A small bit from my now chapter 7:

I have read, pondered, researched, taught, and written about the writings of Paul for forty years, but until recently there was one key aspect of his theology that I could never quite get my mind around. I had the hardest time understanding how, exactly, he viewed Christ. Some aspects of Paul’s Christological teaching have been clear to me for decades – especially his teaching that it was Jesus’ death and resurrection that makes a person right with God, rather than following the dictates of the Jewish law. But who did Paul think Christ was exactly?

One reason for my perplexity was that Paul is highly allusive in what he says. He does not spell out, in systematic detail, what his views of Christ are. Another reason was that in some passages Paul seems to affirm a view of Christ that – until recently – I thought could not possibly be as early as Paul’s letters, which are our first Christian writings to survive. How could Paul embrace “higher” views of Christ than those found in later writings such as Matthew, Mark, and Luke? Didn’t Christology develop from a “low” Christology to a “high” Christology (using these terms that I am no longer fond of) over time? And if so, shouldn’t the views of the Synoptic Gospels be “higher” than the views of Paul? But they’re not! They are “lower.” And I simply did not get it, for the longest time.

But I get it now. It is not a question of higher or lower. The Synoptics simply accept a different Christological view from Paul’s. They hold to exaltation Christologies and Paul holds to an incarnation Christology. And that, in no small measure, is because Paul understood Christ to be an angel who became a human.

I’ll explain all that more fully in the next post or two.

Paul’s View of Jesus as an Angel
Our One-Year Anniversary!