

**Study Guide for *The Origin  
of Paul's Religion*, by J.  
Gresham Machen**

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**Extra Reading for the  
course: "The Heart of Paul's  
Theology"**

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**Read J. Gresham Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion***

**Review Questions:**

**Chapters 1-2**

Use the review questions below to help assimilate the important points in the reading.

1. In recent years, on what has it been customary to base the discussion about the origin of Christianity?
2. What was really standing in the way of Paul's Gentile mission, according to Machen?
3. How did Paul deal with the Old Testament law?
4. What was the "liberal" view of the origin of Paul's religion?
5. What are the views of the literary critic, Von Harnack, regarding the supernatural origin of Christianity?
6. The religion of Paul was a religion of \_\_\_\_\_, according to Machen.
7. In Paul's eyes, Jesus was not primarily a Revealer, but primarily what?
8. What kind of Judaism influenced Paul in his youth?
9. According to the author, what does Paul mean when he says he is a "Hebrew of Hebrews"?
10. Explain Paul's family situation.
11. According to the book of Acts what famous rabbi did Paul study under in Jerusalem?
12. In what city did Paul receive his early education?
13. Does the Book of Acts attest to the fact that Paul lived in Jerusalem at an early age?
14. Does Machen think that Paul saw Jesus before the crucifixion?
15. Does Machen think that Paul was an epileptic?

16. What does knowledge of Christ "according to the flesh" mean?
17. To which Jewish sect did Paul belong?
18. Machen says, "Birth in a Greek university city and Roman citizenship constitute the two facts which bring Paul into early connection with the larger \_\_\_\_\_ world of his day."
19. How should we describe Paul's experience on the road to Damascus?
20. Who revealed Jesus to the apostle Paul?

### **Chapters 3-4**

Use the review questions below to help assimilate the important points in the reading.

21. Who did Paul meet with in his first trip to Jerusalem after his conversion?
22. What was most likely the issue at hand in Paul's first conference with the original apostles?
23. Explain the main points of the apostolic decree according to Acts 15:1-29.
24. According to Machen, was the decree of the Council of Jerusalem meant to be applied among all Gentiles?
25. Did Paul demand in his epistles that the Jews give up keeping the Law?
26. What was the early training of Paul like?
27. The Judaizers in Galatia demanded what of the Gentile Christians?
28. Was there a continued conflict between Paul and Peter in regards to the role of the Law in the life of Gentile Christians?
29. Upon what was the religion of Paul based?
30. Did Paul believe that his authority operated totally independent of the Jerusalem Church?
31. Was the early Jerusalem Church really distinct from contemporary Judaism?
32. In the early period, in Jerusalem, before it had become evident that the Jewish people as such was to reject the gospel message, did the apostles continue to observe the Law?
33. Did the Judaizers object to Paul's teachings on the heavenly nature of Jesus?
34. Did Paul defend his doctrine of Christ frequently in his epistles? Why or why not?

35. According to Machen, what does Paul mean in Galatians when he says that he received his gospel directly from Christ?

### **Chapters 5-6**

Use the review questions below to help assimilate the important points in the reading.

36. Name the "naturalistic" theories of the origin of Paul's religion that have been proposed by theologians, according to Machen.

37. Which Jewish sect was known for their asceticism?

38. Which Jewish sect was known for their support of Roman rule and for their lack of belief in the resurrection?

39. Which Jewish sect was known for their strict rules and for being popular among the people?

40. According to Machen, did Paul belong to a group of Jews that believed in a heavenly pre-existent Messiah?

41. What did the Jewish "apocalyptic" school of thought teach about the divinity of the Messiah?

42. True or false? At the time of Paul, the native religion of Rome was an important factor in the life of the Empire—including in the East. {F}

43. Did the Roman conquerors before Christ root out Greek religious influence in the East?

44. What kind of religion existed in Greece before Christ?

45. In the Greek religion, describe how the worshipers of Dionysus sought to attain contact with the god.

46. What three elements finally undermined the religion of Greece?

47. Before Christ, the ancient Greek religions of the city-state found a successor in the worship of whom?

48. The most important feature of the religion of the Hellenistic age is found in the widespread desire for what?

49. The Stoics enunciated what principle?

## Chapters 7-8

Use the review questions below to help assimilate the important points in the reading.

50. What eastern religions became most influential in the later Roman Empire?
51. According to Reitzenstein, what was the concept regarding knowledge that Paul supposedly borrowed from mystery religions?
52. Machen argues that Paul learned his doctrine of knowledge from where?
53. According to Reitzenstein, what concept regarding the Spirit did Paul supposedly borrow from mystery religions?
54. Machen argues that Paul learned his doctrine of the Spirit from where?
55. According to the modern school of comparative religion, from where did Paul get his understanding of the sacraments?
56. According to Bousset, did the Jerusalem Christian community consider Jesus as "Lord"?
57. Bousset asserts that Paul received the idea of calling Jesus "Lord" from where?
58. According to Machen, where did Paul learn the use of the term "Lord"?
59. Machen says, "Here lies the profoundest of all differences between Paul and contemporary religion. Paulinism was not a philosophy; it was not a set of directions for escape from the misery of the world; it was not an account of what had always been true. On the contrary, it was \_\_\_\_\_"
60. In Paul's epistles, what does the term "justify" mean, according to Machen?
61. What does Paul mean when he speaks of the "spiritual man," according to Machen?
62. Did Paul teach that the human soul no longer exists in the truly "spiritual man"?
63. Justification focuses on how salvation frees us from what?
64. The description "new creation" focuses on how salvation frees us from what?