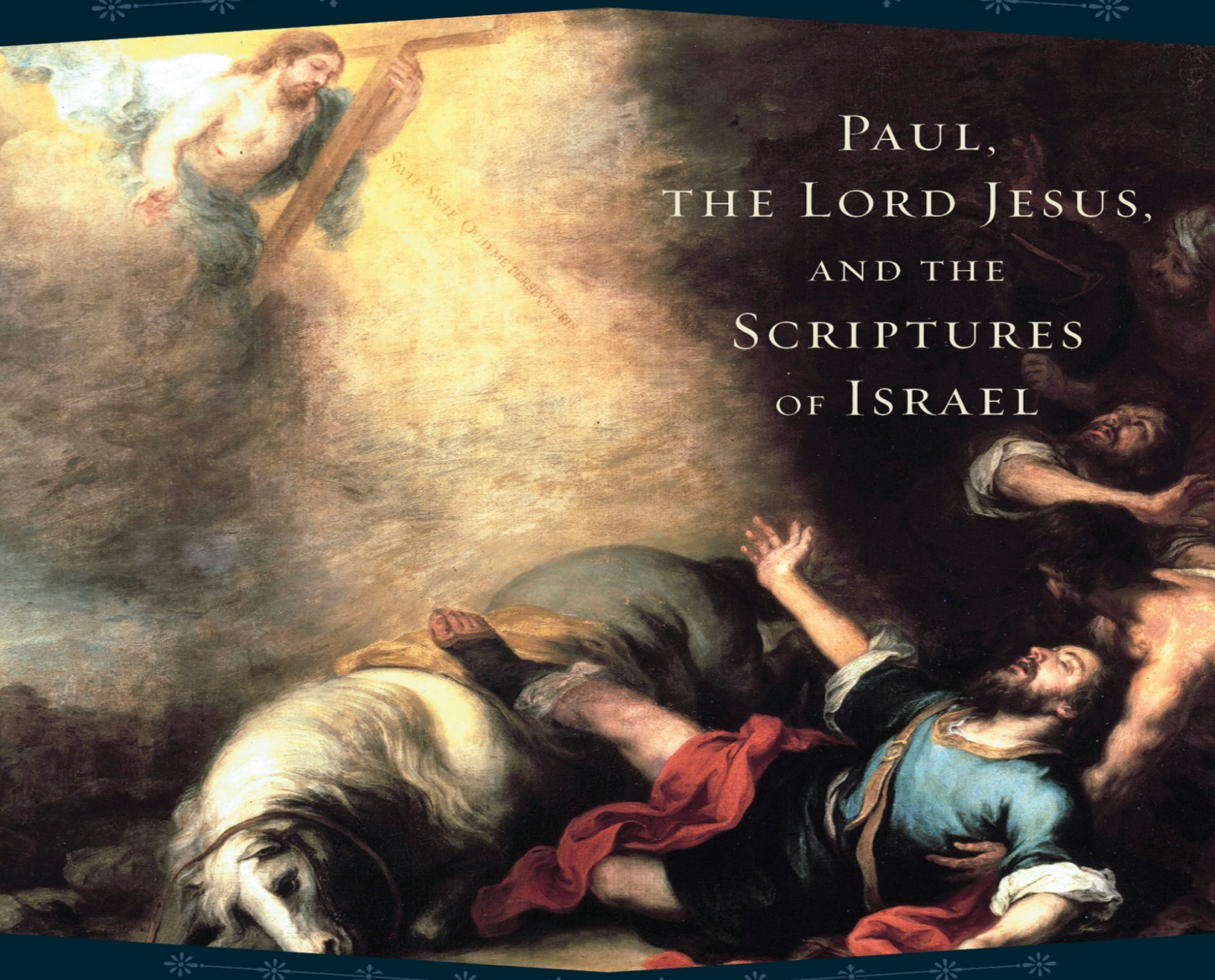
THE DIVINE CHRIST



Paul, the Lord Jesus, and the Scriptures of Israel

DAVID B. CAPES

Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology

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DAVID B. CAPES

Baker Academic
a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Published by Baker Academic
a division of Baker Publishing Group
PO Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287
www.bakeracademic.com

Ebook edition created 2018

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is on file at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

ISBN 978-1-4934-1332-4

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To Larry Hurtado,
friend & mentor

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Abbreviations

General and Bibliographic

AT	author's translation
BCE	before the Common Era
BIOSCS	*Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*
CE	Common Era
chap(s).	chapter(s)
ESV	English Standard Version
frag.	fragment
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NETS	*A New English Translation of the Septuagint.* Edited by Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OT	Old Testament
par(r).	parallel(s)
PG	Patrologia Graeca [= *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*. Series Graeca]. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 161 vols. Paris: Migne, 1857–86.
RSV	Revised Standard Version

SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76.
Voice	The Voice Bible
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
Whiston	*The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*. Translated by William Whiston. New updated ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987.
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Old Testament/Hebrew Bible

Gen.	Genesis
Exod.	Exodus
Lev.	Leviticus
Num.	Numbers
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Josh.	Joshua
Judg.	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
1 Sam./1 Kgdms.	1 Samuel/1 Kingdoms LXX
2 Sam./2 Kgdms.	2 Samuel/2 Kingdoms LXX
1 Kings/3 Kgdms.	1 Kings/3 Kingdoms LXX
2 Kings/4 Kgdms.	2 Kings/4 Kingdoms LXX
1 Chron.	1 Chronicles
2 Chron.	2 Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra
Neh.	Nehemiah
Esther	Esther
Job	Job
Ps(s).	Psalm(s)
Prov.	Proverbs
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes
Song	Song of Songs
Isa.	Isaiah

Jer.	Jeremiah
Lam.	Lamentations
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Dan.	Daniel
Hosea	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obad.	Obadiah
Jon.	Jonah
Mic.	Micah
Nah.	Nahum
Hab.	Habakkuk
Zeph.	Zephaniah
Hag.	Haggai
Zech.	Zechariah
Mal.	Malachi

New Testament

Matt.	Matthew
Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke
John	John
Acts	Acts
Rom.	Romans
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians
Gal.	Galatians
Eph.	Ephesians
Phil.	Philippians
Col.	Colossians
1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians
2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians
1 Tim.	1 Timothy
2 Tim.	2 Timothy
Titus	Titus
Philem.	Philemon
Heb.	Hebrews

James	James
1 Pet.	1 Peter
2 Pet.	2 Peter
1 John	1 John
2 John	2 John
3 John	3 John
Jude	Jude
Rev.	Revelation

Old Testament Apocrypha

2 Esd.	2 Esdras
4 Macc.	4 Maccabees
Sir.	Sirach
Wis.	Wisdom of Solomon

Rabbinic Sources

Avod. Zar.	Avodah Zarah
b.	Babylonian Talmud
Ber.	Berakhot
Hul.	Hullin
m.	Mishnah
Meg.	Megillah
Sanh.	Sanhedrin
Sotah	Sotah
y.	Jerusalem Talmud
Yoma	Yoma

Other Jewish and Christian Sources

Apoc. Ab.	Apocalypse of Abraham
2 Bar.	2 Baruch (Syriac Apocalypse)
Did.	Didache
1 En.	1 Enoch
Pss. Sol.	Psalms of Solomon

T. Ash.	Testament of Asher
T. Jud.	Testament of Judah
T. Levi	Testament of Levi
T. Naph.	Testament of Naphtali
T. Sim.	Testament of Simeon

Josephus, Philo, and Classical Writers

Ant.	Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*
Diatr.	Epictetus, *Diatribai* (*Dissertationes*)
Is. Os.	Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*
J.W.	Josephus, *Jewish War*
Moses	Philo, *On the Life of Moses*
Pol.	Aristotle, *Politica* (*Politics*)

Papyri and Inscriptions

BGU	*Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden*. 15 vols. Berlin, 1895–1983.
CIG	*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*. Edited by August Boeckh. 4 vols. Berlin, 1828–77.
P.Fouad	*Les Papyrus Fouad I*. Edited by A. Bataille, O. Guéraud, P. Jouguet, N. Lewis, H. Marrou, J. Scherer, and W. G. Waddell. Cairo, 1939.
P.Giss.	*Griechische Papyri im Museum des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins zu Giessen*. Edited by O. Eger, E. Kornemann, and P. M. Meyer. Leipzig and Berlin, 1910–12.
P.Oxy.	*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Edited by B. P. Grenfell et al. 73 vols. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1898–2009.

Preface

In 2014 Professor Craig Evans, then Payzant Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Acadia Divinity College, invited me to give the Hayward Lectures at Acadia Divinity College in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. At the time I did not know it, but that lecture would be the fiftieth anniversary of a series that has showcased the insights of leading scholars from around the world in various fields. I was grateful and humbled to be invited. It was my first visit to the maritime region of Canada, and I greatly enjoyed the people, their hospitality, and the vistas.

In those lectures Dr. Evans asked me to revisit some of my earlier work in Pauline Christology and to respond to developments in the field over the last three decades. I was happy to do so, for after a long hiatus I was anxious to engage the conversation once again. For those who know the discipline, the last three decades have witnessed a vigorous debate between scholars offering appreciably different opinions on how the earliest followers of Jesus spoke of his significance and related to him. My Hayward Lectures that year sought to advance the conversation even further. I chose as my topic "Paul's *Kyrios* Christology." This book is an outgrowth of those lectures.

In *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, N. T. Wright remarks that it has become "commonplace" for scholars to point out that Paul regularly refers to Jesus using scriptural quotations where the Greek word *kyrios* stands for the tetragrammaton.[1] Exactly how and when this became commonplace he does not say. I think I can claim some of the credit (or blame) for these insights due to my first book, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology*.[2] In that book I lay out a case for Paul's use of what I call "Yahweh texts" and attempt to tease out the implications for some of his Christology. But, of course, there is nothing entirely new under the sun. In a graduate seminar on Paul, my doctoral advisor, Earle Ellis, pointed out this feature in Paul's Letters, namely, Paul's propensity to quote Yahweh texts and apply them to Jesus. This struck me at the time—and continues to strike me—as a remarkable exegetical move made by a self-consciously Jewish follower of Jesus. Given the kind of reverence accorded the divine name and given the apostle's high regard for Scripture, I was astonished so few scholars had taken the time to investigate the practice and consider its

implications. Since then, a majority of scholars have paid more attention to Paul's christological exegesis, agreeing with my analysis in the main but disagreeing in some of the particulars. This book engages those essential questions and extends my initial proposals in light of recent efforts to come to grips with Paul's Christology.

A "YHWH text"—as I have come to use the term—refers to a quotation of or an allusion to an OT text that refers directly to the divine name. Since Paul writes to his churches in Greek, my focus has been on OT quotations and allusions containing the *kyrios* predicate in which *kyrios* "translates" or renders the divine name. As we will see, Paul quotes a number of these texts with God the Father in mind; but he also consciously quotes and alludes to scriptural texts referring to YHWH, the unspeakable name of God, and applies these to Jesus. The exact relationship of *kyrios* to the divine name is difficult to ascertain, because as we will see *kyrios* translates other Hebrew words referring to people in authority and to God. *Kyrios* does not seem to be as much a translation of the divine name as it is a pious substitute or replacement for it, written and publicly read out of respect for God's unique, covenant name.

In the current book I have chosen to use "YHWH text" rather than "Yahweh text"—my earlier spelling—for four reasons. First, YHWH has become a standard way of referencing the divine name in scholarly discourse. Second, the use of four block capitalized letters visually approximates the tetragrammaton (literally, "four letters"). Third, we cannot say for certain which "vowel" sounds would have been associated with the tetragrammaton, and therefore we cannot know how the faithful might have pronounced it (on the odd occasion when they did). Finally, I want to demonstrate clearly the respect I have for Jews and Christians who regard the divine name as sacred. The casual use of "Yahweh" for God's name is rightly offensive to many believers. Out of respect for them, throughout the book I will use "YHWH text" instead of "Yahweh text."

We will begin the investigation (chap. 1) by considering how English Bible versions have used the words "lord," "Lord," and "LORD" as translations of various Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew words. Clear patterns emerge, which will help us understand the breadth of semantic usage for the key terms. We will also investigate the state of biblical texts at the time of Paul, especially in regard to how the divine name may have been represented in them. In chapter 2 we will trace the rough edge of a debate that began a century ago regarding how early the *kyrios* title was applied to Jesus and what Christ followers meant when they used it.

In chapter 3 we will begin to press into the key questions: How and in which contexts did Paul refer to Jesus as *kyrios* ("Lord")? Where did this language

come from? What did he mean by it? We will see that the apostle does not randomly sprinkle christological titles around his letter. Each title came with a set of associations that Paul wished to take advantage of. This is true particularly of Paul's christological use of *kyrios.* Yet on occasion the apostle also used *kyrios* in reference to God the Father, particularly in quotations of Scripture dealing with specific contexts. I will refer to these occurrences as "patrological" references. While "patrological" is not a new word,[3] I will use it in a new way to parallel "christological." So when Paul refers to God the Father as *kyrios*, these are patrological uses of the term. When he refers to Jesus the Messiah as *kyrios*, these are christological uses. I hope this distinction will be useful. We will begin considering Paul's patrological uses of YHWH texts in chapter 4.

Chapter 5 is devoted to Paul's use of YHWH texts with Christ as referent. The only way to determine whether Paul is making a christological or patrological reference is through a close textual and contextual analysis. Scholars may debate whether this or that text should be read with Christ as referent; what they cannot do is ignore that Paul had a habit of referring YHWH texts to Jesus in quotations and allusions. This exegetical move is evidence of a remarkable development in Paul's Christology and should not be ignored.

Chapter 6 will explore some of the implications of Paul's *kyrios* Christology. Paul operates from what scholars have come to call a "high Christology," that is, a fully divine Christology that is consonant with other, later biblical writers, such as the author of the Gospel of John and Hebrews. That he is the earliest writing Christian theologian must be taken into account, as well as his habit of quoting from preformed traditions, hymns, and creeds. Paul does not impose a high Christology on his churches. Rather, he demonstrates it is the common currency of the Jesus movement, which began among Jewish monotheists living in Judah and Galilee. Finally, we consider how this came to be: What forces and factors from the life of Jesus and the early church contributed to such a remarkable assessment of Jesus's significance so soon after his execution on a Roman cross?

Let me express my appreciation to Dr. Craig Evans and the faculty and staff at Acadia Divinity College for the kind invitation to deliver the fiftieth annual Hayward Lectures. I'm sure I benefited more from the visit than they did. I'm grateful too that this book has been accepted in the series Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology at Baker Academic. This is an important series of monographs, and I am honored to be included. Bryan Dyer, acquisitions editor for Baker Academic, has been a thoughtful and attentive guide through this; yet he has given me the time I needed to develop the book.

Not long after I accepted the project, I changed institutions. After teaching in one place for twenty-five years, I moved across the city to become academic

dean and professor of New Testament at Houston Graduate School of Theology. President James Furr and the staff at HGST have provided me time and space in the weekly schedule to devote to this investigation. I am grateful for their encouragement and the generous accommodation. Finally, let me thank the founding members of the Early High Christology Club, those we see and those we don't: Larry Hurtado, Carey Newman, and Alan Segal. I was privileged to be present when the club was founded in 1995 and have watched over the years as more and more scholars have been added to the ranks. In scholarship, as well as in other enterprises, friendships shape our lives in profound ways. My longtime colleague, friend, and sparring partner, Larry Hurtado, has offered endless rounds of encouragement and counsel on this and many other projects. To him I am forever grateful.

David B. Capes
Houston
Lent 2017

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1. N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 701.
2. David B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology*, WUNT 2/47 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992).
3. The conventional use of "patrological" has to do with the church fathers.

1

"Lord" and "LORD" in the Bible

As we begin, it is appropriate to consider the ways in which various Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words have been translated in the English Bible tradition. This is useful because most of us will continue to read the Bible primarily in translation. There is nothing wrong with that, of course, because we have many excellent translations. But it is helpful to understand what lies just beneath the surface of a translation in the original languages, especially when it comes to matters as significant as divine names and titles. But as with all things biblical, we ought not confine ourselves to part 2 of the Christian Scriptures—that is, the NT—because it is important to see these names, titles, and honorifics diachronically, that is, through time.

We consider first how the English word "lord" in its uncapitalized and capitalized forms appears in Christian Scriptures. Now by Christian Scriptures we mean both OT and NT; but it is particularly the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible or OT that seems to have been formative in the minds of early Christians. Scholars today make a compelling case that if we want to understand early Christians' engagement with Scripture, we must get up close and personal with the Greek version. This does not mean, of course, that what we find in the Hebrew Bible is inconsequential; as we will show, the Hebrew text sets a trajectory of reverence for the divine name (YHWH) that is unmistakable. Generation after generation of faithful Jews and Christians reflected this deep devotion in how they copied, read aloud, thought about, and related those texts to what they thought God was doing in their day. What we find, however, is that when referring to Scripture, early Christians quoted or alluded most often to the Greek version (often referred to as the Septuagint). So our inquiry here will focus not only on select Hebrew words but also on the Greek words used to translate them.

In the English Bible tradition the word "lord" is used in two main ways. First, "lord" is employed to designate a person having special dignity, authority,

power, or influence. Second, its capitalized forms, “Lord” and “LORD,” are employed in reference to God, Jesus, and on occasion the Holy Spirit. It is not easy to determine how many times these words are used because translations vary. The Greek word *kyrios*, for example, can be translated “master” in one version or “lord” in another. Likewise in the NT “lord” can be used to translate words other than *kyrios.* For example, when blind Bartimaeus addresses Jesus as *Rabbouni* (Mark 10:51), the KJV renders it “Lord,” while other versions translate it “My teacher” (NRSV) or “Teacher” (Voice), or transliterate it “Rabboni” (NASB). Similarly, when Herod holds a great state dinner on his birthday, among his guests are the *megistasin* (Mark 6:21), which both the KJV and NASB translate “lords,” while other versions render it “courtiers” (NRSV) and “nobles” (ESV). The point is that translational differences make it difficult to be exact in these matters. Still, the patterns of usages we explore in this chapter are generally uniform.

Old Testament / Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint

In the OT several Hebrew words are translated into English as “lord” or “LORD.” When Isaac thinks the day of his death is approaching, he arranges to offer his fatherly blessing to his eldest son, Esau. Instead, Isaac is tricked, and he blesses his younger son, Jacob (Gen. 27:29):[1]

> Be lord [*gəbîr*] over your brothers
> and may your mother’s sons bow down to you.

Later, after Esau and Isaac realize what has happened, the patriarch says to Esau, “I have already made him your lord [*gəbîr*], and I have given him all his brothers as servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?” (Gen. 27:37). The Hebrew word *gəbîr*, translated “lord” in this context, refers to Jacob as head of a family. Isaac’s blessing grants his second born authority over his brothers, extended family, and, as the story plays out, surrounding peoples. Jacob’s brothers, including Esau, from now on are to relate to him as “servants.” English translations differ on this text; some refer to Jacob as “master” (NASB, NLT, Voice), but most versions render the Hebrew *gəbîr* “lord” (ESV, KJV, NKJV, NIV, NRSV). In the Greek version of the OT, the Greek word *kyrios* is used to translate each occurrence of *gəbîr* (“lord”) in this text. Significantly, the same Greek word is employed earlier in the blessing (27:27) referring to God and translating the divine name (YHWH). More about this later.

The Hebrew word *ʾādôn* occurs more frequently with reference to persons in authority: (1) the patriarchs as heads of family (Gen. 23:6; 32:4 [32:5 MT]); (2) Joseph as vicegerent over Egypt (Gen. 42:10; 45:9); (3) Moses as head ("lord") of the people (e.g., Num. 36:2); and (4) foreign kings and generals: e.g., Sisera (Judg. 4:18); Hanun, king of Ammon (2 Sam. 10:3); Ben-hadad, king of Aram (1 Kings 20:9). Frequently Israel's kings are called *ʾādôn* ("lord"): Saul (1 Sam. 26:15); David (1 Sam. 25:25; 29:10; 2 Chron. 2:14); Solomon (1 Kings 3:17; 2 Chron. 13:6). The term *ʾādôn* is deemed appropriate for Israel's rulers regardless of whether the tradition presents them positively or negatively (e.g., 1 Kings 18:11 [Ahab]). The phrase "my lord [*ʾādôn*] the king" became commonplace in referring to the line of Davidic kings. Other notable leaders such as Ezra (Ezra 10:3) are addressed as *ʾādôn* ("lord") because they are considered religious authorities. Similarly, prophets and priests of Israel are called *ʾādôn* ("lord") since they speak and act on heaven's behalf (1 Sam. 1:15 [Eli]; 1 Kings 18:7 [Elijah]; 2 Kings 4:16 [Elisha]). Almost exclusively those who rendered the Hebrew Bible into Greek preferred the word *kyrios* to translate *ʾādôn* in reference to human rulers, leaders, or property owners.

It is important to note that modern translations often use words other than "lord" to refer to those in positions of power and influence. For example, they may translate *ʾādôn/kyrios* as "master" in contexts dealing with slavery, and "owner" when dealing with property rights and responsibilities. Consider Exod. 21. After giving the Ten Commandments, God commands Moses to set before the Israelites another set of ordinances. The first of these instructions has to do with the treatment of slaves, likely because the Israelites have just been slaves in Egypt. By law Hebrew slaves are to be freed in the seventh year by their owners. If someone enters the master-slave relationship single, he is to be freed single; if someone enters into service married, he is to be freed along with his spouse. But another condition prevails when the master provides the slave with a wife: "If his master [*ʾādôn/kyrios*] gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's [*ʾādôn/kyrios*] and he shall go out alone" (Exod. 21:4). In this passage the Hebrew word *ʾādôn* refers properly to the one who "owns" and has authority over his slaves (see also Exod. 21:5, 6, 8).

Later in the same chapter, the law addresses another kind of situation, this time involving livestock: "When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner [*baʿal/kyrios*] of the ox shall not be liable" (Exod. 21:28). In the Hebrew text the word *baʿal* designates the owner of the ox. This is reflected in most modern translations. However, in early English translations such as the Wycliffe Bible, the English

word “lord” is used to refer to the ox’s owner: “If an ox smiteth with his horn either man, or woman, and they be dead, the ox shall be thrown down with stones, and his flesh shall not be eaten, and the lord of the ox shall be guiltless” (Exod. 21:28 Wycliffe Bible). Historians agree that Wycliffe’s work (ca. 1382) greatly influenced what later became the KJV (1611).

The Hebrew word *ʾādôn* is employed even more frequently to refer to God (e.g., Gen. 18:27; Exod. 4:10; Deut. 9:26) and heavenly messengers. When used in reference to God, *ʾādôn* is translated with an initial capital: “Lord.” Though rare in the Pentateuch, the title became more common in literature associated with the Second Temple period. It may be used by itself or in combination with other phrases and titles (see below). Angels, because they are messengers of God, carry heavenly authority and so may properly be addressed as *ʾādôn* (“lord”; lowercase in English translation). When the prophet Zechariah, for example, is directed through a series of visions, he addresses his angelic guide as “my lord” (Zech. 1:9; 4:4).

Perhaps the most significant use of “Lord” in the OT is in its representation of the divine name (Heb. YHWH). While there are many titles given to the one God of Israel in the Hebrew Bible, there is only one name by which God is to be known: the name revealed to Moses in the wilderness (Exod. 3:13–15; 6:2–3; 20:2). The name (referred to as the tetragrammaton, “four letters”) occurs about 6,800 times in the OT (e.g., Gen. 2:4; Exod. 17:15; Judg. 6:22; 1 Sam. 25:26; Pss. 8:1; 23:1; Isa. 40:3). Its sacredness is reflected in the prohibition of its use in any empty or idle way (Exod. 20:7). The Shema (Deut. 6:4) emphasizes the oneness of YHWH, Israel’s God, as well as the unique covenantal relationship he has with his people (see also Isa. 45:5, 6, 11).

