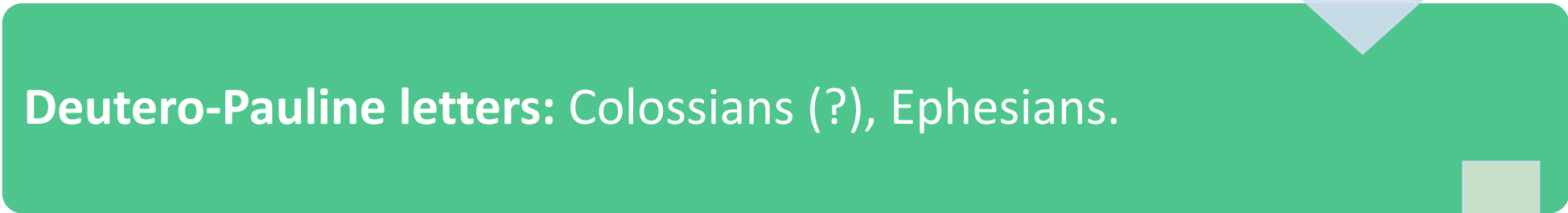
Some letters may not have survived; we cannot be confident that his surviving letters offer a comprehensive picture of this theology.

Sources relating to Paul's Life and Writings

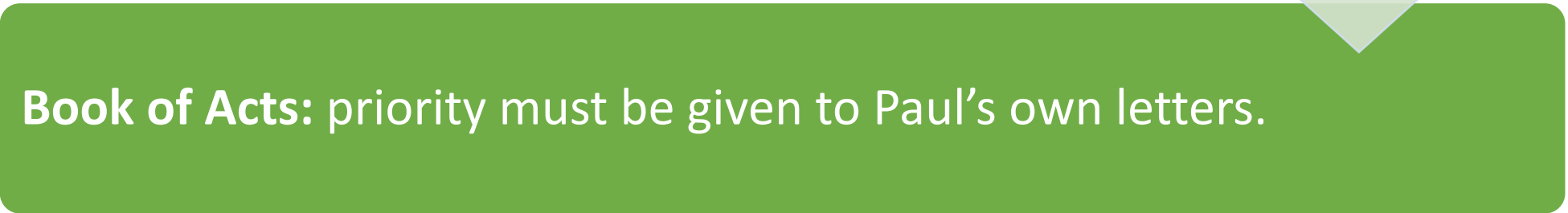
Authentic Pauline letters: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Colossians (?), Philemon.



Deutero-Pauline letters: Colossians (?), Ephesians.



Book of Acts: priority must be given to Paul's own letters.



The Life of Paul

- Paul's main aim was to preach the gospel: 'the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek' (Romans 1:16).
- Mission to the Gentiles - bridges the gap between the Jewish and Gentile worlds.
- 'Circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless' (Philippians 3:5-7).
- A Jew from the Diaspora (childhood spent in Tarsus in Syria).
- He sometimes cites the Greek poets (I Cor. 15:33) and metaphors drawn from Greek customs.

The Significance of Saul's Conversion

James D.G. Dunn:

- Saul was a zealous NATIONALIST.
- He was concerned to keep the 'boundary' rules for Jews
- He persecuted Christians because they preached to Gentiles.
- His conversion was a call to a Gentile mission (Acts 9:15).

The Significance of Saul's Conversion

Seyoon Kim:

- Saul was a zealous PHARISEE.
- He was concerned that Jews obey the Law.
- He persecuted Christians because they preached a CRUCIFIED Messiah (Deut 21:33).
- Conversion was a meeting with the risen Jesus: the cursed one was also the risen one.