A key turning point in my research came when I was stunned by a remark in Colin Wilson’s *Atlantis and the Kingdom of the Neanderthals*:

The Romans issued a wanted poster for Jesus, which still survives, describing him as short (about four foot six), bald-headed, and hump-backed.

This description of Christ appears to match the description of Paul in the apocryphal *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*:

A man of small stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked.

Could Jesus and Paul have been the same person? One of the greatest mysteries associated with modern theories about Christ is—if accepting that he had survived his crucifixion—the question of what had become of him afterwards. If Christ had indeed survived his crucifixion, he would not have gone through such an ordeal only to vanish into obscurity. He could hardly have continued to be around as “Jesus”, since he was supposed to have been taken up into heaven forty days after his resurrection. In *Barbelo* it is shown that following his recovery from the crucifixion, Christ continued leading his revolution and building up his forces under the guise of the biblical Paul of Tarsus. Josephus knew him very well, but referred to him as the Egyptian who led a failed uprising against the Romans, an accusation brought against Paul during his final arrest.

Another great misconception about Christ is that he was a strikingly handsome and imposing figure, as typically depicted below. Nothing could be further from the truth.
In this article I will only point out the physical similarities between Paul and Christ, and some unique events that were common to both.

To begin with, in the *Halosis* of Josephus, Christ is described as

…a man of simple appearance, **mature age**, dark skin, **small stature**, **three cubits high**, hunchbacked, **with a long face, long nose**, and **meeting eyebrows**, so that they who see him might be affrighted, **with scanty hair** (but) having a line in the middle of the head after the fashion of the Nazireans, and with an undeveloped beard.

A similar description of Paul is given in *The Acts of Paul and Thecla,*

[Paul]…a man of small stature, **with a bald head** and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with **eyebrows meeting** and nose somewhat hooked.

while another version of *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* reads

Quite small, bald-headed, bow-legged, with knees far apart, with **meeting eyebrows**, large eyes, **a long nose** and a **red, florid face**.

Pseudo-Chrysostom describes Paul as ‘**the man of three cubits**’ (4 feet 4.7 inches), matching the height of Christ as given in the *Halosis* of Josephus.

The renowned scholar Robert Eisler recognises the resemblance between Christ and Paul:

A glance at the personal description of Paul already given shows at once that the tradition has come down to us in a form exactly corresponding to the one found in the iconismus (imagery) of Jesus,…This resemblance of Paul to Jesus …

However, despite a lengthy rationalisation, this intelligent man fails to consider the most logical of conclusions, that Christ and Paul of Tarsus must have been, or at least could have been, one and the same person.

I’ll next list additional physical descriptions of Christ and Paul as presented by the fathers and critics of the early church.

**Of Christ …**

1. According to Hierosolymitanus, as well as John of Damascus, ‘the Jew Josephus’ recorded that Christ ‘was seen having **connate eyebrows**, goodly eyes, **long-faced**, crooked, well-grown.

2. Nicephorus Callistus also claims that Josephus had described Christ as having been seven spans (5 feet 1.5 inches) tall, with beautiful eyes, a long nose, tawny hair, black eyebrows and his neck gently bent ‘so that the carriage of his body was not quite upright and rigid’, i.e. hunchbacked.
3. In the *hadith* (sayings) of Muhammad, Christ is referred to as **red-faced** and of **medium height**, matching the accounts given above.

4. In the *Letter of Lentulus*, Christ is described as being of **medium height**, with a ‘**slightly reddish complexion**’. He was ‘terrible in his reprimands’ and was never known to laugh.

5. In a letter of certain bishops to the Emperor Theophilus, Christ’s height is described by the epithet *tripechus* (three cubits) which translates to a height of 1.34 m (4 feet 4.7 inches).

6. Tertullian, Celsus and the *Acta Johannis Leucii* all agree that **Christ was below medium height**.

7. Ephrem Syrus (320–379 CE) describes Christ as “God took human form and appeared in the form of three human ells; **he came down to us small of stature**.”

8. Zaccheus had to climb into a tree to see Christ, because he (Christ) was small and was being dwarfed by his followers.

9. Theodore of Mopsuhestia likewise records “Thy appearance, O Christ, **was smaller than that of the children of Jacob.**”

10. Tertullian describes Christ in very unflattering terms:

    Let us compare with Scripture the rest of His dispensation. Whatever that poor despised body may be, because it was an object of touch and sight, it shall be my Christ, be He ignoble, be He dishonoured; for such was it announced that He should be, both in bodily condition and aspect. Isaiah comes to our help again….According to the same prophet, however, He is in bodily condition ‘a very worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and an outcast of the people.

    As when they said, Whence has this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Thus spoke even they who despised His outward form. His body did not reach even to human beauty, to say nothing of heavenly glory. Had the prophets given us no information whatever concerning His ignoble appearance, His very sufferings and the very contumely He endured bespeak it all.

11. According to Irenaeus, Christ was described as weak, unattractive and afflicted:

    Some of them, moreover—[when they predicted that] as a weak and inglorious man, and as one who knew what it was to bear infirmity.