The majority of modern English translations render the tetragrammaton “LORD.” The use of small capitals distinguishes this use from “Lord”—a word used to translate other Hebrew words for God or persons in authority—and signals to the reader that God’s unique covenant name underlies the translation. Exactly how early the practice begins is hard to say. The *Oxford English Dictionary* reports the use of “LORD” for the divine name as early as the eleventh century CE.

The most influential English translation (KJV, 1611/1769) renders the majority of occurrences of the divine name as LORD. Nevertheless, in seven places it represents the name “JEHOVAH,” a combination of the consonants of YHWH (Latinized to JHVH) with the vowels of *ʾadōnāy* (Exod. 6:3; Ps. 83:18; Isa. 12:2; 26:4). The first and perhaps most instructive use of “JEHOVAH” for the divine name appears in a crucial passage, when God promises Moses he will

deliver his people (Exod. 6:3 KJV): “And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.”

It is important to note that the name JEHOVAH is set in all capitals in the King James Version. This passage relates the initial meeting of Moses and YHWH at the burning bush, when God commissions Moses and reveals to the prophet his covenant name (Exod. 3:13–15). Three of these usages refer to place names important in the story (e.g., Jehovah-jireh; Gen. 22:14 KJV): “And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.”

Most modern translations render the final Hebrew verb *yrʾh* “it will/shall be provided” (e.g., NRSV, ESV, NLT). No doubt this translation results from God providing a ram after the near sacrifice of Isaac. But the Hebrew comes from a root that means “to see” (*rʾh*), and the Septuagint rendering appears to reflect that: “And Abram called the name of that place ‘The-Lord-saw’ [*kyrios eiden*] so that even today people say ‘on the mountain the Lord appeared [*kyrios ōphthē*].’”[2] If the Greek translation of the Hebrew reflects the original meaning, then the focus of the passage is not God’s provision atop the mountain but a theophany of God near the summit. Regardless of how this is rendered, it is the case that for centuries Jehovah became effectively “God’s name” in English.

Recent translations have expanded the ways in which the divine name is rendered. The Jerusalem Bible (1966), for example, transliterates the tetragrammaton as “Yahweh.” Other translations employ “Yahweh” in select places (e.g., Exod. 6:3) but generally render the divine name “LORD” (NLT 1996/2004; Holman Christian Standard Bible 1999/2002). A few translations represent the divine name “Jehovah” throughout (Young’s Literal Translation, 1898; American Standard Bible, 1901; New World Translation, 1961). The Complete Jewish Bible (1998) substitutes “Adonai” (Heb. “Lord”) for the tetragrammaton. James Moffatt’s translation (1935) and The Voice Bible (2012) translate the meaning behind the divine name as “the Eternal.” Still, the majority of modern translations continue the practice of rendering the divine name “LORD” (ESV 2011; NRSV 1989; NASB 1995).

While most occurrences of the divine name are translated “LORD,” the name is translated “GOD” when used in combination with *ʾadōnāy* (“GOD” is in small capitals). So the Hebrew address *ʾadōnāy yhwh* is generally rendered “Lord GOD” (e.g., Deut. 9:26; 1 Kings 2:26; Ps. 69:6; Isa. 61:1). Although the expression occurs throughout the OT, it is most frequent in various prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Amos.

There are a number of phrases utilizing the word “LORD” in the Hebrew Bible.

“The angel of the LORD,” for example, refers to an angel in whom the name of God dwells (Exod. 23:20–21). In some cases, it is difficult to distinguish between the angel of the LORD and the LORD himself (Gen. 16:7–14; 22:11–18). “The day of the LORD” is a common reference to a coming day of judgment (first mentioned in Amos 5:18–20). Israel’s preexilic prophets regard it as a day to be feared because God’s people are not likely to escape heaven’s wrath (Isa. 2:12–22; Ezek. 7:7–12). After the exile, however, the poets and sages of Israel associate “the day” with a promise of covenant blessing and security while threatening judgment against her enemies (Zech. 12–14; Joel 3; Mal. 3:2). The title “LORD of hosts” occurs about 240 times in the Hebrew Scriptures to underscore God’s sovereignty over celestial or angelic powers (e.g., 1 Sam. 1:3; Ps. 24:10; most frequently in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi). In the Psalter the community of the faithful is commanded to “Praise the LORD” (e.g., Pss. 111:1; 147:1; 150:6). This directive is so common and distinctive that the Hebrew expression *halәlû yâ*, “praise Yah” (a shortened form of YHWH), became typical in liturgical usage and continues in use today in Christian circles.

A good example of the range of meanings for the word “lord” and “LORD” in English translations is exhibited in Hannah’s story. Hannah is the barren wife of Elkanah, a man from the hill country of Ephraim. Annually the family travels to the shrine in Shiloh to worship the LORD. On one occasion Hannah presents herself to God and pleads to God to give her a male child. Eli, seated near the entrance of the shrine, observes her unusual manner of praying and accuses her of drunkenness. But Hannah replies: “No, my lord [*ʾādôn/kyrios*], I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD [YHWH*/kyrios*]” (1 Sam. 1:15). In the English translation Hannah addresses Eli as “my lord” (*ʾādôn/kyrios*) presumably because he is head of the shrine at Shiloh (or perhaps because he is the head of his clan). She tells him she has been pouring out her broken heart before the LORD (YHWH*/kyrios*). Eli feels badly for her and offers her his blessing. It is not insignificant that both Hebrew words—*ʾādôn* and YHWH—are rendered in Greek by the word *kyrios*.

After her child is born and weaned, Hannah returns to Shiloh to show Eli her son, Samuel, the fruit of his blessing (1 Sam. 1:26–28). She says: “Oh, my lord [*ʾādôn/kyrios*]! As you live, my lord [*ʾādôn/kyrios*], I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD [YHWH*/kyrios*]. For this child I prayed; and the LORD [YHWH*/kyrios*] has granted me the petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the LORD [YHWH*/kyrios*]; as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD [YHWH*/kyrios*].”

In the Greek version the story quite naturally swings back and forth from the use of *kyrios* (*ʾādôn*) to refer to Eli as a human authority to the use of *kyrios* (YHWH) to refer to the one God of Israel. This semantic swing appears to have created no difficulties translating the sacred text, because as we will see, *kyrios* is capable of referring to both human and divine authorities.

The very same dynamic is in play in what many consider a messianic context. Psalm 110 (Ps. 109 LXX) demonstrates this dramatically and just happens to be the OT text most quoted or alluded to by various NT writers (e.g., Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34; Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 1:3):

> The LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*] says to my lord [*ʾādôn/kyrios*],
> "Sit at my right hand
> until I make your enemies your footstool."

The psalm speaks of the enthronement of the Messiah to the right hand of the LORD God. God promises to establish his rule over friend and foe alike. In the text the first *kyrios* translates the divine name; the second translates *ʾādôn* and refers properly to the Messiah-King. Since *kyrios* translates both words in such close proximity, it is obvious the *kyrios* title had a semantic field broad enough to include both persons in authority and the name of the one God of Israel. As we will show, this becomes constitutive of how NT writers such as Paul appropriate various biblical texts to signal the significance of Jesus.

Before we leave the OT we need to consider briefly those portions written not in Hebrew but in Aramaic. For example, in Dan. 2:47 (see also 5:23) the English word "Lord" is used to translate the Aramaic *mārēʾ*: "The king said to Daniel, 'Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord [*mārēʾ/kyrios*] of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery!" The same Aramaic word is also employed to refer to King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:19, 24 [4:16, 21 MT]). Like *ʾādôn*, *mārēʾ* is used for both human and divine referents. The only appearance of the Aramaic word *mārēʾ* ("lord" or "Lord") in the NT occurs transliterated in 1 Cor. 16:22: "Let anyone be accursed who has no love for the Lord. Our Lord, come [*Marana tha*]!" We will have more to say regarding this expression later.

New Testament

In the NT, the situation is a bit more straightforward because we are dealing with only one language, Greek. The English word "lord" or "Lord" translates primarily two Greek words. The Greek word *despotēs* is rendered in some

versions “lord”—in others, “master”—when referring to slave owners (e.g., 1 Tim. 6:1–2; 1 Pet. 2:18). It is also used in prayerful address to God (e.g., Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24) and to Jesus as Sovereign (Jude 4).

The most significant Greek word translated “lord” or “Lord” in the NT is *kyrios*. Like the Hebrew word *ʾādôn*, the Greek word *kyrios* is employed with regard to divine and human referents. In Greco-Roman antiquity the word was used in various ways: (1) in the vocative form as polite address (Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4.1.57; P.Giss. 61.17; 85.16); (2) in regard to masters or owners of property including slaves, houses, businesses, or land (Aristotle, *Pol.* 2.9; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4.1.59, 116, 145); (3) in expressing the divinity of rulers (P.Oxy. 1.37.5; 2.246.30, 33, 36); (4) in reference to the gods and goddesses of various religions (e.g., P.Oxy. 1.110 [Sarapis]; *CIG* 5070 [Hermes]; Plutarch, *Is. Os.* 40 [Isis]). The same patterns of usage are reflected in the NT (e.g., Matt. 27:63; Mark 12:9; Gal. 4:1; 1 Pet. 3:6; 1 Cor. 8:6–8; Eph. 4:6) with one exception: pious Jews and Christians apparently refuse to call the emperor *kyrios*.

Josephus reports that this is because of the word’s close association with the name of God (*J.W.* 7.10.1 §§418–19). After Masada fell, the Romans thought they had vanquished the Jews. Yet disturbances continued in places as far away as Egypt because the faithful continued “to look upon God as their only Lord and Master” (*J.W.* 7.10.1 §410; Whiston, 770). When they were captured, the rebels endured torture and could not be coerced into confessing that Caesar was lord (*kyrios*). Indeed, they seemed insensitive to pain. What amazed those who watched all of this unfold, however, was the courage of the children. For, Josephus reports, not a single child was so overcome by the torments that he/she named Caesar as lord.

As we have seen above, in Greek versions such as the LXX, *kyrios* designates people who possessed authority: heads of families, husbands of wives, owners of livestock, masters of slaves, and kings (e.g., Gen. 27:29, 37; Exod. 21:4, 28; 1 Sam. 1:15; 2 Sam. 16:4; Isa. 1:3). *Kyrios* also translates several Hebrew words for God, including *ʾadōnāy* (e.g., Josh. 3:11; Ps. 97:5 [96:5 LXX]; Mic. 4:13; Zech. 4:14) and *ʾelōhîm* (e.g., Gen. 21:2; Exod. 3:4; Judg. 6:20; Isa. 61:10; Dan. 1:2, 9).

For our purposes here, however, we want to consider the overwhelming number of times *kyrios* is used to translate the tetragrammaton (more than six thousand times). Exactly how early this translational practice emerged is difficult to say because the manuscript tradition is not uniform. Still, there are good reasons to conclude that Greek-speaking Jews vocalized *kyrios* instead of the divine name when reading Scripture in synagogue services during the late

Second Temple period. This liturgical practice is reflected in the manuscript tradition.

With the language of the LXX resonating in their minds, NT writers employ *kyrios* to refer to God in various contexts. The Synoptic Gospels and Acts frequently refer to God as *kyrios* (e.g., Mark 5:19; 13:20; Matt. 11:25; Acts 17:24). Likewise, the apostle Paul employs the title *kyrios* for God the Father, particularly in several quotations from the OT containing the divine name (e.g., Rom. 4:7–8; 9:27–29; 1 Cor. 3:20; 2 Cor. 6:18). We will consider these in detail later.

The NT's use of *kyrios* in reference to Jesus requires further explanation. It is not uncommon for Jesus to be addressed in the Gospels as *kyrie* in polite address (e.g., Mark 11:3; 14:14; John 6:68; 13:13–16). Such usage requires no thought of his divinity, only respect for him as a rabbi or teacher. Interestingly, Jesus's opponents never call him *kyrie*, "Lord," only "Teacher" or "Rabbi." Perhaps this is because in the Gospels the word appears already to be taking on transcendent significance (e.g., Mark 1:2; Matt. 12:8; John 20:18; 20:28; 21:7). In particular, Jesus's quotation of Ps. 110:1 proves instructive (Mark 12:35–37 and parr.): "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.'" The question posed and explanation offered by Jesus imply an indirect messianic claim. The frequent christological use of Ps. 110 by NT writers demonstrates they interpret this psalm as describing something of Jesus's messianic and transcendent significance (e.g., Acts 2:34; 1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 1:3).

Within Paul's Letters—the earliest NT documents—the apostle employs *kyrios* most frequently as an honorific for Jesus. The confession "Jesus Christ is Lord" and belief in the resurrection stand at the center of his gospel (Rom. 10:9–13). For Paul the church consists of those who call on the name of the Lord, by whom he means the risen Jesus (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:2). In fact, the apostle deems the *kyrios* title an appropriate honorific for Christ precisely because of the resurrection (Rom. 1:3–4). Remarkably, Paul expresses this conviction by associating Jesus with the divine name in OT quotations. For example, in contrast to the many gods and lords worshiped by pagans, Paul reworks the central creed of Israel (Deut. 6:4–6) to include "One God, the Father" and "One Lord, Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 8:6). Though distinct and ultimately subordinate to the Father, this revised Shema links Christ with God's oneness and his name ("Lord"/*kyrios*/YHWH), and credits Jesus as an agent of creation and redemption. In this compact and concentrated form we see a key feature of what made Christianity distinctive in the ancient world.

While scholars debate its significance, the majority considers the Philippian hymn (Phil. 2:6–11) an extraordinary example of the apostle's Christology. In

the hymn's second half, God exalts and bestows on the humbled, crucified Jesus the name above all names (likely "Lord"/*kyrios*/YHWH). Universal acclamation of Jesus is expressed in language taken directly from Isa. 45—the most stridently monotheistic passage in the Hebrew Scriptures. The acclamation "Jesus Christ is Lord" associates Jesus directly with the divine name (*kyrios*/YHWH). Notably, when heavenly, earthly, and under-earthly creatures bow the knee and confess "Jesus Christ is Lord," the will of God has been accomplished (Phil. 2:9–11).

The connection between "Lord" and Spirit is less pronounced in the NT than its patrological[3] and christological associations. Still, Paul brings the Spirit into close association with "Lord": "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17). The context of this passage (3:16–4:6) involves the spiritual transformation that takes place when people behold "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (4:6). Given Paul's use of the term "Lord" elsewhere, it is likely to have some christological import here as well. The link between "Spirit," "Christ," "glory," and "Lord" in this passage suggests that the apostle sees Christ and the Spirit as sharing in the same divine identity.

Summary

So far we have surveyed the use of "lord," "Lord," and "LORD" in English translations of the Christian Scriptures. Lowercase forms of the word are used to refer to humans in authority, while capitalized forms refer to God, Jesus, and possibly the Holy Spirit. The small capitals "LORD" constitutes a special case, because it is used in most modern English translations to represent the divine name. Beneath these English forms, however, lay several Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words. In particular, certain words such as *ʾādôn* (Hebrew), *mārēʾ* (Aramaic), and *kyrios* (Greek) had a breadth of semantic usage, allowing them to be used for both humans in authority and the one God of Israel. These references occur near one another, often only a few words apart. As far as we can tell, the mixture of divine and human references in a single passage caused no confusion to hearers and readers of the text.

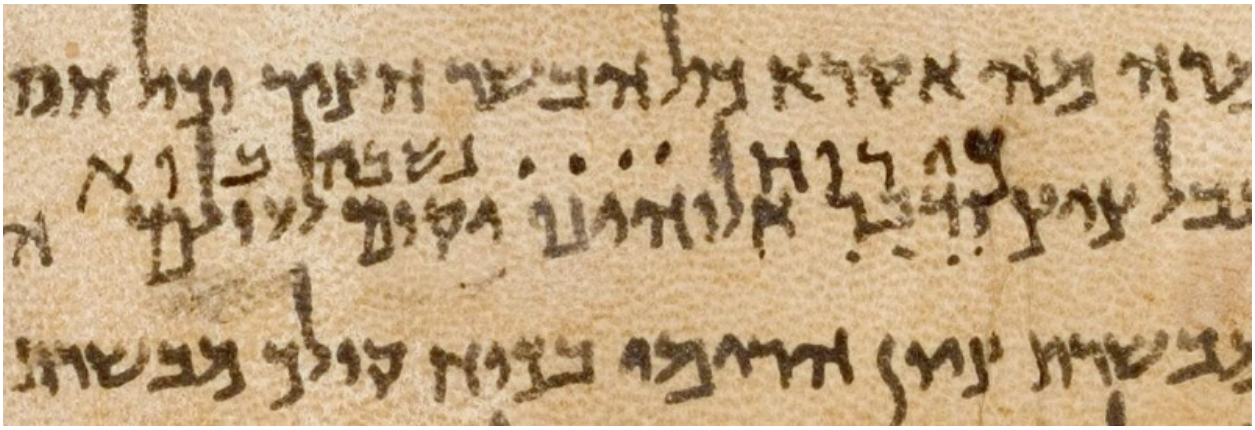
The State of the Text at the Time of Paul

Now that we have considered the state of the biblical texts and translations in our day regarding the term "Lord," let us turn our attention to the state of the biblical texts in Paul's day. In particular, how would the divine name appear in the texts

Paul encountered? Would there have been opportunity for Paul to confuse the name of Israel's God, or its surrogate, with a title for a man in authority? No less significant is a subsidiary question. What customs and practices were common in quoting Scripture, alluding to it, and commenting on it? Since Paul is not a scribe whose task is to faithfully reproduce an original document, how does his custom of quoting Scripture compare with his contemporaries? Given Paul's own statement that he is a "Hebrew born of Hebrews" (Phil. 3:5), and given that Paul writes his letters in Greek, the focus here will be on the state of Greek and Hebrew texts of the OT. It is likely Paul was competent in at least three languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.[4]

Earlier work on Paul explored whether Paul's OT citations were closer to the Hebrew Masoretic text or the Septuagint. The assumption at the time was that there was a fixed Hebrew and Greek text tradition from which Paul drew. Any variations in the quotations were understood as Paul's own interpretative comments or possibly memory lapses—assuming he quoted from memory. Recent assessments challenge these assumptions and show that the Hebrew and Greek biblical texts were not as fixed at this period as previously thought. In particular, the biblical manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrate the fluidity of the textual tradition within a single community's library. It is reasonable to assume that a similar fluidity exists among other Hebrew and Greek Bible texts in the period. When one considers the available manuscripts, that seems to be the case.

With regard to the divine name, the Dead Sea Scrolls offer an interesting picture.[5] Among the Hebrew manuscripts the tetragrammaton (YHWH) is present in a number of biblical and nonbiblical manuscripts. Most copies of Isaiah from Cave 4 have the divine name written in Aramaic script—יהוה. One copy of it, however, contains the divine name and various forms of *ʾelōhîm* ("God") written in Paleo-Hebrew (4QIsa^{c}). In English, it would be as if one were to switch from Times New Roman to a Gothic font when writing the divine name. In addition, some prepositions before the divine name and prefixed conjunctions are also written in the archaic style. What does this say regarding how the name of Israel's God was regarded by copyists, readers, and hearers?

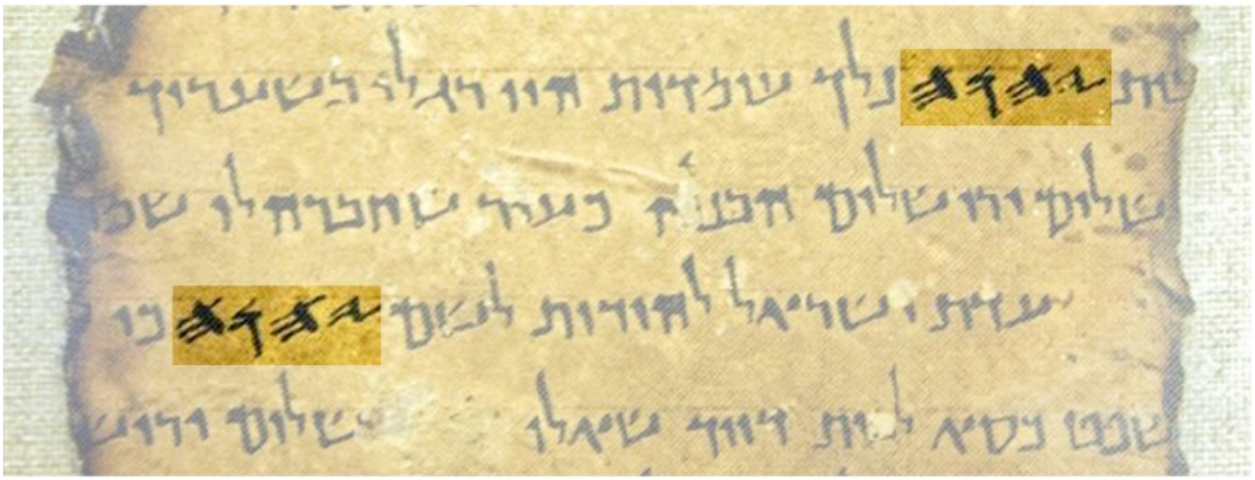


Isaiah 40:7 in the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa[a], col. 33, line 7) from Qumran showing the tetragrammaton represented by four dots.

The famous Isaiah scroll from Cave 1 has the divine name written in Aramaic script; however, in some places it also has four dots written in a row near the middle of the line (e.g., Isa. 40:7; 42:6). In some places the Hebrew *ʾadōnāy* ("Lord") is written above the Aramaic script of YHWH (Isa. 28:16; 30:15; 65:13) as a gloss. Why these variations are present in writing the divine name in this manuscript is unclear; however, it does suggest that the name is to be treated with respect by copyists and readers alike.

11QPs[a] has the Paleo-Hebrew tetragrammaton (143×). Shemaryahu Talmon makes the observation that it is the case that the Paleo-Hebrew text is written only "after the completion of the text in square letters, and not during the actual course of writing."[6] No other divine name or title is given this treatment or accorded this reverence.

Even the nonbiblical manuscripts demonstrate a similar kind of caution with presenting the divine name. The Habakkuk Pesher, for example, renders YHWH in Paleo-Hebrew script (1QpHab 6.14). The sectarian document known as the Community Rule represents the divine name as a series of four dots in its quotation of Isa. 40:3 in a practice similar to the Cave 1 Isaiah scroll (1QS 8.14).



A fragment with portions of Pss. 121–23 from a Qumran Psalm scroll (11QPs^{a}, col. 3) showing the tetragrammaton in Paleo-Hebrew.

Greek manuscripts from the period reveal a similar fluidity when dealing with the divine name. A Greek version of Leviticus from Cave 4 writes the divine name as ΙΑΩ with a space before and after the name; otherwise the manuscript is *scriptio continua*. In a Greek Minor Prophets scroll from Naḥal Ḥever, dated to the late first century BCE, the divine name is written in Paleo-Hebrew twenty-eight times. In P.Fouad 266 the original scribe appears to have left large spaces for the divine name, framed by a dot on either side of the spaces. Then YHWH in Aramaic script is inserted in the spaces indicated by the dots, apparently by a second hand. Interestingly, in the course of copying, one space is left blank. A similar procedure appears to have been followed in P.Oxy. 4.656, but in this case *kyrios* is added by a second hand. There are also Greek manuscripts in which the divine name is represented by Π Ι Π Ι, presumably because of its similar appearance to the tetragrammaton in Aramaic script.

