

"Thus, the Pharisees, whose hope for the kingdom of God were marked by ever stricter observance of the Torah, as well as a passionate attachment to the temple, were bound to see the early Jesus followers as dangerously disloyal. If that sort of belief were to catch on, it could delay or even derail the long-awaited fulfillment of the divine purposes. Also, Jews would have considered blasphemous the veneration of a crucified man as Messiah and Lord, especially if, as seems likely, worship ascribed to YHWH was being given to Jesus. For this reason Saul of Tarsus persecuted the church." (27)

"This fulfillment of Israel's ancient scriptures [via the death/resurrection of Jesus] utterly contradicted the way Paul had been reading them until then. In raising Jesus-Messiah bodily from the dead, God proclaimed not only that he really was Israel's Messiah, but also that this Jesus had done what the one true God promised to do himself, in person. And Jesus was addressing Saul as a master addresses a slave. Saul-Paul was later to proclaim that heaven and earth come together in Jesus-Messiah and the apostle reoriented his entire life around this fact accordingly. However, Saul never stopped believing in the one God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (29)

"Paul would not only rethink his entire Jewish tradition—which he never abandoned—but he also came to understand the Jewish scriptures in the light of the crucified and risen Messiah and his Holy Spirit." (30)

From Harvey Egan, SJ, *Paul: Christianity's Premier Apostolic Mystic* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021)