12. Celsus describes the physique of Christ as ‘little (small), ill-favoured (ugly, hideous), and ignoble (shameful, dishonourable, mean).’
13. In *The Acts of Peter* we read:

Him [Christ] who is great and quite small, comely and ugly: **small for the ignorant**, great to those who know him, comely to the understanding and **ugly to the ignorant**, youthful and aged….glorious **but amongst us appearing lowly and ill-favoured**.


He (Christ) appeared to me again **as rather bald-headed** but with a thick flowing beard….But he sometimes appeared to me as **a small man with no good looks**.

15. Saint Augustine states that Christ ‘**appeared ugly** (foedus, meaning ‘horrible, abominable’) to his persecutors.

16. Tertullian, denying that the appearance of Christ had any beauty, goes as far as stating that:

The ignominy of the face (of Jesus) would roar (as a witness against the heretics) if it could.

17. In the Koran Christ is described as an ‘amazing thing’ brought forth by Mary.

18. Mandaean and Gnostic texts describe Christ as ‘**something that was created in the womb of Mary**’ and an ‘amorphous substance’ that Sophia (a figure based on the life of Mary, Christ’s mother) had given birth to, causing her to grieve at the sight of its imperfection. In another text this birth is further described as ‘**something came out of her that was imperfect and different in appearance from her, for she had produced it without her partner. It did not resemble its mother and was misshapen**.’ Sophia later repented ‘with many tears’ the wickedness that had occurred and the robbery that her son had committed. Christ’s reign of terror is described in full in Barbelo (see also accompanying article *The Violent Messiah*). Paul would later described himself as ‘**one abnormally born**’ (1 Cor 15:8), matching the descriptions presented above.

19. Christ anticipated that he would be taunted ‘Physician, heal yourself’ and at his crucifixion he was indeed taunted that while he saved others, he could not save himself. The statement about the physician healing himself suggests that Christ had to be healed, or in other words, he had a physical affliction or deformity of some kind.

20. Christ no doubt attempted to use the messianic promise of Isaiah 53 to convince his simple-minded followers that he was indeed their promised Messiah. Isaiah 53 dictated step by step what he should do to qualify as the Messiah, including that he should die and rise again from the dead. More specifically, Isaiah’s Messiah had to comply with the description
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. which Christ evidently did.

Of Paul ...

21. Paul admitted that he bore the marks (Greek stigmata) of Christ on his body. The word stigmata is the plural form of stigma, which refers to a mark incised or punched (for recognition of ownership) and actually denotes ‘a tattooed mark’ or ‘a mark burnt in, a brand.’ Although the stigmata in Galatians is usually interpreted as referring to the physical scarring Paul suffered following his conversion to Christianity, it more likely refers to the tattoos Christ had on his body as recorded in the Talmud.

22. In The History of the Contending of Saint Paul, he is described as having a countenance that was ‘ruddy with the ruddiness of the skin of a pomegranate’, and his cheeks were full, and bearded, and of the colour of a rose, matching Christ’s reddish complexion.

23. A description of Paul as recorded in The Passion of Paul reads:

And he was easily recognizable, having a crooked body, a black beard and a bald head.

24. When Paul supposedly raised the deceased son of the Emperor as described in The Acts of Saint Peter, the ‘revived’ son told his father that he had seen men standing before the throne of God, petitioning on his behalf. With them ‘there was another man whose petition was bold, whose head was bald and shining, whose hair was red, and whose appearance was like unto that of Paul.’ The person who supposedly intercedes before God on behalf of the sinners is of course Jesus Christ himself.

Paul and Christ, the same person ...

It is not only their physical appearances that match, but also their actions and legends about them: 

25. Scholars have long identified Paul with Simon Magus, and in Barbelo it is shown that Christ and Simon Magus were one and the same person. Paul and Christ were therefore the same person.

26. A remark in The Acts of Paul and Thecla, that Thecla ‘saw the Lord sitting in the form of Paul,’ suggests that they were indeed the same person.
27. In *The Acts of Saint Peter*, John and Peter have doubts about Paul:

And I, Peter, held converse with my brother John secretly, for we were marveling at the act of Paul, and wondering whether Simon the magician (having heard the rumour of us) had appeared unto us in the form of Paul…

This remark in turn suggests that Simon Magus and Paul were the same person, thereby linking Simon Magus to Christ through Paul.

28. A sect called the Cathars maintained that ‘Jesus was not ever in this world except spiritually in the body of Paul.’ In other words, Jesus was Paul.

29. Following Paul’s arrest, he was accused of being ‘the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place,’ and ‘who had brought Greeks into the temple area and had defiled that holy place.’ Christ was the one who turned Judea upside down with his teachings and who stormed the temple with 310 of his savages, robbing it of all its holy items.

30. Paul was also accused of being the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists into the wilderness. Several scholars have identified this Egyptian as Simon Magus, confirming that Christ, earlier identified as Simon Magus, was also the same person as Paul. Christ fed four thousand of his followers in the desert.

31. Felix and his wife Drusilla frequently sent for Paul to talk to him, while Simon Magus convinced Drusilla to marry Felix. Simon Magus and Paul are therefore linked to Felix and Drusilla in the same setting, confirming that they must have been one and the same person.

Given the evidence presented above, those with an open mind should come to only one conclusion, namely that Christ and Paul must have been one and the same person.