To sum up the manuscript evidence, we have the following representations of the divine name:

Hebrew Texts

1. YHWH written in Aramaic script (4QIsa$^{a–f}$, 4Q158, 4Q162, 4Q163)
2. YHWH written in Paleo-Hebrew (4QIsa^{c}, 1QpHab, 11QPs^{a})
3. YHWH represented by four dots (1QIsa^{a}, 1QS, 4Q175, 4Q176)
4. YHWH in Aramaic script glossed by *ʾadōnāy* (1QIsa^{a})

Greek Texts

1. YHWH written in Aramaic script (P.Fouad 266)
2. YHWH written in Paleo-Hebrew (8ḤevXIIgr, P.Oxy. 50.3522)
3. YHWH transliterated as ΙΑΩ (4QLXXLev^{b})
4. YHWH represented as Π I Π I
5. YHWH translated or written as *kyrios* (P.Oxy. 4.656)

Now exactly how many of these variations Paul may have encountered when reading or referring to biblical or extrabiblical texts is impossible to know. It is likely that he had significant exposure to them as a hearer and not just as a reader in the synagogue. Jonathan Siegel makes the case that the special treatment in writing the tetragrammaton originated "in an actual circumvention in pronunciation."[7] This is likely true. Consider 4Q134, a biblical paraphrase (see also 4Q158). In this document "YHWH" is written in square characters but always preceded by two thick dots written as a semicolon. John Strugnell explains this as a warning to the reader not to pronounce the name as written but to use a substitute word.[8] Siegel elaborates: "A distinction in writing has its basis in a distinction in pronunciation. . . . What was too sacred to be pronounced was also too sacred to be written normally."[9]

Manuscript erasures offer some evidence as well. In 11QPs^{a} the scribe or second hand apparently did not hesitate to erase mistakes (28×) except when it came to the divine name. In two cases the tetragrammaton is written superfluously in Paleo-Hebrew. These were not erased. Instead, each Paleo-Hebrew name has dots written above and below to cancel the word from reading but not from existence. Centuries later the Jerusalem Talmud takes up the problem: What to do if a scribe makes a mistake when writing the divine name? Rabbis debated whether the name, its attached suffixes, and pronouns could be erased (y. Meg. 1.9 [71d]). The debate suggests that there was no agreement among the sages on how these instances should be handled. The Qumran scrolls reflect the lack of certainty scribes had about the matter. Obviously, once a divine name had been written, it stood written and should not be blotted out.

Philo of Alexandria may also provide evidence for the state of the biblical text around the first century. Generally, in his biblical quotations and in his commentaries the divine name is rendered *kyrios*. From this some have concluded that the biblical manuscripts Philo encountered contained *kyrios* for the divine name. The problem, of course, is that we do not have Philo's autographs; we have copies of them, thanks to Christian scholars who thought it wise to preserve and transmit his words to later generations. Given the Christian

predilection to relate *kyrios* to the divine name, the extant copies may represent Christian scribal sensibilities and not Philo's own practice. So we cannot say for certain how the divine name appeared in the biblical manuscripts Philo used.

Still, it is important to distinguish the state of the biblical texts from the custom of quoting Scripture. It may very well be that Philo, the exegete, knew and read biblical manuscripts in which the tetragrammaton was written in Paleo-Hebrew or Aramaic script, not *kyrios*. But he is not a copyist; he is an exegete, a philosopher, a commentator on Scripture. So he probably quoted Scripture the same way he would have pronounced it, by translating the divine name *kyrios*. Although Philo is earlier than Origen, the church father mentions a practice current in his day: when a reader comes across the tetragrammaton in a text, he vocalizes *kyrios* (Origen, *Selecta in Psalmos* 2.2 [PG 12.1104B4–9]). We should also take note of the more ambiguous statement in the Mishnah Sotah: when reciting the priestly blessing (Num. 6:24–26) in the temple, readers pronounce the name as written, but in the Diaspora they substitute a word (m. Sotah 7.6). The practice of substituting a word for the name in the synagogues is well attested. In the final analysis, the Greek biblical manuscripts known to Philo may have contained the tetragrammaton or some form of transliteration for it; nevertheless, the Alexandrian quotes Scripture in his writings the way it was usually pronounced, *kyrios*. It may well be that Philo, not Christian scribes, is the one responsible for the presence of *kyrios* for the divine name in his biblical quotations and expositions.

A number of scholars have taken note of the variety of ways the tetragrammaton is written in Greek manuscripts and offer some analysis for the extant manuscript evidence. In particular, P. W. Skehan reconstructs four stages of development.

1. In the oldest Greek manuscripts YHWH is represented by ΙΑΩ (4QLXXLev^{b}). This may have been read "Yaho" (= יהו) and is attested as early as the fifth century BCE.
2. The name is written in Aramaic script (P.Fouad 266).
3. The name is written in Paleo-Hebrew.
4. *Kyrios* translates YHWH in the final stage of development.[10]

Martin Hengel offers a similar scheme for the use of *kyrios* for the divine name in the LXX tradition.[11]

Albert Pietersma, however, challenges these reconstructions and describes what he calls an "archaizing process" in the writing of the divine name that took

place at Qumran. This may well have coincided with conservative reactions against the encroachment of Hellenistic ways. Indeed, he notes: “The paleohebrew tetragram in Greek witnesses is not the oldest but apparently the youngest. Both in the Hebrew MSS from Qumran and in our earliest Greek MSS there is clear evidence that the divine name was the object of revisionary activity.”[12] Pietersma’s own work focuses on the manuscripts of the Pentateuch among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Yet, he thinks there are good reasons to conclude that early on translators rendered the name as *kyrios*, and later revisionary activities replaced it with the translations of Greek, Aramaic, and Paleo-Hebrew renderings of the divine name in Greek manuscripts.

The examples we cite—and there are others—indicate that there was no one way the divine name was written in Greek or Hebrew biblical texts around the time of Paul. This includes entire scrolls held in synagogue collections or excerpts used for polemical, liturgical, or devotional purposes.[13] What is evident, however, is that the divine name and in some cases the spaces and letters around the divine name were treated differently, with great reverence. The tendency to write the name in Paleo-Hebrew or to represent it with four dots and the reluctance to erase the name provide early material evidence for the reverence accorded the divine name. Other evidence for this reverence is provided by the following:

1. The kneeling and bowing of priests and people when the high priest speaks the divine name on the Day of Atonement in the recitation of Lev. 16:30 (m. Yoma 6.2); see too the *proskynesis* of the faithful when Simon ben Onias utters the divine name of the priestly blessing from Num. 6:24–26 (Sir. 50:20–21; m. Sotah 7.6).
2. The custom of vocalizing the divine name in temple ceremonies but using a substitute word in the Diaspora (m. Sotah 7.6).
3. The cautions expressed regarding speaking the divine name (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.12.4 §§275–76; Philo, *Moses* 2.114).[14]
4. The threat of capital punishment against those who pronounce the name (m. Sanh. 7.5).[15]

Paul encountered this textual diversity and reverence accorded the divine name in the synagogues he attended both before and after the Christophany. In other words, the apostle was likely aware that *kyrios* was the accepted vocalization and/or translation of YHWH in Greek-speaking contexts. So when Paul quotes a text containing the divine name from the LXX, he knows he is

making reference to the unique, covenant name of Israel's God. Furthermore, on those occasions when he applies these *kyrios* texts to Jesus, he cannot be ignorant of the theological implications of applying the name to the Messiah.

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1. Unless noted otherwise, all scriptural quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.
2. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of the Septuagint are my own.
3. Throughout the book I use the word "patrological" not as a reference to the church fathers—its customary usage—but in relation to associations and references to God the Father. In other words, I use it in parallel to "christological."
4. Timothy H. Lim, *Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Paul's Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 148, concludes that Paul is trilingual, competent in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
5. For other representations of the divine name in the scrolls, see Donald W. Parry, "4QSam^{a} and the Tetragrammaton," in *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 106–25.
6. Quoted in Jonathan P. Siegel, "The Employment of Paleo-Hebrew Characters for the Divine Names at Qumran in the Light of Tannaitic Sources," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 42 (1971): 159–72.
7. Ibid., 171.
8. Quoted in ibid., 172.
9. Ibid.
10. P. W. Skehan, "The Divine Name at Qumran, in the Masada Scroll, and in the Septuagint," *BIOSCS* 13 (1980): 238–44.
11. Martin Hengel, "The Interpenetration of Judaism and Hellenism in the Pre-Maccabean Period," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 2, *The Hellenistic Age*, ed. W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 197–98.
12. Albert Pietersma, "KYRIOS or Tetragram: A Renewed Quest for the Original LXX," in *De Septuaginta: Studies in Honour of John William Wevers on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. A Pietersma and Claude Cox (Mississauga, ON: Benben, 1984), 85–101 (quote on 99).
13. Lim, *Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries*, 156, analyzes excerpts from the Dead Sea Scrolls and Paul's Letters, concluding that there likely existed "a number of biblical anthologies which circulated in Jewish and Christian circles" at the time. These excerpts would have contained important and frequently needed biblical themes.
14. Philo (*Moses* 2.114) speaks of the name of four letters that only those with purified ears can hear and purified tongues can speak, and only in the holy place.
15. Darrell L. Bock, *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism and the Final Examination of Jesus*, WUNT 2/106 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 111, writes: "The official rabbinic position is that the use of the divine Name constitutes the only clear case of capital blasphemy (*m Sanh* 7.5)." Though the Mishnah was not codified until around 200 CE, this rule of blasphemy may have extended back into the first century CE as well. Even if capital blasphemy would not have been charged, we can still understand that the faithful would have exercised care in their use of the name.

2

Kyrios/Lord as a Christological Title

Let's begin this chapter by sketching the rough edge of a debate that has been ongoing among scholars of early Christianity regarding how early the *kyrios* title was applied to Jesus and what the devout would have meant when they used it. Early in the twentieth century Wilhelm Bousset argued that it was not until Christianity moved into a Hellenistic environment that the title *kyrios* ("Lord") would have been applied to Jesus. Jewish monotheism, Bousset and his followers believed, would have precluded such a confession among the earliest Palestinian Jewish Christians. Accordingly, how pagans used the term determined what Christians meant when they called Jesus "Lord." More recently, Larry Hurtado has proposed that it is possible to account for the christological use of *kyrios* and religious devotion to Christ by appeal to Jewish notions of divine agency and powerful religious experiences that convinced Jesus's earliest Jewish followers that he had conquered death and was now clothed with divine glory.[1] The *maranatha* invocation "Our Lord, come" (1 Cor. 16:22; see also Rev. 22:20; Did. 10.6) provides evidence that Aramaic-speaking Christians called Jesus "Lord" either as an invocation of his presence in worship or as a prayer-appeal for his return. That Paul does not translate this Aramaic phrase in a letter addressed to Greek-speaking Christians in Corinth indicates it was already an accepted feature of Christian liturgy and practice.

Now, as one might expect, Paul is especially important in these discussions because his writings represent the earliest literary activity available to us. Yet a major question confronting Paul's use of *kyrios* involves its setting in the early church. Three options have been suggested: (1) Some scholars accept the notion that Aramaic-speaking congregations in Palestine were the first to acclaim Jesus as *kyrios* and did so with a view to his divinity. (2) Others, assuming that such an acclamation among Jewish monotheists would not have been possible, argue that Greek-speaking churches outside Palestine provided the initial setting.[2] (3) Yet others march a fine line between these two approaches and propose that Jesus

was called *kyrios* in the earliest Palestinian churches but not in a divine sense. According to some schemes, the term *kyrios* meant something different to those first Jewish believers in Christ than it did to later gentile believers who composed Paul's churches. Let's delve deeper into these positions through their representative thinkers.

Wilhelm Bousset

The year 2013 marked the one hundredth anniversary of the publication in German of Wilhelm Bousset's magisterial work *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenäus*. Although the original German edition was published in 1913, a revised edition appeared in 1921, a year after Bousset died of a heart attack. He was only fifty-four.

Not until 1970 was the book translated into English. By then it had gone through six German editions. The fifth edition carries an "introductory word" by Rudolf Bultmann. In 2013 Baylor University Press published a new edition of *Kyrios Christos* in English with an introduction by Larry W. Hurtado. The importance of *Kyrios Christos* is clearly evident in this brief history. Few books in religious studies are translated into a major language sixty years after they first appear. Fewer still are considered significant enough to be published again after one hundred years. For this reason William Baird calls Wilhelm Bousset "the brightest star in the galaxy of the history of religion school" and *Kyrios Christos* his most important work.[3]

Bousset and his other colleagues in the history-of-religion school sought to understand the rise of Christianity as a historical phenomenon without defaulting to an analysis of the dogmas and truth claims of early Christianity. To put it another way, their essential questions were historical, not theological. As a result, rather than limiting their data to the NT, the history-of-religion scholars situated the NT within a range of early Christian documents. Similarly, rather than privileging Christianity, they sought to locate Christianity within a range of religious options in the Mediterranean world. So early Christianity was just one of many Mediterranean religions, and the NT was just one part of early Christian literary production. As much as possible, the history-of-religion approach sought to understand the Christian religion broadly in its historical context. That meant situating the origins of the Christian faith within Mediterranean religions generally and drawing from various Christian sources, not just the NT.

One of the major contributions of Bousset related to his desire to explain in historical terms the rise of religious devotion to Jesus within a Greco-Roman

environment. If Christ devotion is not the most remarkable feature of early Christianity, it is clearly one of the most. At the heart of that devotion were beliefs and practices centered on the affirmation "Jesus is Lord [*kyrios*]."

Today modern scholars applaud Bousset cautiously because his reconstruction of Second Temple Judaism has not stood the test of time. As a result, his analysis of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity has proved more false than true. The discovery of many documents—including the Dead Sea Scrolls and dozens of pseudepigrapha—and reassessments of the new data have led scholars to a better sense of the kind of religion Judaism was in the first century. Indeed, most scholars today stress the variety of Judaisms over against a single, monolithic religion. Like many of his contemporaries, Bousset had a dim view of *Spätjudentum* (late Judaism). According to them, the Jewish religion had reached its high point in the era of the writing prophets, more than five hundred years before the birth of Jesus. It gradually ran out of steam on its own. Ironically, on foreign soil in Babylon elements of Jewish religion got a new lease on life, the creativity funded by Jews' close encounters with Iranian and later Greek religion. If the Jewish religion had reached its zenith in the era of the writing prophets, it reached its nadir in the late Second Temple period prior to the birth of Christ.

According to Bousset, the title *kyrios* as applied to Jesus originated not in a Jewish setting but in Greek-speaking churches outside Palestine. This new title displaced earlier christological terms such as "Son of Man" and "Christ," which were understood as titles for a strictly human agent in the early Aramaic-speaking communities. *Kyrios* became the new, preferred title of the Hellenistic churches, and Paul inherited and used it.[4]

The original Christian communities, with their eschatological "Son of Man" figure, emphasized the future of the church, when the Messiah would return to restore all things (Acts 3:21). As the movement grew and moved beyond Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth, it came into contact with gentiles and took on a decidedly gentile flavor. Rather than emphasizing the future consummation, gentile Christianity stressed the present experience of the risen Lord in its worshiping community. Baptisms, celebrations of the Lord's Supper, miraculous works, and inspired utterances during worship convinced these gentile believers in Christ that they were experiencing the presence of the risen Lord. Within this context *kyrios* became a proper title for Jesus.[5]

Bousset concluded that Hellenistic Christianity originated and flourished in Syria, where the *kyrios* title was first used in the worship of Jesus as "*Lord*." He offered this caution, however:

> No one thought this out, and no theologian created it; people did not read it out of the sacred book of the Old Testament. They would hardly have dared without further ado to make such a direct transferal of the holy name of the almighty God—actually almost a deification of Jesus. Such proceedings take place in the unconscious, in the uncontrollable depths of the group psyche of a community; this is self-evident, it lay as it were in the air, that the first Hellenistic Christian communities gave the title κύριος to their cult hero.[6]

Interestingly, Bousset considered this explosive move to be an unintentional and unreflective response based on the churches' religious experiences. Since this took place away from its Jewish roots, it could have nothing to do with a rereading of the sacred Scriptures and/or a reassessment of Jewish tradition. Despite its "distance" from Palestine—both geographically and ideologically—Bousset does not believe anyone would have dared transfer the name of the Almighty God over to Jesus. That would have amounted, according to Bousset, to "actually almost a deification of Jesus." Precisely. Bousset understood, though he certainly denied, the implications of applying to Jesus a word associated so closely with the unspeakable name of Israel's God in a Jewish setting in Palestine.

Two reasons stand behind the theory of an extra-Palestinian origin to invoking Jesus as *kyrios*. First, the monotheistic heritage of the first Palestinian believers would have prevented their assigning to Jesus, a man of recent memory, such an exalted status. Bousset stated: "Now it becomes clear that it was no accident that we did not encounter the title Kyrios on Palestinian soil in the gospel tradition. Such a development would not have been possible here. This placing of Jesus in the center of the cultus of a believing community, this peculiar doubling of the object of veneration in worship, is conceivable only in an environment in which Old Testament monotheism no longer ruled unconditionally and with absolute security."[7] So Jesus could have been acclaimed "Lord" only outside a Palestinian context.

Second, literary and material evidence from Greek and Roman culture makes it likely that only within this context could Jesus have been described as some sort of deity. Ancient writers used the *kyrios* predicate widely in reference to the ruler cults common in Roman, Greek, and Egyptian society. One writer, for example, calls Augustus "God and Lord Caesar" (*theos kai kyrios Kaisar Autokratōr*).[8] Epictetus refers to Caesar as Lord (*kyrios*) of all.[9] Josephus relates how the Jewish faithful, including their children, refused to name Caesar as "lord."[10] Many other texts demonstrate clearly that during the first century CE rulers were often acclaimed as *kyrioi*.[11]

Not only did faithful citizens of Rome and other empires utilize the *kyrios* predicate in the adoration of their rulers, but they also applied it freely to the

gods of the mystery religions. Supplicants referred to Isis as “the Lord God of the earth” (*hē kyria tēs gēs theos*).[12] Others likewise used the *kyrios* title in reference to Zeus, Poseidon, Helios, Dionysius, Osiris, and other gods.[13]

Based on evidence such as this, Bousset argues that Hellenistic culture, with its emperor cults, gods, and goddesses, provided the kind of setting in which it became not only possible but popular to invoke Jesus as *kyrios* and make him the cult figure of early Christanity. So *kyrios* was applied to Jesus first within, and only within, the environs of the Diaspora churches, where there were gods-a-plenty to be reverenced and served.

The Legacy of Bousset

After Bousset wrote *Kyrios Christos*, many scholars accepted his proposals, some wholesale, some with modifications. Ferdinand Hahn, for example, built on Bousset’s findings but sensed that there were weaknesses in his reconstruction. In particular, Bousset’s analysis of the contribution and complexities of early Christianity needed to be reconsidered. For example, Hahn concluded that the early Palestinian churches had referred to Jesus as “Lord” (*kyrios*), but for the first generation of believers it had nothing to do with his divinity or their worship of him. Since the Synoptic Gospels parallel “teacher” and “Lord” (*kyrios*), Hahn reasoned that the original use of the *kyrios* title for Jesus had nothing to do with assertions of his deity; instead, it was a way of acknowledging Jesus as their honored teacher.

Hahn agreed with Bousset that since *kyrios* played an essential role in the practices of various Mediterranean religions as well as the emperor cult, the *kyrios* title must have had some effect on gospel proclamation and community formation outside Palestine, where Jewish monotheism was not pervasive. The lure of pagan ideas on gentile followers of Jesus therefore made it possible for Jesus to be worshiped as divine in gentile churches. Interestingly, Hahn claimed that this was not exactly new; it was the culmination of a long process of christological development that originated in earlier stages.

Hahn also introduced another stage between Jesus and Paul. Whereas Bousset thought the Hellenistic Greek church stood between Paul and the Palestinian church, Hahn asserted that two communities separated Paul from the earliest believers: (1) the Hellenistic Jewish church and (2) the Hellenistic Greek church.[14] Hahn’s proposal created further distance between Jesus’s earliest followers and Paul. We could visualize it this way:

Bousset	Jesus	→	Palestinian Jewish church	→	Hellenistic Greek church	→	Paul		
Hahn	Jesus	→	Palestinian Jewish church	→	Hellenistic Jewish church	→	Hellenistic Greek church	→	Paul

According to Hahn's theory, the Palestinian followers of Jesus considered him their rabbi and teacher, while the gentile churches worshiped him as their "Lord." Under this reconstruction Paul's Christology must be understood as a significant departure from the Christology of the earliest believers. To borrow a biological analogy, gentile Christianity was not just the adaptation of a species; it was a new species. Other scholars followed Bousset as well: Rudolf Bultmann, Werner Kramer, and more recently Maurice Casey.[15]

Almost immediately strong reactions against Bousset came from various quarters. One of the most significant challenges to Bousset came from J. Gresham Machen in his book *The Origin of Paul's Religion*.[16] He argued against privileging Greco-Roman influences on Paul and upheld his Jewishness as the dominant factor in the formation of his religion.[17]

Machen challenged Bousset's reconstruction of the christological use of *kyrios* in several areas. First, Bousset maintained that the Synoptic Gospels reflect the theology and practice of the earliest Christian communities. He noted that Jesus is not frequently hailed as *kyrios* in the Synoptics, and when he is, it is generally a form of polite address that lacks any christological significance. Therefore, he concluded, *kyrios* was not a title for Jesus among first-generation Aramaic-speaking believers. Machen countered, arguing that the infrequent use of *kyrios* for Jesus in the Synoptics carries great christological significance. In particular, he pointed to Mark 12:35–37 (cf. Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:45), the crux of which is a quotation of Ps. 110:1 (109:1 LXX), which begins "The Lord [*kyrios*] said to my lord [*kyrios*]." Jesus poses this psalm as a scriptural riddle for the scribes. If David calls him "Lord" (*kyrios*), how can he be David's son? Jesus doesn't answer the riddle, of course, but he leaves it hanging in the air for his followers and detractors to ponder. In the psalm David refers to his own son as *kyrios* seated at God's right hand, but *kyrios* translates both the divine name (a clear reference to the unspeakable name of Israel's God) and *ʾādôn*, a reference to David's royal son. Indeed, when one reads the entire Gospel of Mark, or any of the Synoptics for that matter, one comes away with the impression that Jesus is more than an honored teacher; he is the embodiment of the God of Israel.[18] Bousset attempted to explain away the significance of this quotation by appealing to the fact that the LXX does not differentiate between the divine *kyrios* and human *kyrios*. But it is exactly this ambiguity that Mark wishes to

exploit. Machen further pointed out that the title “Christ” is not frequent in the Gospels either; yet Bousset put great stock in “Christ” being a crucial feature of the Jerusalem church’s understanding of Jesus.

Second, Machen disputed Bousset’s claim that Paul’s christological use of *kyrios* originated in Christian communities in Antioch, Damascus, and/or Tarsus. He appealed to the commonsense meaning of the phrase “the brother of the Lord” in Gal. 1:19 as evidence that this sort of language must have been common in Judea and Galilee. Likewise, he contended that the *maranatha* invocation (1 Cor. 16:22) demonstrates that the Aramaic-speaking churches addressed Jesus in prayer as “Lord” (*maranatha* = “Our Lord, come”; cf. Rev. 22:20).

Third, Machen challenged Bousset’s contention that *kyrios* became a christological title in churches far removed geographically and religiously from Palestine because of the intolerance of Christian monotheists like Paul toward pagan gods. When one takes seriously 1 Cor. 8:4–6 and 10:14–22, it is hard to imagine Paul or other Jewish Christians identifying Jesus with the pagan cult deities worshiped in pagan temples across the Mediterranean. Machen admitted the mood of the era was syncretistic for pagans, but it was anything but that for Jews, who stubbornly recited the Shema and endured martyrdom rather than give in to pagan rulers who insisted they worship like their non-Jewish neighbors. Christianity, Machen argued, was forged in the strong monotheistic heritage of Judaism, not in the shadow of pagan temples. Therefore, for Machen, the Greek word *kyrios* as used in the NT as a title for Jesus does not indicate dependence on pagan ruler cults or mystery religions; rather, it indicates only dependence on the Greek language. If the good news of Jesus was to make inroads into the prevailing culture—where Greek was the dominant language—it was going to have to do so on the back of the Greek language.

A. E. J. Rawlinson presented another early challenge to Bousset.[19] For him the two fundamental questions are similar to Machen’s: To what extent did Paul the apostle to the gentiles remain a Jew? To what extent did he succumb to the syncretistic mood that characterized non-Jewish life?

Rawlinson criticized Bousset for so easily divorcing Paul from his heritage. Following Albert Schweitzer,[20] Rawlinson concluded that the apostle considered Christianity not a new religion but “simply Judaism with its centre of gravity shifted in consequence of the new era.”[21] After all, Paul speaks of the gospel as “the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). He consistently quotes and argues from the standpoint of the OT, even though his letters are addressed to Greek-speaking audiences. He often speaks with pride concerning his Jewish background and

heritage (e.g., Gal. 1:13–14; Phil. 3:4–6). His letters betray only limited knowledge of Greek literature or philosophy.[22] Moreover, in line with Jewish tradition, he considers idolatry shameful and pagan sacrifices as offerings to demons (1 Cor. 10:20). Given all of this, Rawlinson questioned whether Paul would have been so eager to borrow central ideas and practices about the key figure of early Christianity from pagans.[23]

Ultimately, in Rawlinson's view, the *maranatha* invocation (1 Cor. 16:22) is the Achilles' heel of Bousset's theory. It provides irrefutable evidence that the title "Lord" (*mari*) was available and used in the Aramaic-speaking congregations with reference to Jesus. Despite Bousset's insistence that this formula does not mean that early Christians were worshiping Jesus, it does indicate that inherent within the movement from the beginning was a belief and practice that situated Jesus in an exalted status as more than a man, as one who could be present whenever the church gathered and called on him in prayer.

Oscar Cullmann seconded Rawlinson's critique of Bousset and argued that 1 Cor. 16:22 was indeed the Achilles' heel of Bousset's reconstruction of early Christianity. He considered the *maranatha* invocation the oldest liturgical formula in the NT. Properly understood, it is a prayer ("Our Lord, come!"), likely used in a eucharistic setting. For Cullmann, Bousset was too quick to propose that the worship of Jesus took place only later, away from its original Jewish setting. If one sets aside preconceived notions about what could or could not have happened in early Christianity, Cullmann deemed it impossible to explain the Aramaic *maranatha* except as a formula expressing the cultic veneration of Christ by the original, Aramaic-speaking churches.[24]

The Pillars of Bousset's Project

Bousset's theory of a Hellenistic origin for the christological use of *kyrios* rests on three pillars. Each of these deserves comment and, in some cases, criticism.

First, Bousset and those who followed him assumed that a religious and cultural dichotomy existed between Palestinian Jewish and Hellenistic Greek churches in the opening decades of the Jesus movement. Each group, he and his followers thought, had its own needs, language, and ways of expressing its faith in and devotion to Christ. If this were the case, then there must also have been significant differences in the features of Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism. But was this, in fact, the case? Were these communal structures present in the early church, particularly prior to Paul's conversion, which most scholars believe happened only a few years after the execution of Jesus? Did Palestine somehow

escape the Hellenizing forces that shaped so much of the Mediterranean world? Was Greek cultural engineering, which began in Palestine under the Seleucids and continued under the Romans, ineffective at making inroads in Jewish life? Was Palestine an island cut off from the rest of the continent? Two scholars addressed these issues extensively: W. D. Davies and Martin Hengel.

At mid-century, in the shadow of the Holocaust and in the light of Dead Sea Scrolls research, scholars were ready to reassess the prevailing orthodoxy of the history-of-religion school. Perhaps no one did more at the time to reassert the Jewishness of Jesus and Paul than W. D. Davies. In his sea change book, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, W. D. Davies examined relevant linguistic and cultural data, including (1) the extent of the use of Greek language in Palestine, including Greek loan words in the Talmud; (2) the presence of Greek-speaking synagogues in Jerusalem (e.g., Acts 6:9); (3) Paul's preference for the Greek OT in his letters; and (4) rabbinic permissions for the use of Greek in biblical translations and religious duties. He concluded that "there was a considerable reciprocal interchange of thought between the Judaism of Palestine and that of the Diaspora."[25] In other words, there is no basis for understanding Palestinian Judaism as Bousset and his followers had done; it was not a "watertight compartment" against Greco-Roman influences.

Martin Hengel carried out a more exhaustive study of the evidence in his two-volume work, *Judaism and Hellenism*. He concluded that the hellenization of Palestine, which began in the upper classes of society in the third century BCE, made its way to the general population during the next two centuries. As evidence he cited (1) Greek loan words in the Talmud, (2) the use of Greek names in Palestine, (3) the erection of a gymnasium in Jerusalem by the high priest Jason (2 Macc. 4:7–17), (4) Greek education, (5) the writing of Jewish literature and history in Greek, and (6) tombstone inscriptions written in both Greek and Aramaic.[26] According to Hengel, the usual distinction made in NT scholarship between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism needed to be abandoned: "From about the middle of the third century BCE *all Judaism* must be designated '*Hellenistic Judaism*' in the strict sense."[27]

The work of Davies and Hengel is sufficient to topple the first pillar erected by Bousset. Both scholars demonstrate that Palestinian Judaism, along with the rest of the known world, had gradually succumbed to the invasive and provocative power of Hellenism. So no evidence exists to draw a sharp line to demarcate Palestinian from Diaspora Judaism. If one removes that line, then it is questionable whether one can continue to draw a neat line dividing Palestinian Jewish from Hellenistic Greek Christianity. As Hengel pointed out, it is pointless to speak of separate Jewish and Greek churches; from the beginning Christianity

consisted of mixed churches, where the Jewish Christians remained the spiritual leaders and spokespersons for doctrine.

Second, Bousset also presupposed that the *kyrios* title as used in Greco-Roman political and religious contexts is identical with the *kyrios* title used for Jesus by Paul and other early Christians. For Bousset and his followers, pagan practice determined Christian practice. But this second pillar of Bousset's project faces serious objections: (1) the late date of the sources he cited and (2) the antagonism Paul and other Christians felt for paganism.

In the nineteenth century it became commonplace for scholars to point out parallels between early Christianity and other religions present—or assumed to be present—in the Mediterranean world. In the century that led up to the Holocaust, parallels were sought and found—let the reader understand—in nearly every religion except Judaism. But identifying parallels can be slippery business, and "parallelomania," as it is often called, was a serious disorder that took many a NT scholar off track.[28] In order for a parallel to be authentic, it has to be more than similar and more than coincidental; one has to have been borrowed or adopted (consciously or unconsciously) by the other. Proving that is difficult; it is much easier just to assume it. Take, for example, two contemporary religions that have a sacred meal. How can these two practices be related? Four possibilities exist:

1. The practice in religion A is borrowed from religion B.
2. The practice in religion B is borrowed from religion A.
3. The practices of religions A and B are borrowed from another (earlier) source independently.
4. The practices of religions A and B are innovations independent of any source.

Of the possibilities above, only 1–3 represent authentic parallels. Possibility 4 is not a parallel because any similarity is coincidental and not the source of the other. Since food is essential to life and meals are central to communal identity, one can account for some similarities between religions A and B in generic, not genealogical, ways. This means, of course, that an authentic parallel must be based on some available, contemporary influence. The origins of a first-century CE religious movement cannot be determined by what is clearly happening in a third-century CE community. Furthermore, without direct evidence of one influencing the other, it is easier to imagine a parallel that doesn't exist simply because the interpreter thinks it should. Likewise, it is easy to assume without

further evidence that a word or phrase used in one place must mean the same thing in another. Larry Hurtado offers a helpful caution: “We must also recognize the responsibility of all historical work to do justice to the peculiarities of each example of religious phenomena, and we must avoid determining the meaning of a term, concept, belief or practice too heavily on the basis of its occurrence in other sources and groups.”[29] So, in light of these, how does Bousset’s second pillar hold up? Did the christological use of *kyrios* originate in pagan cult figures?

In constructing his version of early Christian history, Bousset does not seem to have been controlled sufficiently by the data, for the sources he used were often too late to have influenced Christianity in its infancy. So, for example, he consistently argued that early Christians were influenced significantly by the practices of the mystery religions despite the fact that the mysteries were not prominent until after the second century CE. In addition, the beliefs and practices of these religions were not as widespread or influential as Bousset and his followers initially thought. Perhaps more than anything, however, is the fact that Christian beliefs and practices stood in such stark contrast to the supposedly prominent mystery religions. Methodologically, for parallel hunters more significant and closer connections could be discovered in Paul’s Jewish background.

So, is it correct to understand the Christian confession “Jesus is Lord [*kyrios*]” in terms of the religion devoted to Lord (*kyrios*) Sarapis? Or is it best to interpret the affirmation “Jesus is Lord” in light of the politically expedient “Caesar is Lord”? While both statements might have political overtones, it is unclear that the pagan version “Caesar is Lord” served as any sort of model for the Christian confession. In fact, if it served any purpose, it was likely a “negative stimulus.”[30] Christians and pagans alike viewed the confession “Jesus is Lord” as a subversive act against the power of the state. Given the rapid rise of the Christian movement and the uniqueness of its claims about Jesus, the only correspondences to pagan phenomena are likely to be incidental and verbal. Koine (common) Greek has only so many words in its arsenal for describing religious phenomena. The word “God” in English offers a useful analogy. Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists in the United States may all use the word “God” but mean different things by it. And what they mean is derived not from one another but from factors internal to the faiths themselves. Although a common language exists, it still ends up separating one faith from another.

But there is another compelling reason not to go along with Bousset’s suggestion that the christological use of *kyrios* in Paul and the NT originated in pagan practice. Consider Paul’s role as the apostle to the gentiles. He and his

coworkers were responsible for translating the Christian message for gentile audiences, a gospel that centered on the person and work of Jesus. Given Paul's disposition toward pagan practices, how likely is it that Christ's emissary would have passively permitted his message to be shaped and fundamentally changed under pagan influences? As a Jew Paul despised idolatry and thought it was at the root of what was wrong with the world (e.g., Rom. 1:18–23). In 1 Cor. 10:20–21 Paul writes: "No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons." The apostle does not mince words here. Pagan sacrifices to idols are offerings to demons, and Christ believers must have nothing to do with them. Similarly, in 2 Cor. 6:14–16a he advises: "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness? What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?" The sentiment of this passage is similar to what we see elsewhere in Paul, even if some of the language is unique. No agreement exists, no fellowship is possible, no partnership is advisable between Christians and unbelievers. The difference is stark: light to darkness, righteousness to lawlessness, Christ to Satan, the temple of the living God to the lifelessness of idolatry.

If this reflects Paul's attitude toward outsiders and their idolatry, how likely is it that he would have allowed his central confession about Jesus to become misshapen through the influx of pagan ideas? Paul may have desired to win over gentiles, but would he have run the risk of losing the center of his message by uncritically applying pagan language, concepts, and practices to his faith?

Admittedly, when Paul taught his gospel to gentiles, their experience and background would have informed how they heard and what they thought of the gospel. And after Paul and his entourage left a city to plant other churches, these new believers would have been left to work out the gospel's implications. But Paul did not leave them alone. He appointed leaders, trained them, returned when he could, sent delegates when he couldn't, received reports and traveling missionaries from the churches he founded, and wrote letters to make sure they stayed firm in the true faith. In short, Paul did everything he could to ensure the spiritual health of his churches.

In the end, Bousset's conclusion that the christological use of *kyrios* arose from Greco-Roman influence on the rapidly expanding young churches seems unlikely. It ignores the possibility, indeed the likelihood, that Christian beliefs and practices arose primarily from within Second Temple Judaism.

The third pillar of Bousset's reconstruction insists that Jewish monotheism would have prevented the confession "Jesus is Lord" on the lips of Aramaic-speaking Christians in and around Palestine. A newer version of this argument is presented by Maurice Casey. As long as the Jesus movement remained close to its Jewish roots and Christian Jews maintained their Jewish identity, Casey says, monotheism served as a restraining influence against exalting Jesus beyond what he truly was, a Jewish prophet. But the influx of gentiles regrettably meant a loss of Jewish identity—for they didn't convert to Judaism—and put Jesus "on the verge of deity"; once Christianity became a gentile religion, belief in Jesus's deity was "inevitable."[31] Casey admits the title "Lord" (*mar/kyrios*) did go back to the Aramaic-speaking church, but it did not connote divinity in that early stage. For Casey, it was only among Hellenistic believers that the christological use of *kyrios* held any sense that Jesus was more than a prophet. Again, this pillar rests on a questionable foundation when one considers Paul's own attitude about himself, his mission, and the nature of pre-Christian Jewish monotheism.

Philippians 3:5–6 contains one of those rare autobiographical moments in Paul's Letters. He states unequivocally that he was circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, a member of the Pharisaic sect, so zealous that he persecuted the followers of "the Way" and considered himself blameless before the law. Clearly, Paul views himself as born and raised in the heart of his Jewish faith and not just a loosely observant Jew. As a Pharisee he carefully observed the Mosaic law; and when he failed to observe it properly, he sought the law-directed remedies to make sure he was "blameless" before it. Central to Moses's teaching was the confession that Israel's God is one, as the Shema proclaims (Deut. 6:4–6). In the tradition of Phineas (Num. 25:7–13), the preconversion Paul prided himself in his zealous defense of the traditions of the fathers, which meant he could use violence against fellow Jews in order to keep the faith pure.

As a Jew, Paul was first and foremost a monotheist. He frequently speaks of God as "one" (1 Cor. 8:4–6; Rom. 3:29–30; Gal. 3:20; cf. Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5). He decries polytheism and idolatry in all its forms. Yet, he gladly declared, sung, and chanted "Jesus Christ is Lord" and proclaimed it as the heart of the gospel (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:9–11). Indeed, a day is coming, Paul affirms, when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10). For Paul this confession does not insult God, nor detract from his greatness; it is the will of God and to his glory that all creatures —heavenly, earthly, and subterranean—will one day join in the chorus.

Not only did the claim "Jesus is Lord" not violate Paul's Jewish and monotheistic sensibilities, but there is nothing to suggest it upset any of his

opponents. Granted, the identity of his opponents is hard to pin down, but there are a few things we can say about them. Apparently, they were outsiders to the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 11:4) and celebrated their Jewish pedigree (2 Cor. 11:22). These rivals antagonized Paul by disparaging his apostolic credentials while boasting of their own superior, spiritual status (2 Cor. 10:2–12). Paul's opponents in Galatia may also have been outsiders who preached "a different gospel"—though it was in fact no gospel at all (Gal. 1:6)—for they required gentile believers to be circumcised and follow the law of Moses (Gal. 5:2, 12; 6:12–13). Still, it is important to recognize that Paul's opponents were not "outsiders" to the Jesus movement; they were "insiders" devoted to Jesus.

But was there anything in Paul's declaration that "Jesus is Lord" that would have offended these self-appointed critics of the apostle? Consider 2 Cor. 11:4: "For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough." Some have interpreted the phrase "another Jesus" to suggest that Paul's opponents in Corinth had a significantly different Christology from the apostle, but that seems unlikely. Since the phrase "another Jesus" parallels "a different spirit" and "a different gospel," it is best taken as a general condemnation of their entire mission and teaching.

Though Paul defends his own apostolic résumé and his gospel of salvation apart from the law, there is nothing in his letters to suggest he senses the need to defend his understanding of the Messiah. The most likely reason for this is that his opponents, who were themselves Jews, had no doctrinal reason for undermining his Christology. Had Paul's confession "Jesus is Lord" essentially transformed the Christology of the earliest, Aramaic-speaking believers to another species of faith, would that not have occasioned attacks from them on precisely that point? In fact, the disagreement between Paul and his opponents has nothing to do with his Christology, but it has all to do with how Paul is welcoming gentiles into this new community that he refers to as the *ekklēsia* (church).

Even if his opponents had not come from original Palestinian circles, surely some would have been sympathetic with them. No, these Jesus-believing Jews did not attack Paul's Christology, most likely because they shared it. While this may be an argument from silence, it is nonetheless consistent with what we know of Paul's own Christology as a self-described monotheist and explains the absence of any christological polemics in his letters.

We come finally to consider the nature of pre-Christian Jewish monotheism. Would the monotheistic beliefs of the first Jesus followers have prevented them

from declaring “Jesus is Lord [*kyrios*],” as Bousset and his followers concluded? Well, it depends in large measure on what is meant by “monotheism.” Some scholars today think the word and category itself ought to be retired from discussions about Christian origins. The word “monotheism” means the belief that only one God exists; it is a modern term coined in the wake of the Enlightenment in part to try to describe the Jewish/Christian belief in God’s oneness. But this abstract concept doesn’t deal fairly with the concrete facts on the ground among ancient Jews or Christians. For them monotheism wasn’t some heady concept about God, a suitable topic for philosophical discussions in college courses on metaphysics; it was the rough-and-tumble, real-life decisions they had to make daily: whether or not to bow before the gods of other nations. This was especially true when the pressure was on—and it often was—from gentile neighbors and leaders who accused them of being unsociable and keeping to themselves. Paula Fredriksen writes: “In the modern context of its origin, the word [monotheism] denotes belief in a single god who is the only god. When modern scholars transpose the term to antiquity, the definition remains constant. And this is a large part of the problem.”[32]

If “mono-” means “one” in a kind of mathematical precision, then it is doubtful “monotheism” is the right term at all to describe Second Temple Jewish practices related to God. Ancient Jews seemed to have granted the existence of other gods, though they refused to worship them. Consider these key examples:

> I am the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*] your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. (Exod. 20:2–3)

> Hear, O Israel: The LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*] is our God, the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*] alone. (Deut. 6:4; alternatively, “the LORD is one”)

> For all the peoples walk,
> each in the name of its god,
> but we will walk in the name of the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*] our God
> forever and ever. (Mic. 4:5)

Passages such as these from the Law and the Prophets appear to allow for the existence of other gods and yet insist that the covenant people honor, follow, and worship only YHWH. Scholars invented the term “henotheism” to describe this phenomenon and to take into account all the ambiguous evidence for “other gods” found in biblical and extrabiblical texts among an allegedly monotheistic people. But this ambiguity has to be balanced with other texts, for example, the most stridently monotheistic chapter in the entire Hebrew Bible:

> For thus says the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*],

who created the heavens (he is God!),
who formed the earth and made it (he established it;
he did not create it a chaos,
he formed it to be inhabited!):
I am the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*], and there is no other. (Isa. 45:18)

Declare and present your case;
let them take counsel together!
Who told this long ago?
Who declared it of old?
Was it not I, the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*]?
There is no other god besides me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is no one besides me. (Isa. 45:21)

Turn to me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.
By myself I have sworn,
from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness
a word that shall not return:
"To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear." (Isa. 45:22–23)

The LORD's demand for absolute loyalty in Isa. 45 appears to negate altogether or at least disregard the existence of other gods. The LORD (YHWH/*kyrios*) will give Cyrus victory over the nations, subdue his enemies, and give him the world's treasures. But it is important for Cyrus and Israel to understand that it is the LORD (YHWH/*kyrios*), the God of Israel, who is doing this and not some other power. The oracle strips away all authority from other entities and lays it at the feet of the LORD:

I am the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*], and there is no other.
I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe;
I the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*] do all these things. (Isa. 45:6c–7)

There is no reason to postulate the existence of other gods, if one God can do all of this. Taken together, it is best to see "monotheism" on a scale moving over time from less to more exclusive, from plural to unitary. In other words, the later rabbinic view (fourth to fifth century CE) is probably not the best place to go looking for a first-century Jewish understanding of God. Similarly, one won't find an appropriate analogue for pre-Christian Jewish monotheism in the practices and beliefs of modern monotheistic religions such as Judaism and Islam. As a number of scholars have argued, rabbinic Judaism hardened the

category of God's "oneness" in reaction to Christian and gnostic beliefs and practices.[33]

Bousset and his followers were operating with a view of "monotheism" formed centuries after the NT era, which was defensive in posture and hardened against heretics (*minim*). While sticking to its confession that "The LORD is our God, the LORD alone" (or "the LORD is one"), Second Temple Jews allowed for a variety of manifestations of the divine, including "the angel of the Lord" (Gen. 22:11–18; Exod. 23:20–21; Dan. 10:2–9; 11QMelchizedek; Apoc. Ab. 10–17), the divine "Word" (e.g., Isa. 9:8; 55:10–11: *Logos* among Greek speakers; *Memra* among Aramaic speakers), and "Wisdom" (Prov. 8:22–31; Wis. 7:21–27). Given this background and the expectation that YHWH himself would return to deliver Israel,[34] the first generation of Jesus-believing Jews could have been prepared to recognize in the Messiah a manifestation of God. This was not self-evident; there were no preexistent categories of a divine Messiah for Jesus to fit neatly into. What these followers needed was a catalyst to identify Jesus as this divine manifestation; that was provided by the resurrection and the subsequent appearances of the risen Lord.

Pre-Christian Jewish monotheism is therefore not the same as the latter rabbinic (and modern) version. It was not unitary, but it did allow for the inclusion of divine manifestations to be identified with and yet remain distinct from God. Jewish monotheism before Christ therefore would not have precluded the identification of Jesus with God or calling him "Lord."

Given Paul's own religious practice, which included confessing and hymning the lordship of Jesus, and the inclusive nature of pre-Christian Jewish monotheism, the claim by Bousset and others that Jewish monotheism itself would have precluded the use of the *kyrios* title for Jesus seems implausible.

Each of the pillars erected by Bousset against the christological use of *kyrios* among the earliest Aramaic-speaking believers rests on a faulty foundation. His assertion that a dichotomy existed in the early church between Palestinian Jewish and gentile believers; his contention that pagan practices shaped NT Christology, which asserts influence by pagan sources on NT Christology; and his claim that Jewish monotheism would have precluded any lofty claim of Jesus's lordship in Palestine fail to account for the content of Paul's Letters and biblical or extrabiblical evidence.

As a result of Bousset's faulty reconstruction, we can hardly accept his account for Paul's use of *kyrios*. Yet, in *Kyrios Christos* Bousset proved that *kyrios* was a term used widely in the veneration of political leaders and in the cultic practices associated with the mystery religions. If so, *kyrios* is just the term one would expect to be applied to Jesus as Messiah-King and/or as the

rightful object of worship in the Christian churches. Bousset failed to demonstrate that the acclamation of Jesus as "Lord" was exclusive to a gentile setting or that the Christology of the gentile churches was a radical departure from the faith of the early Palestinian churches.

We think the evidence will show that the confession "Jesus is Lord" is right at home in the earliest Christian communities, which spoke Aramaic and gathered in the land traditionally known as Palestine. We will have more to say later about what all of this could mean for an understanding of God and monotheism in the Second Temple period.

Conclusion

N. T. Wright credits Martin Hengel "for the dawning scholarly awareness that the Jewish world of the first century was itself Hellenistic through and through, so that to do what some earlier generations had done and go looking for a pre-hellenistic, and indeed *non*-hellenistic, strand of primitive 'Jewish Christianity' was to search blindly in a dark room for a black cat that wasn't there in the first place."[35] Wright proposes that the prevailing orthodoxy of the Enlightenment insisted that a high Christology had to be a late development that took root far from Jewish soil. Therefore, if a divine Christ is late and non-Jewish, then it need not be taken seriously. These ideas inevitably evolved away from the Jesus of history. Regarding the current question—the source for the christological use of *kyrios*—Wright claims early Christians did not borrow the term from paganism; instead, they derived it from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.

Larry Hurtado is often credited with having founded a new history-of-religion school. Martin Hengel himself makes that claim in a blurb for Hurtado's book *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*. More than any other scholar I know, Hurtado has taken Bousset to task and written an alternative account for the rise of religious devotion to Christ from Jesus to Irenaeus. Hurtado argues that given Paul's Jewish background, including his own dismissive attitude toward paganism and idolatry, we should regard the Jewish religious use of *kyrios* as more determinative for Paul's christological use than any other source. Therefore, the proper origin for the confession "Jesus is Lord" ought to be sought in early Jewish Christian circles. Two features are most relevant: (1) how Greek-speaking Jews used *kyrios* and (2) how *kyrios* is used in translating Hebrew and Aramaic texts referring originally to God.[36] We will turn to these questions over the next chapters.

We are back then to where we started, the semantic range of *kyrios* and related words in the Hebrew Bible and the NT, words such as *gəbîr, ʾadōnāy, despotēs*, and the divine name itself. I contend that if we are to grasp why and what early Christians such as Paul meant when they called Jesus "Lord," we must engage in a close, contextual reading of Paul's Letters vis-à-vis the Septuagint. This kind of dialectical approach will take Paul at his word as a "Hebrew of Hebrews" and as a Jew. In particular, over the next few chapters we will consider two of the most remarkable features of Paul's Letters: his willingness to invest Jesus with the divine name and his propensity to read OT texts featuring God's unique, covenant name, YHWH, and relate those to Jesus.

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1. Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988; 2nd ed., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); and Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

2. E.g., Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), originally published in German in 1913 and revised posthumously in 1921. Rudolf Bultmann (*Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, 2 vols. [New York: Scribner, 1951–55], 1:51–56) follows Bousset.

3. William Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, vol. 2, *From Jonathan Edwards to Rudolf Bultmann* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 243–51.

4. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 121–28. Bousset claimed the seed for the acclamation of Jesus as Lord was found in the Palestinian church in acts of exorcism in Jesus's name.

5. Ibid., 129–33, 151. For a helpful summary of Bousset's view of the churches' worship of *kyrios*, see ibid., 134–38.

6. Ibid., 146–47.

7. Ibid., 147.

8. BGU 1197.1.15, cited in Werner Foerster, "κύριος," *TDNT* 3:1049. *Autokratōr* refers to one who exercises absolute power.

9. Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4.1.12.

10. *J.W.* 7.10.1 §§418–19.

11. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 138–48, gives ample examples. See also Foerster, *TDNT* 3:1049.

12. Plutarch, *Is. Os.* 2.367.

13. See the texts cited in Foerster, *TDNT* 3:1047–58.

14. Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*, trans. Harold Knight and George Ogg (New York: World, 1969), 68–135.

15. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*; Werner G. Kramer, *Christ, Lord, Son of God*, trans. Brian Hardy (London: SCM, 1966); P. Maurice Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology* (Cambridge: Clarke; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991).

16. J. Gresham Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1923).

17. Ibid., 173–251.

18. Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 26–27, 107–9.

19. A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1926). The substance of Rawlinson's work was presented at the Bampton Lectures, University of Oxford, in 1926.

20. Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History*, trans. W. Montgomery (London: Black, 1912), 227.

21. Rawlinson, *New Testament Doctrine of the Christ*, 98.

22. Note the exception in 1 Cor. 15:33, which Rawlinson (ibid., 99) considered a "schoolboy tag," and Titus 1:12.

23. Ibid.

24. Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. Shirley Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), 199–214.

25. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 5–8.

26. Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, trans. John Bowden, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 1:61, 88–106; 2:43–45, 71.

27. Ibid., 1:104, italics original. See also Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Languages of Palestine in the First Century AD," in *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays*, SBLMS 25 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 29–56.

28. See Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13.

29. Larry Hurtado, "New Testament Christology: Retrospect and Prospect," in *Christology and Exegesis: New Approaches*, ed. Robert Jewett, Semeia 30 (Decatur, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1985), 21.

30. Martin Hengel, *The Son of God: The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress; London: SCM, 1974), 30.

31. P. Maurice Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology*, Edward Cadbury Lectures at the University of Birmingham 1985–86 (Cambridge: Clark; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 114.

32. Paula Fredriksen, "Mandatory Retirement: Ideas in the Study of Christian Origins Whose Time Has Come to Go," in *Israel's God and Rebecca's Children: Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. David B. Capes, April D. DeConick, Helen K. Bond, and Troy A. Miller (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 35–38.

33. See Alan Segal's classic book, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, SJLA 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 33–155. More recently, Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 89–92, has argued that a majority of non-Christian Jews held tenaciously to the idea of a second god named Logos, Metatron, Memra, Sophia, or Yahoel.

34. Isa. 40:3–5, 10–11; Mal. 3:1; Pss. Sol. 17.36; T. Sim. 6.5; T. Levi 5.2; T. Jud. 22.2; T. Naph. 8.3; T. Ash. 7.3. See the other sources cited in G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 3–68.

35. N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 647.

36. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 108–10.

3

Jesus as *Kyrios* in Paul's Letters

In the first chapter we surveyed various Hebrew and Greek words translated "lord," "Lord," and "LORD" in the Christian Scriptures. We found a range of relevant meanings that provides a likely backdrop for one of the key christological titles in the NT: *kyrios*. In the second chapter we looked at an important question that has been the subject of scholarly debate since the early decades of the last century: namely, what is the cultural and communal setting that best accounts for the title *kyrios* ("Lord") being applied to Jesus? We highlighted the work of Wilhelm Bousset, the leading light of the history-of-religion school, who argued that Jewish monotheism would have precluded the application of the title "Lord" to Jesus in a Palestinian setting. Instead, primitive Christianity hailed Jesus in human terms, "Son of Man" and "Christ." For Bousset and scholars who continue to follow him, the application of the title *kyrios* to Jesus was not made until the Christian movement had parted ways with *Spätjudentum* (late Judaism). Indeed, those first to hail Jesus as Lord were Greek-speaking gentiles in Hellenistic churches of Syria, a cultural setting where supplicants worshiped a number of gods.

In the second half of the twentieth century, in the wake of the Holocaust, scholars began reassessing the orthodoxy of the history-of-religion school, especially with regard to its characterization of Second Temple Judaism. With the aid of archaeology and the publication of previously unknown Second Temple literature, scholars enjoyed an ever-expanding data stream. The older orthodoxy was about to crumble.

Scholars such as W. D. Davies, Martin Hengel, Ed Sanders, Earle Ellis, Otfried Hofius, Larry Hurtado, Richard Bauckham, Craig Evans, N. T. Wright, and many others have sought to refocus eyes darkened by centuries of anti-Jewish sentiments. Indeed, they argue that precedents for the kinds of features we see in early Christianity are best explained out of an already hellenized Jewish cultural and religious milieu. In order to account for the emergence of

kyrios as a key title for Jesus, we must consider the ways Greek-speaking Jews like Paul used the word and how they encountered it in their religious texts. We've already seen how the divine name is represented in biblical and other religious texts from the period. In this chapter we explore the texts and contexts in which Paul refers to Jesus as *kyrios*. Before we proceed, however, it is important to consider the breadth of Paul's usage of the word. In keeping with his contemporaries, Paul employs *kyrios* in a variety of ways. First, in a secular sense he uses the word for people who hold some kind of authority over others ("masters" over "slaves," Col. 3:22–24; "owner of the estate," Gal. 4:1). Second, he uses *kyrios* to refer to pagan gods and deities (1 Cor. 8:5). Although it is difficult to grasp Paul's exact meaning, he clearly wants to contrast the many gods/many lords (*kyrioi*) worshiped by the majority with the one true God and the one true Lord, Jesus the Messiah. The difficulty lies in his ambivalence toward whether or not these *kyrioi* (lords) actually exist. Third, there are a few places in Paul's Letters where *kyrios* refers to Israel's God (e.g., Rom. 4:7–8; 9:27–29; 11:34; 15:9–11; 1 Cor. 3:20; 2 Cor. 6:18). Since this usage forms one of the major areas of this study, it is best to discuss the details of these texts later in this chapter. For now, suffice it to say that Paul does refer to Israel's God by the term *kyrios* (Lord).

So, in a handful of instances Paul employs *kyrios* for human authority figures, pagan gods, and the one God of Israel. Yet in the vast majority of cases, he employs *kyrios* in reference to Jesus. Other than Christ (*Christos*), *kyrios* is the most frequently attested christological title in Paul's Letters. He uses it over two hundred times in a variety of contexts, as we will see. He uses it alone and in combination with other titles to refer to the church's Lord, Jesus the Messiah:

1. "Lord Jesus" (e.g., Rom. 14:14; 1 Cor. 11:23; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:19; Philem. 5)
2. "Jesus Christ our Lord" (e.g., Rom. 1:4; 5:21; 7:25; 1 Cor. 1:9)
3. "Lord Jesus Christ" (e.g., Rom. 5:1; 1 Cor. 1:2–3; 2 Cor. 1:2–3; Gal. 6:14, 18)
4. "Christ Jesus our Lord" (e.g., Rom. 6:23; 8:39; 1 Cor. 15:31; Col. 2:6)
5. "Jesus our Lord" (e.g., Rom. 4:24)

While Paul is the earliest historical witness to the confession "Jesus is Lord," he was not the first to acclaim Jesus as *kyrios*. The *maranatha* invocation (1 Cor. 16:22) is evidence that he inherited the designation from the earliest, Aramaic-speaking churches in and around Palestine. Furthermore, in several places, he

cites what were apparently preformed christological confessions where *kyrios* plays a prominent role (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:10–11). Since he uses it without any explanation, it is evident the churches he addresses are already familiar with it. It is, so to speak, the common property of the Jesus movement.

For Paul and the earliest Jesus followers, the resurrection established the Messiah as *kyrios*. There may have been other reasons for ascribing to Jesus this exalted title; not the least may have been Jesus's own self-understanding, reflected in his riddling use of Ps. 110:1 (Mark 12:36 and parr.). Nevertheless, the resurrection stands as the climactic event that inaugurated Jesus's sovereign reign as the *kyrios* (e.g., Acts 2:32–36).

Paul reveals his familiarity with the link between the resurrection and Jesus's exalted status as "Lord" in the Roman letter. In Rom. 14:8–9 he states: "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living." The Lord Jesus is without question the one who is meant, since Paul makes reference to the death and resurrection ("lived again") of the Messiah/Christ. The phrase "for to this end" implies the divine purpose. Thus, the Messiah died and lived again to establish his lordship over the living and the dead. Romans 14:8–9 makes an unmistakable connection between the resurrection and the acclamation of Jesus as *kyrios*.

At the beginning of the Roman letter, Paul links resurrection and lordship in his description of the gospel (Rom. 1:3–4): "the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was to be declared Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord." Many scholars think that a traditional confession lies behind this passage. If Paul is quoting a preformed tradition, his use of it signals his approval of its teaching and may serve to bridge the gap between himself and the Roman church, a community he did not found but hoped to soon visit.

The heart of the gospel, according to Paul, is a person who bears the title "his [God's] Son." The Sonship of Jesus is described in two distinct stages. In the first stage, Jesus is the Son of David "according to the flesh." This refers to his role as the Messiah. The messianic hope was attached to King David and his royal line initially by a series of promises God made to the king through the prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 7:12–16). Apparently, many Jews regarded this passage as central to their hopes for the future (e.g., 1 Chron. 17:11–13; Pss. 2:7; 89:26; 2 Esd. 7:28–30; 1 En. 105.1–2; 4QFlorilegium 1.10–13). After the resurrection, early Jewish Christians recognized Jesus as the promised "seed of David" and expressed this sentiment in creeds and confessions.

Our primary interest is with the second half of this preformed tradition, which ratchets up the Sonship of Jesus. Whereas the first part describes God's Son as a messianic descendant of King David, the second part emphasizes his appointment as the "Son of God with power" by the resurrection. To this Paul appears to add his own postscript, his apostolic last word to the creed, "Jesus Christ our Lord." For Paul the resurrection of Jesus from the dead took the Sonship of Jesus to a whole new level. By his resurrection Jesus is appointed (by God—a divine passive) to the special status of "Son of God with power," who is none other than "Jesus Christ our Lord." The apostle balances this christological equation with the phrase "according to the Spirit of holiness"; it stands in contrast to the phrase "according to the flesh" in the first half of the creed. In Paul's way of thinking "Spirit" and "power" are closely connected (Rom. 15:18–19; 1 Cor. 2:4–5; 2 Cor. 6:6–7; Gal. 3:5); the Spirit is God's empowering agent in this whole gospel drama. The supreme show of power and Spirit was the resurrection, which exalted the humble seed of David to a status beyond anything previously known. This is why the title *kyrios* ("Lord") now rightfully belongs to him.

The same dynamic is in play in the Philippian hymn (Phil. 2:6–11). The second half of the hymn (2:9–11) declares that God has superexalted the humbled, crucified servant and graciously bestowed on the man Jesus the name above every name. And what name is that? It is revealed at the climax of that hymn in the universal acclamation of all creatures (heavenly, earthly, subterranean), "Jesus Christ is Lord [*kyrios*]." Though *kyrios* can be a title, it is best taken here as a name. If so, it can be none other than God's unique covenant name, the tetragrammaton, YHWH. We will have more to say about this important text later. For now, it is sufficient to point out the connection in all these texts between resurrection (exaltation) and the declaration that Jesus is *kyrios*.

Before we consider the contexts in which Paul employed *kyrios* as a title or name for Jesus, it may be helpful to point out something inherent in each of the texts we've discussed. The confession "Jesus is Lord" is not restricted in time or to this or that realm. It is universal and cosmic. One day, Paul believes, all creatures will bow the knee and acclaim "Jesus Christ is Lord" to the glory of God (Phil. 2:9–11). While this event itself lies in the eschatological future, the truth of the acclamation is not restricted to some remote future. It is right and good now, in this present age, for the church to bow the knee and robustly declare "Jesus is Lord." Yet by including "every knee" and "every tongue," Paul makes sure to extend Jesus's lordship beyond the church to all creation.

Similarly, Paul writes that the death and resurrection of the Messiah resulted in Jesus being established as Lord over the living and the dead (Rom. 14:8–9). By this, the apostle means that the same Jesus who was crucified and continues to live (as a result of the resurrection) exercises dominion over those who have died as well as those who live. Inherent within this conviction is that the risen Christ is Lord over all creation. As C. F. D. Moule rightly states, "to be Lord of the domain of the dead and living is, nevertheless, a 'cosmic' position."[1]

In 1 Cor. 8:6 the apostle makes the scope of Jesus's lordship even more explicit and places him back "in the beginning" at creation. We will have more to say about this text later. For now, it is important to note how the statement places "one God, the Father" and "one Lord, Jesus Christ" in parallel. Through the one Lord all things (*ta panta*) came into existence, and through him redemption is assured. The confession links the Lord Jesus with God the Father; both have a role in creation and salvation. The Lord Jesus has a mediatorial role ("through him"), but a role nonetheless as a coworker and cocreator with God. For Paul and his followers, this could only mean that the Lord Jesus had to be present at creation and active in bringing "all things" into existence. The Colossian hymn (Col. 1:15–20) offers a similar perspective on the cosmic scope of Christ's significance, though without the title *kyrios*: "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:15–17 RSV).

The key term in both of these texts regards the scope of Jesus's lordship as "all things" (*ta panta*). He created "all things." He holds "all things" together. He is before "all things." Nothing lies outside his lordly dominion. Past, present, and future are his. The heavenly, earthly, and subterranean realms are his. Things visible and things invisible are his, as are things hostile and things friendly. Texts such as these clearly portray the cosmic and universal import of Jesus's significance as the *kyrios*.

The Earthly Jesus as Lord

Although Paul regards the resurrection as the basis and defining moment of Jesus's lordship, he is also able to speak of the earthly Jesus as "Lord" (*kyrios*). When Paul relates his account of the Lord's Supper, he writes: "For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he

broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me’” (1 Cor. 11:23–24). Paul grounds his corrective to the Corinthians’ failure to properly practice the Lord’s Supper on an account he received of that fateful event. Employing the language of tradition, he claims to have faithfully passed on what he has received “from the Lord” (*kyrios*). On the night he was betrayed “the Lord Jesus” performed certain memorable actions and spoke words that the church has been reciting for two thousand years. By “Lord Jesus” Paul has in mind not the resurrected, exalted Lord but the earthly, preresurrected Jesus. The tradition he recalls and passes on refers to Jesus as “Lord” prior to his execution. The apostle identifies these words specifically as Jesus’s and seems to quote them with precision.

On a number of occasions Paul appeals to a “word of the Lord.” When writing on the subject of divorce, Paul alludes to a command that he claims came from the Lord (*kyrios*): “To the married I give this command—not I but the Lord—that the wife . . .” (1 Cor. 7:10; cf. Matt. 5:32 and parr.; 19:19; Luke 16:8). Later in the same chapter Paul does not have dominical authority on another teaching: “Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord [*kyrios*], but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy” (1 Cor. 7:25). On the issue of virgins Paul does not have a command from the Lord. Yet he does have an opinion. Since he is an apostle and thereby a caretaker of churches’ spiritual health, he feels obliged to share his answer in response to the Corinthians’ question on the matter (1 Cor. 7:1). Regarding another issue, Paul defends an apostle’s right to receive material benefits from his converts and again alludes to a command from the Lord: “In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14; cf. Luke 10:7). Finally, in 1 Thessalonians Paul appeals to a “word of the Lord” on the question of the parousia and future resurrection: “For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died” (1 Thess. 4:15; cf. Matt. 8:11; 22:23–33; 24:30–31).

Now for each “word of the Lord” listed above there is no exact Gospel parallel. Three options are possible. First, Paul alludes to a saying uttered by the risen Lord either to him or another charismatic prophet. Second, Paul refers to a traditional dominical saying preserved only outside the Gospels (such sayings are called *agrapha*; see Acts 20:35). Third, Paul summarizes and applies sayings of the earthly Jesus that are rooted in the Gospel accounts. In other words, Paul knows the gist of Jesus’s teachings on a variety of topics and passes them on without sensing he has to quote him exactly.

Of the examples cited above, only the Lord's Supper passage appears to be an explicit quotation (1 Cor. 11:23–25; cf. Luke 22:17–20). In other places it seems Paul only alludes to other sayings. Yet it should be remembered that Paul is writing to his churches in Greek, and in all likelihood Jesus spoke to the crowds and his followers in Galilee in Aramaic. We cannot know exactly how Paul may have heard or encountered the sayings of Jesus. Knowing too that he does not always quote the OT with precision, it is not inconsistent that he may have done the same with the sayings of the earthly Jesus. But this habit does not distract from their authenticity or authority. This is evident above all in the sharp distinction he draws between his own apostolic opinion and the "word of the Lord."

This particular discussion leads us to an ongoing dispute among scholars, often dubbed the "Jesus-Paul debate."[2] The question is this: To what extent did Paul have access to and interest in the sayings and deeds of the earthly Jesus? Some scholars think that since the apostle's focus was on the crucified and risen Jesus, he did not go out of his way to learn or relate much about the earthly life and ministry of Jesus. Others regard it likely that Paul was acquainted with some of Jesus's teachings as recorded in the Gospels. His contact with Peter and James (Gal. 1–2) at the very least put him in touch with credible sources for those teachings. If this is the case, then Paul stands as our earliest witness to any kind of sayings tradition, since his letters predate the writing of the Gospels.

The Context for Paul's Use of *Kyrios* for Jesus

In the undisputed letters the apostle employs a variety of christological titles: Christ, Lord, Son of God, and Savior. "Christ" (or "Messiah") is the most common christological title, followed closely by "Lord." When one reads his letters carefully, it becomes evident that Paul has a tendency to use these titles in particular contexts. He does not just randomly sprinkle christological names and titles throughout his letters: a little "Jesus" here, a dash or two of "Christ" there, a pinch of "Son of God" over there, perhaps "Lord" folded in for good measure. Indeed, each christological title comes with a set of associations that Paul wishes to exploit. One of the best ways to take note of this is to juxtapose *one title* over against another.

When it comes to the title "Christ"—the most frequent title used by Paul—the apostle appears to use it when discussing the sacrificial death of Jesus.[3] A few examples should suffice:

> For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:6–8)
>
> For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. (1 Cor. 15:3–5)
>
> For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. . . . If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. (Rom. 14:9, 15)

In each of these passages the death of Jesus is associated with the title "Christ" or "Messiah." The only exception appears to be the more formal "Lord Jesus Christ": "For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him" (1 Thess. 5:9–10). We can account for this exception because of the eschatological framework of 1 Thess. 5. Often passages do not have a single, driving interest; it is frequently the case that multiple contextual factors converge in a single text. As we will show below, in matters of eschatology and Jesus's place in it, Paul tends to favor the *kyrios* title.

It should come as no surprise, then, that when discussing the cross and crucifixion, Paul is more likely to refer to Jesus as the "Christ."[4]

> But we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. 1:23–24)
>
> For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (1 Cor. 2:2)
>
> For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:19–20)

There are exceptions to this pattern, of course, but the exceptions seem a bit out of place and prove the rule: "None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8). My point is that Paul's use of christological titles is not random but purposeful. Christological titles come with a variety of associations, so it is instructive to see in what contexts Paul employs them.

There appear to be several contexts in which Paul prefers to use the *kyrios* title for Jesus: in ethical statements when Jesus's authoritative status is on display, in matters pertaining to eschatology, and in instruction concerning the church's worship or its liturgy.

Ethical Context

While *kyrios* serves as a christological title in nearly every part of Paul's Letters, it appears most prominent in the hortatory sections. In dealing with matters relating to conduct and practices within his churches, the apostle tends to refer to Jesus as *kyrios*.

One can illustrate this grammatically by noticing that Paul has a tendency to use the title *kyrios* in portions of his letters dominated by imperative verbs. On the other hand, he employs "Christ" generally in sections of his letters governed by indicative verbs. The indicative has to do primarily with the new reality created by God through Messiah Jesus, while the imperative deals with the concrete ways these realities are to be made true in the lives of believers. To put it simply, the indicative involves "what to believe," while the imperative concerns "how to behave." Consider these examples of the indicative of the gospel with its focus on the title Christ:

> There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:1)
>
> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him [Christ] by baptism into death. (Rom. 6:3–4)
>
> I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. (Gal. 2:19c–20b)
>
> For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. (1 Cor. 15:22)[5]

In each of these statements the apostle is teaching his readers what God has done in and through the Messiah on behalf of the church; this is their new reality. In the final example the "in Christ" formula is particularly instructive. It is best understood in light of Paul's soteriology and signifies that all who belong to Christ have been transferred into a new age inaugurated by his death and resurrection. Similar statements about "Christ" indicate that believers belong to him and have been incorporated into him (Rom. 1:6; 1 Cor. 3:23; 15:23; 2 Cor. 10:7; Gal. 3:29; 5:24). The apostle routinely speaks of the church as "the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12), perhaps his most memorable corporate image.

J. Christiaan Beker notes that the phrase "in Christ" occurs primarily in three contexts: "(1) in relation to concepts of salvation; (2) in relation to the communal structure of the church; (3) in relation to the apostolate and other apostolic persons."[6] Thus, one may say "in Christ" represents the indicative of the gospel, understood as a believer's participation in or being incorporated into Christ's first coming, death, resurrection, and the inauguration of the new age, with all of its attendant features as they influence the church. Otherwise, "in the

Lord" signifies the imperative of the gospel, understood as the demand laid on believers in light of God's saving activity in and through the Messiah.[7]

For Paul, "in Christ" becomes "in the Lord" when discussing the practical conduct of believers and their lives together in the church. If "Jesus is Lord," then this provides the basis for addressing his followers as servants/slaves. If Jesus is Lord of the cosmos, his authority extends to day-to-day details in the lives of those who belong to him. Paul utilizes *kyrios* when concrete, behavioral-ethical issues are at stake. When attached to ethical injunctions, the title "Lord" gives them a sense of urgency. In other words, the church that is constituted by the confession "Jesus is Lord!" ought to be willing to live under his teaching and by his example.[8]

A few illustrations will have to suffice:

Stand firm in the Lord. (Phil. 4:1)
Rejoice in the Lord. (Phil. 3:1; 4:4)
Paul delivers exhortations "in/by the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:1; 5:27).
Greetings are offered "in the Lord" (1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16).

> Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. (1 Cor. 15:58)

Paul, of course, was not limited to the formula "in the Lord" to give urgency and authority to his ethical instructions. He employs the title "Lord" throughout his instructions to the churches. Consider 1 Cor. 5:1–5, as Paul offers advice to the Corinthians about the incestuous man. After stating the nature of the man's wrongdoing, he directs them to remove this character from the church: "When you are assembled *in the name of the Lord Jesus* and my spirit is present, with *the power of our Lord Jesus*, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved *in the day of the Lord*" (1 Cor. 5:4–5 ESV, italics added). With the reputation of the church on the line, Paul has already passed judgment on the fellow and urges the church to exercise his apostolic will with a threefold appeal to their Master and Lord.

In the Roman letter Paul encourages believers to refrain from passing judgment on one another with regard to certain religious and dietary customs:

> Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.
>
> We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. (Rom. 14:5–9)

The remedy for the disaffection of the "weak" and the "strong" can be discovered by recognizing that observant and nonobservant alike live their lives "in honor of the Lord." They live to the Lord. They die to the Lord. They belong to the Lord. So why, Paul asks, do you insist on passing judgment on your brother? Later Paul adds: "I know and am persuaded *in the Lord Jesus* that nothing is unclean in itself: but it is unclean for any who thinks it unclean" (Rom. 14:14, italics added). The title "Christ" does appear in this context, of course, but it recalls primarily the indicative of the gospel, in this case the death and resurrection of Jesus: Christ died and lives again in order that he might be Lord over the dead and the living.

Finally, the household code in Colossians offers a concentrated presentation of *kyrios* used in ethical instruction:

> Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting *in the Lord*. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases *the Lord*. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing *the Lord*. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for *the Lord* and not for men, knowing that from *the Lord* you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving *the Lord Christ*. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.
>
> Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have *a Master* [*kyrios*] in heaven. (Col. 3:18–4:1 ESV, italics added)

With a single exception (husbands/fathers) Paul lays a series of demands on family members by appealing to the authority of the Lord Jesus. Seven times in just a few verses he makes reference to Jesus in his role as *kyrios*. As *kyrios* Jesus becomes the basis for wives' respectful demeanors to their husbands, children's obedience to their parents, slaves' service to their masters, and masters' just treatment of their slaves.

What we find in Paul's Letters is a distinct pattern of usage of *kyrios* in ethical instructions. All of life is lived "in the Lord" and "in honor of the Lord." No part of believers' lives is exempt from his sovereign rule. The apostle based these ethical imperatives on the indicative of God's saving work in the Messiah. Because God has acted finally and decisively in the Messiah to establish the new age, and because believers belong to him, Christians ought to live in complete obedience to him. Typically, Paul uses the *kyrios* title to express these sorts of demands.[9] Thus, in discussing the imperative of the gospel—that is, how Christians should behave—the teaching and example of Jesus are regarded as authoritative. Jesus is thus their lordly example.

In *Paul's Divine Christology* Chris Tilling contributes to a debate that has been going on over the past thirty years regarding whether Paul's Christology

can properly be described as "divine," in what sense, and how it came to be. Picking up on an earlier and undeveloped observation by C. F. D. Moule,[10] Tilling's approach can be described in this phrase: "the Christ-relation is Paul's divine-Christology expressed as relationship."[11] Moule had noticed that there were aspects of relation between Christ and the church/individual believers that constitute evidence that Jesus occupied a special status.

This Christ-relation language is so significant that some scholars regard the center of Paul's theology to be "participation in Christ," a shorthand way of describing the many ways in which Christ believers stand in relationship to and take part in the life of Christ. Significant for Tilling is the way in which Christ's relation to his people stands in direct continuity with YHWH's relation to his people Israel. To put it another way, when Paul speaks about the relation between Christ believers and the risen Jesus, he uses the same language and themes found in Second Temple Jewish texts to speak of Israel's relation to YHWH. In Tilling's own words: "*It will be maintained that this pattern of Christ-relation language in Paul is only that which a Jew used to express the relation between Israel/the individual Jew and YHWH. No other figure of any kind, apart from YHWH, was related to in the same way, with the same pattern of language, not even the various exalted human and angelic intermediary figures in the literature of Second Temple Judaism that occasionally receive worship and are described in very exalted terms.*"[12] Tilling is on to something important that scholars have noticed but frankly neglected. If we apply these insights to the christological use of *kyrios* in ethical contexts, we note that Jesus's teaching and example constitute the basis of Christian ethics in the same way that YHWH's teaching and example provide the basis for Jewish ethics or *halakah*.

We have space for only a few examples, but these examples prove instructive regarding the pattern we find in the Hebrew Bible. The Decalogue begins with "I am YHWH [*kyrios*] your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Exod. 20:2 AT). Jewish tradition considers this the first commandment; others regard it as a kind of prologue to "the ten words." What is clear is that this teaching and the commands that follow have a basis in the concrete actions of YHWH (*kyrios*) to rescue his people from slavery.

The command to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy also finds its basis in the actions of God: "But the seventh day is a Sabbath to YHWH [*kyrios*] your God; . . . For in six days YHWH [*kyrios*] made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested on the seventh day; therefore YHWH [*kyrios*] blessed the Sabbath and consecrated it" (Exod. 20:10–11 AT). What is unusual here is the use of YHWH in regard to the six days of creation. As the architects of the Documentary Hypothesis noticed, the account of the creation of the heavens and

earth in six days (Gen. 1) is described as the work of *ʾelōhîm* (God); the divine name is absent from the six-day creation account. It is not until Gen. 2:4—and the so-called second account—that the name YHWH is associated with creation: "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that YHWH God made the earth and the heavens" (Gen. 2:4 AT). No mention is made in this second account of creation—dominated as it is by the creative work of YHWH—about the six days of work and a day of rest. The second account of the Ten Commandments in Deut. 5:6–21 makes use of the same language. YHWH created the heavens and earth in six days, and on the seventh he rested. Based on YHWH's actions, example, and command, the people of God are now to make the Sabbath holy by doing no work on the seventh day.

Similarly, the Holiness Code (Lev. 17–26) associates the divine name with a variety of commandments: "YHWH [*kyrios*] spoke to Moses: Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the people of Israel and say to them: This is what YHWH [*kyrios*] has commanded" (17:1–2 AT). Similarly: "YHWH [*kyrios*] spoke to Moses, saying: 'Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I YHWH [*kyrios*] your God am holy'" (19:1–2 AT). In sum, throughout the Pentateuch the divine name is associated with the commandments and the way God's people are to "walk" more than any other name or title. In many ways this is only natural because the divine name is the covenant name of God, revealed to Moses and Israel at Sinai, and the commandments reside in the heart of the covenant.

This same pattern is evident in the prophets. Famously, Micah concludes the controversy between God and his people (Mic. 6:8) with

> He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
> And what does the LORD [*kyrios*] require of you
> But to do justice, and to love kindness,
> And to walk humbly with your God?

The prophet Haggai has a word from the LORD (*kyrios*) for Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, and for Joshua, the high priest: "Thus says YHWH [*kyrios*] Sabaoth: 'Consider how you have fared. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,' says YHWH [*kyrios*]" (Hag. 1:7 AT). We could multiply these examples many times.

The point is this: in the Hebrew Bible the divine name YHWH (*kyrios*) is associated with commanding and ordering the lives of God's people more than any other name or title. Furthermore, the actions of YHWH (*kyrios*) to redeem and establish a covenant with Israel become the basis for all demands made by

him. In the Greek version of the OT, *kyrios* carries on the same narrative, redemptive, and ethical force as the divine name does in the Hebrew.

The same pattern is evident in the writings of Paul, with one exception. For him, the redemptive and ethical center is now occupied squarely by *kyrios* Jesus. As the *kyrios*, the risen Jesus commands and orders the lives of believers. He can do so because of what he has done on behalf of the church through his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of God. These redemptive actions give him exclusive, authoritative status over the church and make him uniquely qualified to command their obedience. In this way Jesus as *kyrios* stands in the same kind of relation to the church/individual believers as YHWH (*kyrios*) stands in relation to Israel/individual Jews. This is a remarkable appropriation of language reserved for the one true God; it is rendered all the more remarkable when one considers that Jesus was executed as a messianic pretender only a few years before, within the memory of many who were still alive. It is also remarkable that Jesus is linked so profoundly with the covenant name of God. As we will see in other contexts, this is not the first and only place this happens. It becomes part of a pattern of religious language, themes, and devotion evident in Paul's Letters.

Eschatological Context

A second context in which the apostle prefers the *kyrios* title as a referent for Jesus has to do with his eschatology. Paul's thinking about "last things" is integral to the faith he shares with the early Christ followers. It is not some subsidiary doctrine sitting comfortably off to the side minding its own business; it is crucial to how he views God, the world, and the future. Eschatology touches every other doctrine. This is because, for Paul, eschatology is not just oriented toward the future; it extends back in time to the resurrection of Jesus, when the end of the age invaded the middle of history. The last days begin with Jesus's resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand. We can see this clearly in passages where Paul associates the resurrection with Jesus's lordship (Rom. 1:3–4; 10:9–13; Phil. 2:5–11).

Looking to the eschatological future, Paul prefers to use *kyrios* of Jesus in passages that address three imminent events (imminent from Paul's perspective): (1) the day of the Lord, (2) the coming of the Lord, and (3) the final judgment.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

The consensus of scholarship is that the earliest reference to the day of the LORD (YHWH/*kyrios*) is Amos 5:18–20:

> Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD!
> Why do you want the day of the LORD?
> It is darkness, not light;
> as if someone fled from a lion,
> and was met by a bear;
> or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,
> and was bitten by a snake.
> Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light,
> and gloom with no brightness in it?

Amos hopes to counter the popular understanding of the day of the LORD as a day when God exercises divine power to judge his enemies. God will indeed exercise his power to judge his enemies, but he will start with Israel. Therefore, the people of Israel should not look forward to or welcome its coming; it will be a day tinged with gloom.

The day of the LORD is a common theme in prophetic oracles (e.g., Isa. 2:12–22; Zeph. 1:7–10; Joel 1:15; Ezek. 7:7–12; Zech. 12–14). On that day the LORD will intervene dramatically in the world. It will be a day of judgment against the wicked (e.g., Isa. 13:9), attendant with darkness and cosmic upheaval (Joel 2:1–2; Amos 5:18–20; Zeph. 1:14–15). In some cases it seems close at hand; in others more distant. The perspective on the day among the prophets appears to change over time. Though generalizations are never 100 percent accurate, prior to Jerusalem's fall to the Babylonians (586 BCE), the day of YHWH has a more negative connotation of judgment and disaster; during and after the exile, it is reassessed and associated with the restoration and deliverance of God's covenant people. All in all the day of the Lord (YHWH/*kyrios*) forms a key ingredient to many of the prophets' eschatological outlooks.

It comes as little surprise then that Paul, schooled in his religion from youth, also anticipates the day of the Lord. For him, however, the Lord is Jesus, and the day of YHWH has become "the day of the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul can refer to this expectation simply as "the day of the Lord" (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2), but he also modifies it in order to make sure readers and hearers of his letters make a christological connection:

The day of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 1:14)
The day of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:8)
The day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6)
The day of Christ (Phil. 1:10; 2:16)

According to Paul, the day comes "like a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2). For some it will mean sudden destruction (1 Thess. 5:3) with eternal consequences (2 Thess. 1:9). For others it will unleash rescue and salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5:9). That day will be a day of pride in the work accomplished for the gospel (2 Cor. 1:14; cf. Phil. 2:16). On that day God's work in the lives of Jesus's followers will be brought to completion (Phil. 1:6) as the Lord Jesus himself is revealed (1 Cor. 1:8) and glorified among his people (2 Thess. 1:10).

In Paul's understanding the imminence of the day of the Lord has ethical import; it means that believers must stay awake, be sober, live uprightly, and seek to be found blameless on the day of judgment (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:8; 2 Cor. 1:14; 1 Thess. 5:2–11). In this sense eschatology for Paul always has an ethical dimension.

The Coming of the Lord

The day of the Lord will commence with the coming of Jesus. The language Paul uses to depict his second advent is couched in the same sort of images found in the OT referring to theophanies when God arrives to judge sin, save the righteous, and establish his kingdom (Judg. 5:4–5; Pss. 18; 68:7–8; Isa. 30:27; 40:3–5, 10–11; Amos 1:2; Hab. 3:3–6, 13). As G. R. Beasley-Murray notes:

> The decisive element in the theophany descriptions of the Old Testament, accordingly, is the concept of the coming of God; the descriptions of accompanying phenomena in the natural order are to be viewed as parabolic. The "parables" are not unimportant—they point to the irresistible might of the Lord in his coming, for the resources of creation are his, and nothing in creation can resist his will—but the supremely important matter is that God *comes* into the world, now in the present and (in the teaching of the prophets) in the future, and in his coming he reveals himself.[13]

Paul expresses his conviction about the coming of the Lord Jesus with a variety of terms and images. Frequently he employs the word *parousia*, a Greek word meaning "arrival," in this context (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1, 8). In contemporary Greek literature *parousia* refers to the arrival of some high-ranking official, generally for beneficent purposes. When employed in religious literature, it signifies a divine epiphany.[14] For Paul the arrival of the Lord Jesus fulfills redemptive history (1 Thess. 4:13–20):

> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord [*kyrios*], that we who are alive, who are left until the coming [*parousia*] of the Lord [*kyrios*], will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord [*kyrios*] himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven,

> and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord [*kyrios*] in the air; and so we will be with the Lord [*kyrios*] forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

There is a great deal in this passage worthy of notice, but our primary aim is to show the tight connection between the description of the "coming" and the *kyrios* title. We should also pay attention to the cosmic implications of his parousia: the raising of the dead, the transformation of the living, the descent of the Lord accompanied by the archangel's shout and sound of the trumpet. We should probably hear in the reference to the clouds a subtle echo of earlier theophanies or the Son of Man coming on the clouds to the throne of the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:12–14). Unfortunately, chapter and verse divisions often skew the reading of a text. The eschatological theme continues (1 Thess. 5:1–11) with apocalyptic overtones in the apostle's discussion of "the day of the Lord," which for him is clearly the Lord Jesus.

Another term Paul employs for the second advent is *apokalypsis* ("unveiling" or "revelation"). Christ believers, he says, are awaiting the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:7). In this context "revelation" does not refer to an impartation of knowledge or a visionary experience that unveils a mystery; it has to do with the coming of God into the world. The emphasis here is on the full disclosure of Jesus's present lordship.[15] In other words, when he comes, the true Lord of the world, who is currently hidden from sight, shall be revealed in all his glory, power, and majesty.

The Final Judgment

Paul uses the *kyrios* title not only in connection with the day of the Lord and the second coming; he also uses it regularly to refer to final judgment (1 Cor. 4:4–5; 5:3–5; 11:33; 1 Thess. 4:6; 2 Thess. 1:5–10). This is only natural, since for Paul parousia and judgment belong together.[16] Consider 1 Cor. 4:4–5: "I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God." In keeping with Paul's other statements, the Lord here must be Jesus, whose coming initiates divine judgment, thus exposing people's dark secrets and revealing their true intentions. The imagery is likely borrowed from OT and other Second Temple texts that depict God knowing the secrets of human hearts.

Similarly, 2 Thess. 1:5–10 proves instructive against the background of growing threats against the Thessalonians:

> This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, and is intended to make you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering. For it is indeed just of God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to the afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord [*kyrios*] Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord [*kyrios*] Jesus. These will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord [*kyrios*] and from the glory of his might, when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at on that day among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

Marshaling powerful apocalyptic imagery from the prophets Isaiah (66:4, 15) and Jeremiah (10:25), Paul portrays the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with his mighty angels in flaming fire to execute divine judgment and ultimately to exclude the unrighteous from the Lord's presence. These phrases echo OT prophetic and apocalyptic passages that depict YHWH as Ruler and Judge.[17] Here Jesus stands as *kyrios* and therefore the judge who will correct the injustices being suffered by his people at his coming.

Paul's concepts of "the day of the Lord," the second coming, and final judgment appear to form a constellation of related, not distinct, eschatological events. Although some have tried to chart them out, they ultimately defy systemization. For Paul, these future happenings comprise a single, grand finale, even as the cross, burial, and resurrection of Jesus form a single, world-changing event in the middle of time. Furthermore, these notions are consistent with the kinds of prophetic interests we see expressed in the OT. For our purposes, we should not overlook the significance of the referential shift that has taken place in Paul's writings. The prophetic promise that God will come into the world to right wrongs and rescue his people finds its yes in Jesus the Lord, who has come and will come again. The apostle has deliberately applied to Jesus OT concepts reserved for YHWH. He does this not in some obscure, secondary aspect of his theology but on a crucial component of it. For a first-century Jew to have thought and written this is indeed remarkable. It is even more remarkable to consider that these associations are being made to a man roughly Paul's contemporary, a man who suffered a shameful death condemned by both secular and religious officials.

In his book *Jesus and God in Paul's Eschatology*, Larry Kreitzer describes a "conceptual overlap" in Paul's thought between God and Jesus so that the boundary between them was fluid.[18] Kreitzer is convinced he has found evidence that the barrier was already on the way down before the advent of Christianity with regard particularly to the eschatological schemes evident in the Jewish

Pseudepigrapha. In 1 Enoch, for example, both God and the Messiah are said to sit on the throne (God: 47.3; 60.1–13; Messiah: 45.3–6; 69.29). In the Testament of Moses, both God and Michael are described as executing judgment (see, e.g., 10.1–7). From his analysis of the pseudepigraphic literature (1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch), Kreitzer concludes that (1) the Pseudepigrapha demonstrate a great deal of diversity in eschatology without concern for consistency; (2) with regard to the final judgment, they portray a "functional overlap between any intermediary agent and God himself as that activity is discharged"; (3) this "overlap" creates confusion in the textual tradition, which gives rise to many textual variants; and (4) with those documents that speak of the Messiah, the functional overlap is so complete between the Messiah and God that they seem to slide into each other despite the strong monotheistic character of the texts (e.g., 2 Bar. 21.7–10). If Kreitzer is correct, the "conceptual overlap" is not exclusive to Paul; rather, it appears to have been emerging on the scene of Jewish religious culture before and around him. Not everyone has followed Kreitzer on this point. Scholars question a pre-Christian origin to 1 En. 37–71, and some of the Testaments are disputed.[19] If they are not pre-Christian, then they could not have influenced NT writers. It is unlikely we will ever know whether there were precedents in Jewish tradition for the kind of referential shift we see expressed between Jesus and God in Paul's eschatology.

Liturgical Context

Although Paul's Letters do not give us a thick description of what took place during early Christian assemblies, in the course of sharing his pastoral advice the apostle to the churches does allude to a number of practices and expressions that characterized their worship. Clearly, addressing Jesus as "Lord" and placing him at the center of their devotion was at the heart of what they did when they gathered.

In dealing with the headstrong church in Corinth, for example, Paul urges the congregation to take action in his absence against a man living in a sexual relationship with his father's wife. From a distance Paul pronounces judgment on the man. When the church is assembled "in the name of [our] Lord Jesus," the people are to hand him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord (1 Cor. 5:4–5). While there is much here worthy of notice, the point I want to consider is the way in which Paul characterizes the church's life together: they gather "in the Lord Jesus." Similarly, in the same letter's opening, Paul describes his addressees as "the church of God" located geographically in Corinth. Believers have been

"sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2). That phrase "calling on the name of the Lord" is best explained in light of OT passages such as Joel 2:32 (3:5 LXX): "then everyone who calls on the name of the LORD [*kyrios*] shall be saved." Notice the word "LORD" stands for the divine name. In the Hebrew Bible, calling on YHWH is a shorthand way of describing ritual actions of worship often involving temple sacrifices.[20] Paul takes that same language and redirects it to his "Lord Jesus Christ." This act of calling on the name of Jesus signals a cultic practice typical of Paul's other churches; it can be traced back to some of the earliest days of the Christian movement.[21] Such a habit would identify Jesus as an appropriate object of worship. Evidence suggests this type of invocation may have taken place early in the Judean churches. As Larry Hurtado notes: "For such a major cultic innovation to have so quickly become widespread, conventionalized, and uncontroversial among various Christian groups, it must necessarily have originated among one or more sufficiently influential, respected, and very early circles of believers."[22] Hurtado goes on to say that as far as he can tell such religious invocation directed toward Jesus is unprecedented in Jewish circles.[23] For our purposes here it is important to note the priority Paul gives the title *kyrios* in matters of the church's gathering and its liturgy. The church gathers "in the name of the Lord Jesus," and its chief cultic expression is "calling upon the name of the Lord [Jesus]."

This is clearly demonstrated in the creedal confession of Rom. 10:9–13:

> Because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The confession "Jesus is Lord" accompanied with faith in the resurrection constitutes the proper response to God's actions in the resurrection itself and Jesus's now-exalted status. Those who confess and believe can rest assured that they will be saved and justified. Ethnic status is irrelevant because the same Lord is Lord of all. Paul then goes on to quote Joel 2:32 (3:5 LXX): "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Since the basic Christian confession is "Jesus is Lord," it is clear Paul intends "Lord" here to mean Jesus. What is remarkable is that *kyrios* here translates the divine name in the quotation taken from Joel. If Paul is aware of this—and there is little reason to think he isn't—the apostle has applied sacred texts to his Lord Jesus that referred

originally to the one, true God whose name is ineffable, unspeakable, and protected by the commandments. Furthermore, as we indicated above, "calling upon the name of the Lord" is best understood in a posture of worship toward *kyrios* Jesus analogous to those worshipers who invoked YHWH in temple sacrifices.

In 1 Cor. 12:3 the apostle describes the same confession, "Jesus is Lord," as the work of the Holy Spirit: "Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit." Since the context of this passage has to do with the use of spiritual gifts, and the worship of the church is clearly in view (chaps. 12–14), the confession should be understood as an acclamation made about Jesus in worship. The confession "Jesus is Lord" must have been central to the liturgy of Paul's churches.

"God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"

Paul has a habit throughout his letters of using particular, stereotypical formulas in his introductions, thanksgivings, and farewells. Frequently this formula includes some reference to "God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" or a variation of it. It is worth discussing here because there are good reasons to think that the apostle expected his letters to be read aloud as churches gathered in worship. The presence of creedal confessions (e.g., Rom. 10:9–10; 1 Cor. 12:3; 15:3–5), hymns (e.g., Phil. 2:6–11; Col. 1:15–20), doxologies (e.g., Rom. 11:33–36; 16:25–27; 2 Cor. 1:3–11), scriptural exegesis (e.g., Gal. 3–4; Rom. 9–11), and benedictions (e.g., Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; Philem. 3; 1 Thess. 3:11–13) situates the public reading of Paul's Letters in worship as a liturgical act. After dispatched letters arrived in their intended cities, the skillful reading of the apostle's letters was an integral feature in churches' gatherings and worship.

At the same time Paul's Letters are occasional pieces directed to specific questions and needs in specific churches. They follow the literary conventions of the day for Greco-Roman and Aramaic letters[24] by including certain stereotypical forms. Take, for instance, the typical Pauline salutation: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord [*kyrios*] Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:3). One of Paul's unique contributions to the art of letter writing includes adjusting the typical Hellenistic greeting from *chairein* to *charis* ("grace") and adding the common Jewish greeting *shalom* (or "peace"). Paul's prayer-wish for his recipients is that they be thoroughly immersed in grace and peace, whose ultimate source is "God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." The two are one in purpose, and there is no distinction of function. Together God the Father and

the Lord Jesus dispense grace and peace to the church. This sort of binitarian statement is possible only if God the Father and the Lord Jesus reside at a similar level in Paul's thought. Interestingly, the two figures remain distinct even as they are regarded as one; whenever the apostle employs this form or a variation of it, God the Father precedes the Lord Jesus.

Paul customarily follows the salutation of his letters with a thanksgiving. These are typically less fixed in form but often contain a similar, binitarian reference: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 1:3; cf. Eph. 1:3); "In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Col. 1:3); "We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 1:2–3).

Paul uses the same formula in the body of his letters in benedictions and doxologies of praise. Consider the following examples:

> Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. (1 Thess. 3:11–13)

> If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus (blessed be he forever!) knows that I do not lie. (2 Cor. 11:30–31)

Given Paul's use of the binitarian formula in salutations, thanksgivings, and the body of his letters, one might expect to find it also in his farewells. However, this is not the case. In most of his farewells Paul refers only to the Lord Jesus: "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you" (1 Cor. 16:23); "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (Rom. 16:20; see also 1 Thess. 5:28); "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters" (Gal. 6:18; see also Phil. 4:23 and Philem. 25).

The typical Pauline farewell includes a reference to "grace" and "the Lord Jesus" but no appeal to "God the Father." The primary exception to this is the conclusion to 2 Corinthians: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you" (2 Cor. 13:13). Taken together with the initial greetings, the apostle sees the Lord Jesus as the source of grace, dispensing salvation not only in this age but also in the age to come. Although these farewells contain no verb forms, it is probably best to take them as a prayer-wish ("May the grace of our Lord Jesus be yours").

The binitarian formula "God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ" or variations of it appear frequently in stereotypical fashion in Paul's Letters. The

two figures are linked closely and act as one. There is distinction between them, however, because (1) God the Father always precedes the Lord Jesus Christ, and (2) God is described as "the Father of our Lord Jesus." This kind of language serves to underscore the intimate relationship between the Father and the Lord Jesus. In texts like this, *kyrios* (Lord) comes close to the title *huios* (Son). Interestingly, Paul more often links "Father" with "Lord" than he does "Father" with "Son."

There are two reasons for this. First, the confession "Jesus is Lord" characterizes the appropriate response of the churches to the resurrection (Rom. 1:3–4; 10:9–13; Phil. 2:9–11). At the same time Jesus's Sonship reflects his unique relation to the Father. To put it another way, Jesus stands as Lord in relation to the church and is so addressed in worship, whereas in relation to the Father he stands as Son. Granted, it is proper and expected that all believers call on God as "Abba/Father" precisely because he is Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's Sonship sets the stage for his followers to address God as "Father." While it is true that God is Father of all creatures by virtue of creation, the Christian notion of God's Fatherhood goes further because it depends on God's revelation of himself through the cross of Jesus. In other words, Christians can claim to be sons and daughters of God because he is first of all the Father of our Lord Jesus, and believers participate in him through faith and baptism. Now it is true that the title "Christ" occurs in many of these full, stereotypical formulas but not in all; yet the designation "Lord" is always joined with the personal name "Jesus" in these binitarian formulas. This is significant, for it indicates that the *kyrios* title held the more prominent liturgical association for the apostle.

A second and perhaps more important reason for Paul's connection of God the Father with the Lord Jesus has to do with how he has reworked the central Jewish confession around Jesus. The Shema is the best known and most recited confession from the Hebrew Bible (Deut. 6:4): "Hear, O Israel: The LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*] is our God, the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*] is one [or alone]." This line opens the first paragraph of an important Jewish prayer (*Shema* = "Hear!"). During the Second Temple period the recitation of it became a regular feature of synagogue liturgy and personal devotion. Jesus rehearses these verses in his teaching on the greatest commandment (Mark 12:29–30). Modern readers will hear in it an assertion of monotheism: a sort of theoretical, abstract conclusion that there is only one God. Yet in context, it is best understood as a declaration of absolute loyalty to YHWH, Israel's God. As N. T. Wright writes: "To pray the *Shema* was to embrace the yoke of God's kingdom, to commit oneself to God's purposes on earth as in heaven, whatever it might cost. It was to invoke, and

declare one's loyalty to, the one God who had revealed himself in action at the exodus and was now giving his people their inheritance."[25]

What Paul does to this prayer is nothing short of remarkable. He takes the essential language of it from the Greek version and expands and redraws it to include Jesus at its very core (1 Cor. 8:6):

> For us there is one God, the Father
> from whom are all things and for whom we exist,
> and one Lord, Jesus Christ
> through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Paul's reworked Shema—like the original—lacks any verbs, making the exact translation of both versions difficult. Yet the ambiguity of the texts adds to their flexibility, simplicity, and mystery. In light of Jesus's and the early churches' teaching on the Fatherhood of God (Abba/Father), Paul glosses "God" with "the Father." In light of the confessions "Jesus is Messiah (Christ)" and "Jesus is Lord," he glosses Jesus with the twin titles "Christ" and "Lord." The doubling of "one" in Paul's version is not additive: "one" plus "one" equals "two." For Paul, Jesus is no second God. "One" recalls and expands/doubles down on the Shema, including "the Lord Jesus Christ" unambiguously within the divine identity. If Paul were in the habit of reciting this revised form of the Shema with its references to "God the Father" and the "Lord Jesus Christ," then the expression "God the Father and the Lord Jesus (Christ)" would have easily made it into key moments of his letters, especially where one would expect to find stereotypical expressions and formulas.

For the apostle this agenda-setting confession lays out the central direction of his answer to the Corinthian question (1 Cor. 8:1): How are Christ believers to face the challenge of paganism and idolatry in their city? It has nothing to do with esoteric dogmas suitable for discussion in the faculty lounge. It is the foundation for who they are, whose they are, and how they are to relate to one another by virtue of their creation and salvation. It is not as if Paul is arguing for a controversial doctrine (that is, including Jesus as "Lord" along with God in the confession); as far as believers are concerned ("for us") the matter is settled. No, he is arguing for a certain kind of behavior toward pagan gods and weaker brothers and sisters who are offended when Christ followers knowingly eat meat sacrificed to idols.

The Lord's Supper

The practice of the Lord's Supper offers a special example of how Paul employs the *kyrios* title. He mentions the practice twice in only one of his letters,

1 Corinthians. This happens to be the earliest historical evidence of a practice the church still engages in today under a variety of names: Holy Communion, the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper. Paul himself refers to it as "the Lord's supper" (*kyriakon deipnon*) in 1 Cor. 11:20 and "the table of the Lord" (*trapezēs kyriou*) in 1 Cor. 10:21. In each case he associates the title *kyrios* with the practice more than any other title.

Having chastised the Corinthians for their abuse of the Supper (1 Cor. 11:17–22), he relates to them the tradition as he has received it "from the Lord" and continues to lay out his understanding of it. What he means by "from the Lord" is not altogether clear, but that he employs the language of tradition and recites/relates a version close to the Synoptic account (see Matt. 26:26–30; Mark 14:22–26; Luke 22:17–20) appears to rule out his reception of it by a direct revelation in any one of his celebrated "visions and revelations" (2 Cor. 12). Rather, the earthly Jesus is the source of the account—they are after all his words and actions—and the risen Jesus is responsible for Paul's unique interpretation of the event. After detailing the actions and words of Jesus in his final meal with his disciples, Paul adds what appears to be his own spin on the custom in the churches: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). Paul interprets the Supper as more than the commemoration of a past sacrifice ("Do this in remembrance of me," 11:24). For him it is also an opportunity to proclaim (*katangellete*) the gospel in the present. Furthermore, for him it is a practice that the church should engage faithfully until the future consummation ("until he comes"). What is unusual here is Paul's association of Jesus's death with the title *kyrios*: "You proclaim the Lord's death." As we saw earlier, "Christ" is typically the title he employs in discussions of Jesus's crucifixion and death.

Next Paul warns the Corinthians against participating in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy fashion (11:27–32). Anyone, he says, who eats the bread or drinks "the cup of the Lord" in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning "the body and blood of the Lord." So he urges caution and self-examination so they do not bring judgment on themselves. Apparently, Paul is convinced that some have grown weak and ill, and still others have died in the church, because of the abuse. He concludes the warning: "When we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world" (11:32). The association of the title *kyrios* with final judgment is not unusual, as we noticed earlier. What does run counter to Paul's normal practice is talk of the cup and bread as "the body and blood of the Lord." The liturgical context of the Supper appears to govern Paul's use of *kyrios* when discussing the sacrificial death of Jesus.

Turning to 1 Cor. 10:14–22, we note a different pattern: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” The context is once again the Lord’s Supper. Yet here and only here the sacred meal represents believers’ sharing in *Christ’s* blood and body.[26] But later, in the same passage, Paul reverts back to his habit, linking *kyrios* with the elements. “You cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.” In warning against idolatry, the cup and table of the Lord stand in antithesis to the cup and table of demons. According to Paul, what pagans sacrifice to their gods, they actually sacrifice to demons and other malevolent spirits. Despite what some are thinking, the practice is not neutral and so must be avoided: “I do not want you to be partners with demons,” Paul writes (1 Cor. 10:20).

Superintending this entire discussion (chaps. 8–10) is Paul’s initial recalibration of the Shema: “Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.” Paul’s new version is redrawn completely to include Jesus within God’s unique covenant identity (8:5–6): “Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”

Paul’s expanded Shema acknowledges the unfortunate reality of idolatry and then trumps the claim that the world is populated with many so-called gods and lords. They may be called “gods,” but gods they are not. They may be called “lords,” but lords they are not. For us (Christ believers) there is one God, the Father, the source and goal of all reality, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, the agent of creation and redemption. The confession is, of course, binitarian. It sees the two—God, the Father, and the Lord, Jesus Christ—in unity. The two are one. We are not dealing with any sort of primitive ditheism, that is, two separate and distinct gods. As a Jew Paul was a monotheist, but now—given all that the God of Abraham has been up to—he understands that Jesus somehow must be reckoned within God’s unique covenant identity. We should not fail to notice here that the title “Lord,” associated as it is with Jesus, has its roots in the Shema. Spoken versions of the prayer substituted *ʾadōnāy* (Lord) for the divine name out of reverence for the name, but it is clear the original contains the covenant name of God: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD [YHWH] is our God, the LORD [YHWH] alone” (Deut. 6:4). The link between YHWH and the Lord Jesus in Paul’s revised version is unmistakable and remarkable. What makes it all the more remarkable is that Jesus is not a figure of the ancient past whose legend and stature grew

over the centuries but a man who recently walked the earth with people Paul himself met and knew (Gal. 1). The claim is audacious. The link—if it were a fiction—would be scandalous.

Therefore, in referencing the Lord's Supper, Paul generally uses the *kyrios* predicate for Jesus. This is all the more significant when one realizes that he customarily employs the title "Christ" in discussions related to the facts of the gospel, particularly the sacrificial death of Jesus. Werner Kramer is correct when he says *kyrios* has "a fixed place in the terminology relating to the Lord's Supper,"[27] but Kramer errs by insisting that this is true because the title *kyrios* was related to certain cultic meals in Hellenistic religious practices. According to him, the Lord's Supper in Paul's churches was adopted from meals dedicated to various pagan gods. Some ate in honor of Lord Sarapis; others ate in honor of the Lord Jesus. While Christians and pagans probably noticed the contrast in communal practice and identity, there is no reason to think it actually started there. Indeed, the *maranatha* prayer ("Our Lord, come!") may well belong to early eucharistic liturgy. If this Aramaic phrase is traced back to the Palestinian churches, and if Paul included it at the end of 1 Corinthians (16:22) because he expected the letter would be read publicly prior to the Lord's Supper observance in Corinth, it is more likely that the linkage between *kyrios* and the Supper emerged from Palestinian practice.

There are other liturgically oriented texts in Paul that feature *kyrios* as a christological title (especially Phil. 2:6–11), but for now these are sufficient to make the case that the apostle's use of the honorific is not random but purposeful.

Conclusion

In our investigation of the texts and contexts where Paul felt it appropriate to refer to Jesus as Lord, we uncovered three main contexts: ethical, eschatological, and liturgical. This body of evidence drawn from Paul's Letters demonstrates that Jesus occupies special status over against the church. In particular, the Lord Jesus's relation to the church stands in direct continuity to YHWH's relation to Israel. The apostle employs similar language and calls on themes familiar and current in Second Temple Judaism.

In regard to ethics, Jesus's teaching and example form the heart of the church's life and ethic in the same way YHWH's teaching and example formed the heart of Jewish life and ethics. Furthermore, the concrete actions of YHWH to redeem his covenant people from slavery with the promise of a new exodus

and new creation constitute the basis of YHWH's authority to command, legislate, and order the lives of his people. Likewise, for Paul, the concrete actions of Jesus in the cross and resurrection to redeem the church from hostile powers with the promise of his second coming constitute the basis of Jesus's authority as *kyrios* to instruct and order the life of the church. In matters of ethics, Paul most often refers to Jesus as *kyrios*, the accepted Greek vocalization of the divine name.

In matters of eschatology, we noticed the referential shift that takes place in Paul's Letters. The day of YHWH has become the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. The promise/threat of YHWH's return is now taken up in the promise/threat of the arrival, appearance, and revelation of the Lord Jesus. Additionally, the apostle recasts the final judgment of God in and around the second coming of Jesus, who arrives to execute divine judgment in glory and power. In matters of eschatology, Paul's habit is to speak of Jesus as *kyrios*.

Then, in matters of worship, we took notice of how Paul speaks of what Christians do when they gather. They come together in the name of the Lord Jesus. They act in his stead. They confess with one voice "Jesus is Lord" by the power of the Spirit. They appeal to the "Lord" in prayer. They chant, sing, and hymn the name of Jesus the Messiah as "Lord." They partake of the Lord's Supper, seated at the table of the Lord, drinking the cup of the Lord, eating the body of the Lord in order to keep on proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes. Then in an audacious move, sure to elicit scandal among unbelievers, Paul recasts the central Jewish confession, the Shema, in and around Jesus as *kyrios*. Clearly, in matters of liturgy, Paul tends to favor *kyrios* as a way of highlighting the transcendent significance of Jesus.

Now it is important to note that these three contexts—ethical, eschatological, liturgical—are not watertight. There can be overlap between them, often significant overlap. We have suggested this already in the ethical demands Paul places on believers in light of the imminence of the Lord's coming. Perhaps a clear case in point is the Philippian hymn (2:5–11). While it appears to be a liturgical piece sung or chanted in worship to summarize and celebrate the master story of the church, it also has an eschatological angle in the universal acclamation of Jesus as Lord and Messiah: one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. Furthermore, Paul uses the hymn in the first place to underscore Jesus as the lordly example of humility and service (Phil. 2:1–4). He urges the Philippians to adopt the same mind Jesus had when he emptied himself and gave his life for others on the cross (2:5). Thus, for Paul the hymn he recites has a decidedly ethical purpose. In Phil. 2:5–11, then, ethical, eschatological, and

liturgical interests find common expression in the conviction that "Jesus is Lord."

EXCURSUS:

Kyrios as Counterimperial Propaganda

I have no doubt that when Christians gathered and confessed "Jesus is Lord," they meant "Caesar is not." For Paul the Jewish Messiah has indeed been shown to be the rightful Lord of all things. The slain Messiah has been vindicated by God through the resurrection; thus messianic claims about him have been endorsed in the highest heavens. Death, the final enemy, has been defeated in his glorified body; the new creation has come, and with that a new king has taken his rightful place at the right hand of God. Rome might well be a functionary of the one, true God (Rom. 13:1–7), but it is not his rival, nor the rival of the man seated at his right hand. Those who think otherwise are as foolish as pagans who bow before a carved bit of wood and claim it is god over them.

Philippians 3:20–21 stands as the apostle's clearest anti-imperial line: "But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself." For Paul, the world is ruled not from Rome but from heaven. Our true citizenship and allegiance, he claims, reside there. The world's true Savior and Lord is Jesus the Jewish Messiah, not Caesar.

Yet the christological use of *kyrios* is not derived from or dependent on counterimperial rhetoric; it is rooted in the conviction that God has acted finally and decisively in Jesus. The claim that Caesar is Lord and Savior for bringing Roman peace, taxation, and public works designed to ease people's nasty, short, and brutish lives would be and could be mocked by any Jew. The Shema itself stands in opposition to the kinds of ultimate claims made by Rome or any of its functionaries. Paul's revised version of the Shema (1 Cor. 8:6) with God the Father and the Lord Jesus at its core no doubt functioned the same way.

So, yes, Paul's Christology is inherently counterimperial, and more needs to be made of it; however, I doubt it is the reason early Christians started calling him "Lord" in the first place. Rightly understood, Paul's counterimperial rhetoric is rooted in the churches' experiences of the risen Jesus and in Spirit-inspired exegesis, which associates the crucified, now resurrected Messiah squarely with the one God, one Lord of Israel.

1. C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Paul's Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 44.

2. David B. Capes, "Jesus Tradition in Paul," in *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus*, ed. Craig Evans (New York: Routledge, 2008), 446–50.

3. The verb *apethanen* is reserved almost solely for "Christ" (Rom. 5:6–8; 6:8, 9, 10; 8:34; 14:9, 15; 1 Cor. 8:11; 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:14–15; Gal. 2:21; Col. 2:20).

4. 1 Cor. 1:13, 17, 23; 2:2; 2 Cor. 13:4; Gal. 2:20; 6:12; Eph. 2:16; Phil. 2:8; 3:18; Col. 2:14.

5. Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 179. E.g., "yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:6), those of Christ (1 Cor. 15:23; Gal. 5:24), you (pl.) are of Christ (1 Cor. 3:23; Gal. 3:29), to be of Christ (2 Cor. 10:7). To these examples we could add those phrases in which "Christ" is used as a genitive of possession, signifying that believers belong to Christ and have been incorporated into him.

6. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 273, followed Fritz Neugebauer, "Das paulinische 'in Christo,'" *NTS* 4 (1958): 124–38. On (1) see Rom. 3:24; 6:11, 23; 8:2, 39; 2 Cor. 5:19, 21; Gal. 2:17; 3:14, 26; 1 Thess. 5:18. On (2) see Rom. 6:11; 8:1; 12:5; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 1:22; 2:4, 17; 3:28; 1 Thess. 2:14. On (3) see Rom. 9:1; 15:17; 16:3, 7, 9, 10; 1 Cor. 4:15, 17; 15:31; 16:24; 2 Cor. 2:14, 17; 12:2, 19; 13:4.

7. On the indicative/imperative structure see Rudolf Bultmann, "Das Problem der Ethik bei Paulus," *ZNW* 23 (1924): 123–40; Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 272–78.

8. Werner G. Kramer, *Christ, Lord, Son of God*, trans. Brian Hardy (London: SCM, 1966), 169.

9. Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 115. See too Rom. 14:1–12; 16:2–20; 1 Cor. 6:12–7:40.

10. Moule, *Origin of Paul's Christology*, 47–48.

11. Chris Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology*, WUNT 2/323 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 3.

12. Ibid., 73, italics original.

13. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 3–10.

14. Albrecht Oepke, "παρουσία, πάρειμι," *TDNT* 5:860; also Karl Hermann Schelkle, *Paulus: Leben, Briefe, Theologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981), 251.

15. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 555.

16. Larry Kreitzer, *Jesus and God in Paul's Eschatology* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 88–90.

17. Volkmar Herntrich, "κρίνω," *TDNT* 3:923–33.

18. Kreitzer, *Jesus and God*, 165–69.

19. H. W. Hollander and M. De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 82–85; also Matthew Black, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 181–88.

20. Karl Ludwig Schmidt, "ἐπικαλέω," *TDNT* 3:496–500.

21. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 198–99.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid. The naming of angels in Jewish magical practices is not equivalent to the ritual invocation of Jesus. The former is private and secretive. The latter is corporate and open for inspection. In fact, Saul is said to have been charged to bind all those who call upon [the Lord Jesus's] name (Acts 9:14; cf. 7:59; 22:16). Such an outsider's description demonstrates this is public and widely known.

24. David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, and Randy Richards, *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters and Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 54–82.

25. N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 663.

26. Kramer, *Christ, Lord, Son*, 162–63.

27. Ibid., 161. See also Eduard Schweizer, *Jesus*, trans. David E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox, 1971), 66–67.

4

YHWH Texts with God as Referent

In the undisputed letters the apostle quotes OT YHWH texts thirteen times; roughly half of those refer to God, and the rest refer to Christ. He also alludes to YHWH texts, but always in reference to the person and work of the Messiah. Before we proceed, it may be helpful to define some key terms. By "YHWH text" we mean Paul's quotation of or allusion to an OT text that contains the divine name. But this raises the question: What is a quotation, and what is an allusion? Richard Hays offers a helpful way of categorizing intertextual references. He describes three: quotation, allusion, and echo. These categories represent "approximate markers on the spectrum of intertextual linkage" moving from most explicit to least. A quotation is often introduced by a citation formula (e.g., "for it is written," Gal. 3:10; "for the scripture says to Pharaoh," Rom. 9:17) and contains a high degree of verbal correspondence with the source text. An allusion does not typically begin with a citation formula and is characterized by a slighter degree of verbal correspondence. In fact, an allusion may consist primarily of just a few key words from a text that, to the insider, conjure up some sort of prior scriptural story, character, or insight. An echo is the least distinct of the three. It may consist of only a word or a phrase that signals the alert hearer to form a connection with a prior text.[1] When most modern Christians hear the simple phrase "Our Father," for example, they are prompted to recall and pray the entire text of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9–13). When charismatic believers say to one another "Greater is he," they may well be encouraged to rehearse the entire scriptural teaching: "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4c NASB). The point is that it takes only a few words to form an intertextual link. Our focus in what follows will be primarily quotations and allusions that contain a reference to the unspeakable name of God.

YHWH Texts with God as Referent	YHWH Texts with Christ as Referent
Rom. 4:7–8 (Ps. 32:1–2)	Rom. 10:13 (Joel 2:32)

Rom. 9:27, 29 (Isa. 28:22; 1:9)	Rom. 14:11 (Isa. 45:23)
Rom. 11:34 (Isa. 40:13)	1 Cor. 1:31 (Jer. 9:23–24)
Rom. 15:9, 11 (Pss. 18:49; 117:1)	1 Cor. 2:16 (Isa. 40:13)
1 Cor. 3:20 (Ps. 94:11)	1 Cor. 10:26 (Ps. 24:1)
2 Cor. 6:17–18 (Isa. 52:11; 2 Sam. 7:14)	2 Cor. 10:17 (Jer. 9:23–24)

	Selected Allusions to YHWH Texts with Christ as Referent
	2 Cor. 3:16 (Exod. 34:34)
	Phil. 2:10–11 (Isa. 45:23)
	1 Thess. 3:13 (Zech. 14:5)

As far as I can tell, there are no allusive uses of YHWH with God the Father as referent.[2] Whether a passage refers to God or Christ must be worked out through contextual and exegetical analysis. An earlier generation of scholars seems to have assumed that Paul used *kyrios* christologically except in OT quotations and allusions; but as we will show, that assumption does not stand up.[3] In this chapter we will consider those YHWH texts Paul uses to refer to God. In the next chapter we will deal with YHWH texts Paul applies to Jesus.

YHWH Texts with God as Referent

The Lord and Justification/Righteousness (Rom. 4:7–8)

In the first major section of Paul's Roman letter (1:18–3:20), the apostle details humanity's desperate plight in sin and rebellion against God. God's wrath was the world's ambient reality since none were righteous, not even one (Rom. 3:10). The good news for Paul is that the world has entered a "but now" moment (Rom. 3:21–31). Thanks to the faithfulness of Jesus and his atoning sacrifice, God is now making right all those who enter into the Messiah by trusting in him. This includes Jews as well as gentiles. As a result, everything has changed. But even if history has entered a new phase, the path to it was anticipated centuries earlier, beginning with Abraham (Rom. 4).

Paul, ever the scriptural thinker, finds in Abraham's faith and faithfulness an example. Abraham was not justified before God through his works; rather, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Rom.

4:3, quoting Gen. 15:6). This scriptural text echoes throughout Paul's argument, as he teases out the meaning of key words through exegetical maneuvers and appeals to other sacred texts. "Reckoned" (*logizomai*) is one of those key words. Abraham is "reckoned" righteous as a gift based solely on faith. His righteous reckoning has nothing to do with his submission to ritual circumcision, which came later; the gift of faith-righteousness fulfills a key aspect of God's promise to the patriarch.

Paul goes on to appeal to King David (Ps. 32:1–2) to show that Abraham was not alone. God's people have always benefited from a faith-righteousness connection to their covenant partner (Rom. 4:7–8):

> Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven,
> and whose sins are covered;
> Blessed is the one against whom the Lord [YHWH/*kyrios*] will not reckon sin.

The link between Psalms and Genesis demonstrates the second of Hillel's principles, *gezera shawa*, which allows two passages to be associated and interpreted together as long as they share a common word, in this case "reckon" (Gen. 15:6 and Ps. 32:2; the link works here in both Hebrew and Greek versions).[4] So, for Paul, the righteousness "reckoned" to Abraham by virtue of faith (Gen. 15:6) is explained further as the forgiveness of sins for those who confess their faults to the LORD (Ps. 32:1–2).

But the link seems to go much deeper. At first glance these two passages appear to have little in common. Genesis 15:6 relates Abraham's response to God's promise to give him descendants as numerous as the stars in the night sky. Psalm 32:1–2 is David's celebration of the "blessedness" of having one's sins forgiven. But for Paul, the entire story of Abraham is rooted in blessing and blessedness.[5] When the LORD first appeared to Abram after his father died, he told Abram to leave Haran and go to a land he had never laid eyes on with this promise (Gen. 12:2–3, italics added): "I will make of you a great nation, and *I will bless you*, and make your name great, so that *you will be a blessing*. *I will bless those who bless you*, and the one who curses you I will curse; and *in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*."

For the apostle, Abraham and blessing/blessedness go hand in hand. Abraham is more than a figure from the past; he is a father of a people whose legacy is rooted in a promise of receiving and being a blessing.[6] This deep, structural link between Abraham and blessing offers another reason the apostle thought of David's psalm.

But that is not all. Like other wisdom psalms, Ps. 32 involves good news and bad news. The good news has to do with the happiness and joy that result from

God covering and forgiving the sins of the righteous (32:11). The bad news is that to keep silent and not confess sins is to court disease and disaster. When the psalmist finally turns to the Lord to confess his sins, the Lord forgives and heals him. The psalm ends triumphantly, calling the righteous and upright to rejoice in YHWH. Paul's quotation of Ps. 32 does more than provide him with a scriptural proof text; it draws from the wider context of Abraham's story and David's psalm.

Paul's quotation of Ps. 32:1–2 (31:1–2 LXX) appears verbatim from the Septuagint, which varies somewhat from the Hebrew reading. The apostle prefaces it with an extended introductory formula that lays out the connection he hopes to make between Genesis and Psalms: "So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom *God reckons righteousness* apart from works" (Rom. 4:6, italics added). The quotation clearly qualifies as a YHWH text, since the original Hebrew version has the divine name. In the Hebrew version of the psalm, YHWH is mentioned explicitly four times: (1) the one who does not hold the sinner guilty, (2) the one to whom confession is made, (3) the one in whom trust is given, and (4) the one in whom the righteous rejoice.

There are three factors within the text and context of this passage that demonstrate that this YHWH text refers to God the Father. First, the way Paul introduces the quotation with its reference to "God" clearly shows that he reads the text with God, not Jesus, in mind. Second, from Rom. 3:21 onward the context of Paul's argument appears thoroughly theocentric. Paul refers to God directly or indirectly over fifteen times from 3:21 to 4:7–8. References to Christ, on the other hand, are significant but far fewer. Third, given Paul's normal habit of associating justification (righteousness) with God (e.g., Rom. 1:17; 2:13; 3:20–26; 4:2–6; 8:30, 33; 10:3) and the faith-righteousness emphasis of his argument, it is reasonable to conclude that the apostle has God in mind when referring to the *kyrios* who does not reckon sin.

"The Lord of Hosts" (Rom. 9:27–29)

In Rom. 9–11 Paul laments the unbelief of his countrymen who rejected Jesus as their Messiah despite their privileged history and special status with God (Rom. 9:4–5). Still, he is confident that God has not abandoned his people; on the contrary, Paul looks at the modest number of Jewish Christians in his churches and beyond as the remnant that will one day witness a great renewal of God's people (Rom. 11).

It is significant to note that when laying out his thoughts on why the majority of Jews have not accepted his gospel, Paul quotes the OT twenty-six times. In

particular Rom. 9:6–29 appears to be a midrashic exposition composed by Paul to explain the situation created when the majority in Israel rejected the Messiah. Midrash is both an activity and a product; it is the act of studying the Scriptures as well as what is taught or written as a result of that study. Paul begins by quoting Gen. 21:12d: "For it is through Isaac that offspring [*sperma*] shall be named for you." Paul interprets this text in a manner similar to the kind of biblical exegesis found at Qumran known as *pesher* (e.g., 4QFlorilegium 1.11–14 and the Habakkuk Pesher [1QpHab]). *Pesher* is an interpretive strategy that locates a biblical text in current times due to God's recent activity. In a way, *pesher* modernizes the text, updates it, and makes it current. Paul's authoritative interpretation of Gen. 21:12 offers a scriptural reason to conclude that the physical descendants of Abraham are not necessarily heirs to the promise. In other words, Abraham had many descendants (*sperma*), but only Isaac is chosen. Likewise, Isaac had many descendants (*sperma*), but only Jacob is chosen. God's elective purpose is never far from his promise. Marshaling other biblical texts from the Law and the Prophets (e.g., Gen. 18:10, 14; 25:23; Isa. 10:22–23; Mal. 1:2), the apostle reminds believers of a familiar story with a new twist. The inclusion of gentiles into God's people was prefigured in the Scriptures. Now the people of Messiah Jesus—both Jew and gentile—are the true people of God, standing in direct continuity with the OT revelation.

Romans 9:27–29 is our focal text, and it concludes Paul's thoughts on the nature of Israel. It contains not one but two references to the divine name, from two separate prophetic oracles. The first (9:27–28) merges two quotations, Hosea 2:1 LXX and Isa. 10:22: "Though the number of the children of Israel were like the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, for the Lord [*kyrios*] will execute his sentence on the earth quickly and decisively."

Paul's conflated quotation has an introductory formula crediting it to the prophet Isaiah: "And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel. . . ." The two passages are similar in tone and purpose, echoing a well-known refrain from Genesis that Abraham's descendants will be as numerous as "the stars of heaven" and "the sand of the sea" (e.g., Gen. 22:17). The apostle's ability to merge these texts shows just how steeped he is in the Scriptures. The reference to "Lord" (*kyrios*) truncates and renders the divine name in combination with two other titles: "the Lord GOD [YHWH] of hosts" (Isa. 10:23). Exactly why he abbreviates the name and title in this quotation is unclear until one considers how it is conflated with the second.

For both Isaiah and Paul, there are two theological ideas in play: (1) the rescue of a remnant and (2) the swift and decisive execution of divine judgment. The eighth-century prophet had predicted that catastrophe would fall on God's people

at the hands of Assyrian soldiers. He understood this coming calamity as God's judgment on his own people, who had rebelled and rejected him. Still, judgment oracles like his were frequently balanced with oracles of hope and restoration: a remnant of Israel will survive the onslaught and will, in time, have their fortunes restored and their status as God's people renewed. For Isaiah, this was not so much a restoration to the land or a Jewish way of life as it was a return to the God of Jacob (Isa. 10:21).

In Paul's way of thinking, God is acting in his day as he always has, that is, through a remnant of faithful believers elected by his grace. Through Israel's calamitous history God has often chosen some and not others, saved some and judged others. He even brought in outsiders to play key roles in the drama of redemption (e.g., Ruth, Rahab, Cyrus). Although most of the apostle's Jewish contemporaries are rejecting Jesus as Messiah, he finds the small band of Jewish believers prefigured in Isaiah's prophecy of the "remnant." Therefore, the meager acceptance of Jesus among Paul's countrymen does not alarm him, even though it clearly disappoints him. The congregation of Jesus followers will not resemble the sand of the sea until the gentiles begin to convert in large numbers. In the end, Paul likely considers the unbelief of his own people as direct evidence of God's judgment against them—at least for now.

The second YHWH text we consider here concludes Paul's exposition. He quotes Isa. 1:9 LXX virtually verbatim. He writes,

> If the Lord [*kyrios*] of hosts had not left survivors [*sperma*] to us,
> we would have fared like Sodom
> and been made like Gomorrah. (Rom. 9:29)

The final quotation of Paul's midrash alludes back to the opening text via the key word *sperma* (seed[s] or "descendants"). He prefaces it with an introductory formula: "And as Isaiah predicted . . ." (9:29). His quotation contains what was originally a reference to the divine name, as indicated by the phrase "Lord of hosts" (Greek *kyrios sabaōth*). The Greek translates and transliterates respectively the Hebrew, *yhwh ṣəbāʾôt*.

When Paul combines different quotations, he generally connects them by means of a key word. In Rom. 9:33 the word is "stone." In Rom. 15:10–12 the word is "nations." In this case (Rom. 9:27–29), the linkage is more parallel and conceptual than verbal. The phrase "left survivors" (9:29) stands in parallel to the idea of "remnant" (9:27). In fact, although it is difficult to visualize, the word translated "remnant" (*hypoleimma*) is cognate with the verb "left" (*enkatelipen*). A similar combination of words provides the apostle another opportunity for conceptual, if not verbal, linkage between an OT quotation (1 Kings 19:14–18)

and his own application of the text (Rom. 11:2b–5): “Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ‘Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, I alone am left [*hypeleiphthēn*], and they are seeking my life.’ But what is the divine reply to him? ‘I have kept [*katelipon*] for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ So too at the present time there is a remnant [*leimma*], chosen by grace.”

In addition to these potential connections, both OT quotations (Isa. 1:9 and 10:22–23) contain the word *kyrios* as a translation of the divine name. In both texts the Hebrew “Lord of hosts” stands behind them: in one expressed (Rom. 9:29), in another unexpressed (Rom. 9:27). By merging the quotations, the single use of “Lord of hosts” in Rom. 9:29 is sufficient to help link the passages together, avoid redundancy, and resonate with one of the more memorable combinations of name and title in the Hebrew Scriptures. The point here is that multiple points of contact between the two texts highlight Paul’s analysis of Scripture over against the new situation.

The apostle took what was a well-worn theme of Isaiah’s prophecies (remnant theology) and saw it fulfilled finally and decisively by the Lord of hosts in the new situation brought about by the Messiah. Despite the darkness of God’s judgment, foreign invasion, and exile, Isaiah proclaimed hope for a new day when a remnant of Abraham’s children would make their way back from exile to the land of promise. Now, in Paul’s day, the same Lord, the Lord of hosts, is sparing a remnant of Jews faithful to Messiah Jesus; otherwise Israel itself would be lost to history and become a byword to the nations, like Sodom and Gomorrah. As gentiles flooded into the church via baptism, a majority of Jews were rejecting him. But rather than invalidating or confusing God’s promises, this situation actually confirms them. Like the prophets of old, Paul distinguishes true Israel from those who are merely the physical descendants of Abraham.

From the analysis above, let us venture toward some conclusions. In Rom. 9:27–29 Paul quotes two distinct YHWH texts with God as the referent. The theocentric features of Rom. 9:6–29—the explicit mentions of God, God as the unspoken subject of verbs, God as the antecedent to the pronouns—combined with the lack of any clear reference to Jesus demonstrate that Paul likely had God in mind when quoting these YHWH texts. Add to that the presence of the phrase “Lord of hosts,” the special epithet for God associated with the sanctuary at Shiloh (e.g., 1 Sam. 1:3, 11), and it seems only natural to read “Lord of hosts” as “God the Father” and not the “Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Mind of the Lord (Rom. 11:34)

Moved by the mystery of God's present and future dealings with both Jews and gentiles (Rom. 9–11), Paul concludes his discussion with a doxology of wonder and adoration (Rom. 11:33–36). Doxologies are a common feature in Paul's Letters (e.g., Rom. 16:25–27; Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20) that invite his readers/hearers to stop and consider the praise of the one true God. Doxologies are not just tacked onto the end of a section to form a transition from one thing to another; they are strategically located and contextually grounded in the argument Paul is trying to make. Romans 11:33–36 carries forward the theme of the previous chapters in celebrating God's wisdom and contrasting it with the feebleness of human wisdom. It has a hymnlike quality (Rom. 11:33–36):

> O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!
>
> "For who has known the mind of the Lord?
> Or who has been his counselor?"
> "Or who has given a gift to him,
> to receive a gift in return?"
>
> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

At the heart of the doxology is a quotation of Isa. 40:13, an OT YHWH text. Chapter 40 is one of those pivotal chapters in the oracles of Isaiah, announcing that the long, national nightmare of exile is over for God's people. Soon they will return to their land. God's glory left the temple before the Babylonian onslaught, but the oracle promises his presence will return to them in powerful, visible ways. In other words, YHWH is coming back to Jerusalem.

But Isa. 40 itself is awash in echoes and reworkings of earlier biblical texts. Paul draws the center of his praise hymn from a portion of the chapter that underscores the incomparability of God. This passage from Isaiah sounds very Job-like as he poses one cryptic question after another (Isa. 40:12–14):

> Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand
> and marked off the heavens with a span,
> enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure,
> and weighed the mountains in scales
> and the hills in a balance?
> Who has directed the spirit of the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*],
> or as his counselor has instructed him?
> Whom did he consult for his enlightenment,
> and who taught him the path of justice?
> Who taught him knowledge,
> and showed him the way of understanding?

In Rom. 11:34 Paul quotes Isa. 40:13. Some regard this as more an allusion than a quotation, but the words and word order correspond so closely to the Septuagint that it should probably be taken as a quotation:

> For who has known the mind of the Lord [*kyrios*]?
> Or who has been his counselor?

When Paul quotes Isa. 40:13 as part of his doxology, he understands the phrase "the mind of the Lord" to refer to God the Father. This conclusion seems warranted given the theocentric direction of the chapter. Eleven times in Rom. 11:1–32 the apostle mentions God explicitly as he discusses the new relationship of Israel to her covenant partner now that the gentiles have been grafted in (Rom. 11:17–19). Only once does he refer to Christ, and he does so not by name or customary title; he calls him "the Deliverer" (Rom. 11:26). Equally important is how this doxology begins: with a clear reference to God (11:33a): "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!" The apostle erupts in wonder and celebration of God's riches, wisdom, and knowledge. These three elements stand in parallel to God's judgments and ways, and they form a chiastic structure with the questions that follow:

A riches
  B wisdom
    C knowledge
    C′ Who has known the mind of the Lord?
  B′ Who has been his counselor?
A′ Who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return?

A close reading of Rom. 11 and this doxology carries forward the notion that God, and not the Lord Jesus, is the subject of this doxology. Though he is not addressed directly, everything in it points to him. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that Paul uses this YHWH text patrologically, that is, to describe the depth of God's wisdom and celebrate his sovereignty.

Praise the Lord, Ye Gentiles (Rom. 15:9–11)

If the length of Paul's response to the "weak" and "strong" tells us anything (Rom. 14:1–15:13), it is that the church in Rome is plagued by a deep division. Their worship gatherings and communal meals seem to be tense and uncomfortable events. The "weak" refer to those Jewish Christians who observe Jewish practices such as special days and kosher diets and are deeply offended when gentile believers do not follow suit. The "strong" refer to believing

gentiles who do not concern themselves with Jewish scruples about the calendar or certain foods; likely they are critical of the "weak" for holding on to what they must think are irrelevant practices. Paul, it appears, places the onus on the strong to "welcome those who are weak in faith" (14:1) and "to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (15:1; the apostle apparently counts himself among the strong).

Paul's instruction ends as it began, with an encouragement for both groups to "welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Rom. 15:7; cf. 14:1). The qualifier "just as Christ has welcomed you" locates the admonition in some aspect of the story or reputation of Jesus. Christ has become and remains the servant of the Jews (the circumcised). If the gentiles are to imitate Christ and follow his example, it is right for them to become servants of the Jews as well. When Christ became a servant, Paul claims, he accomplished two things: (1) he confirmed the promises made by God to the patriarchs (proving that God had not failed in his promises), and (2) he established a new community, composed of Jews and gentiles (15:8–9).

Beginning in 15:9 Paul gives scriptural warrant for the inclusion of the gentiles by referring to a series of four OT quotations bound by the keyword *ethnē* ("gentiles"/"nations"). On the authority of Scripture Paul argues that it was God's plan all along for the gentiles to place their hope in the Jewish Messiah (15:12, "the root of Jesse") and join Israel in the praise of the one true God. He reaches across the three divisions of Scripture—the Law, Prophets, and Writings—to find this hope foreshadowed throughout the Scriptures of Israel.

This series of texts begins with the introductory formula "As it is written . . ." (15:9). Two of the four quotations are based on OT texts containing the divine name. The first quotation in the chain comes from Ps. 18:49 (17:50 LXX) and is preserved almost verbatim by the apostle except for one thing: the omission of *kyrie* ("Lord . . .").

> LXX: "Therefore I will confess you among the nations, Lord [*kyrie*]
> and sing praises to your name."
>
> Paul: "Therefore I will confess you among the nations,
> And sing praises to your name." (AT)

The Hebrew text is addressed to YHWH (Ps. 18:49), which the Septuagint renders *kyrie* (17:50), but Paul's quotation lacks it. Is this a purposeful omission, or did he merely forget it? It is possible that the Greek version he quotes lacked it. Reference to "the name" in line 2 of the couplet stands in parallel to either

“you” or “Lord” in line 1. So the divine name is implied, even if it is not explicit in Paul’s quotation.

The second quotation is taken from Deut. 32:43. In keeping with the theme of the chain of quotations, it invites the gentiles to rejoice with the people of God. This passage contains no reference to the divine name, but the third quotation does. Paul quotes it from Ps. 117:1 (116:1 LXX). He links it to the previous quotations with “and again” and proceeds to quote closely from the LXX but not verbatim (Rom. 15:11):

> Praise the Lord [*kyrios*], all you nations,
> and let all the peoples praise him.

Since “Lord” (*kyrios*) in the LXX corresponds to the divine name in the Hebrew, Paul is once again quoting a YHWH text.

The two key words in this quotation are “nations” (*ethnē*) and “peoples” (*laoi*). In the LXX “nations” (*ethnē*) typically refers to the world outside Israel. Other translations render it “Gentiles.” On the other hand, *laos* (“people”) generally refers to Israel as the people of God. Paul uses the word eleven times in his letters, but only here in the plural, because it is plural in the LXX. “Nations” and “peoples” stand in parallel to each other to indicate they are called to unite in the same action (praise of the LORD). In the previous verse (Rom. 15:10), Deut. 32:43 is invoked to summon the nations to rejoice along with God’s people. In the following verse (Rom. 15:12), Paul marshals the oracle of Isaiah (11:10) to again universalize the hope: when the root of Jesse comes, the one destined to rule the nations, the nations will put their hope in him.

Taken together, all these quotations share a similar perspective. The destiny of Jews and of the nations/gentiles are interwoven in God’s plan to repair the world. All people groups will (eventually) put their hope and trust in the God of Israel. All will (eventually) confess him, praise him, and make music to his name. Though it is not mentioned here explicitly, the Abrahamic promise of blessing for the nations (Gen. 12:1–3; 22:16–17) is fulfilled in the community where both Jews and gentiles gather to the glory of God.

Paul’s use of these YHWH texts in this chain of OT quotations points directly to the Lord God. First, the straightforward statement in Rom. 15:9 that Christ became a servant of the Jews in order that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy signals that Paul is reading these texts patrologically rather than christologically. Second, the benediction that concludes the discussion (Rom. 15:13) is an appeal to “the God of hope” to fill the Roman believers with joy, peace, and hope as a consequence of their faith. These two factors indicate that God the Father must be the referent for the two YHWH texts in Rom. 15:9–11.

It is probably important to note that the context of these verses (15:9–11) and those in the previous section we discussed (9:27–29) concerns Israel as the people of God and the inclusion of the gentiles into God's saving plan. In both cases Paul reads *kyrios* in these YHWH texts as God.

The Lord Knows (1 Cor. 3:20)

In more ways than one the Corinthian congregation is a mess: rival parties have rallied around certain gifted leaders and boast of spiritual experiences that they interpret to be marks of maturity and wisdom. Paul, however, has a different take; their experiences and factions reflect human and fleshly wisdom, which has more in common with this age than the age to come. Left unchecked, the church is in serious jeopardy. In 1 Cor. 1:18 Paul begins to lay out the nature of true wisdom. He brings his argument to a close in 1 Cor. 3:18–23.

Paul offers a direct challenge to their proud opinions about their leaders. Any progress they have made in the faith has nothing to do with the people they follow; it has all to do with God's work in them (1 Cor. 3:5–9). Believers, of course, have a responsibility to build on the right foundation, Jesus Christ, with lasting, not shoddy, materials, but the day of judgment will reveal the enduring nature of their work. Yet Corinth is in danger from leaders and followers who could destroy God's temple with their schismatic attitudes. These, he warns, will suffer eternal destruction at the hand of God (1 Cor. 3:17).

The apostle brings his case to conclusion with a pair of quotations from Israel's Scripture, the second of which qualifies as an OT YHWH text:

> Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written,
>
> "He catches the wise in their craftiness,"
>
> and again,
>
> "The Lord [YHWH/*kyrios*] knows the thoughts of the wise,
> that they are futile."
>
> So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. (1 Cor. 3:18–23)

In this passage Paul makes the case that God's wisdom—on full display in the word of the cross—amounts to foolishness in the eyes of the world. Now he reasons that the opposite notion is equally true; what this world calls "wisdom" is foolishness in God's eyes. But as with most of Paul's reasoning, this situation is not new. The apostle finds it written already in Israel's sacred texts. He brings

two texts, Job 5:13 and Ps. 94:11 (93:11 LXX), into the discussion based on the key word “the wise.”

Paul introduces the quotations with the formula “for it is written” before his initial quotation: “He catches the wise in their craftiness” (Job 5:13). The quoted line is part of Eliphaz’s speech celebrating God’s great power. Job’s friend implores the sufferer to put his case before God, who performs wondrous deeds, raises the humble, and brings victory to the dejected (Job 5:8–11). But God also foils the plans of the crafty to keep them from oppressing the poor. In the language of the hunt God is portrayed as the hunter who uses the cunning of the prey—the so-called wise—to capture them. When Paul quotes from Job, he is not just importing a series of words; he is drawing from the overall wisdom theme. Earthly wisdom is devilish and hurtful and nothing compared to God’s. God will turn their wisdom on its head and use their cunning against them. Their wisdom will be exposed for what it is: foolishness in disguise. The apostle has been formed spiritually by Israel’s Scripture; and that formation comes to the surface throughout Paul’s quotations, allusions, and echoes.

Paul adds yet another layer of scriptural support by quoting Ps. 94:11 (93:11 LXX): “The Lord [YHWH/*kyrios*] knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.” With its criticism of “fools” and delight in God’s discipline and teaching, this psalm has affinities with other Jewish wisdom texts. The line that Paul quotes sits comfortably within his theme. He connects it to the previous quotation from Job 5:13 with the phrase “and again” to show how the passages agree. Paul’s quotation differs only slightly from the LXX of Ps. 94:11 (93:11 LXX):

> LXX: “The Lord [*kyrios*] knows the thoughts of men, that they are futile.”
>
> Paul: “The Lord [*kyrios*] knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.”

Paul substitutes “the wise” for “men.” Some have wondered whether Paul suffered from a faulty memory. Perhaps. But it seems more likely that the substitution represents Paul’s deliberate adaptation of this psalm to his own context. Since 1:18 “wisdom” has been Paul’s theme. Frequently he has expressed the sharp contrast between God’s wisdom and human wisdom, which is really folly in God’s sight. Paul’s adjustment of the quotation fits his overall argument and—at the same time—upholds the integrity of the original psalm. In the psalm it is not just “men” whose thoughts are futile; it is those “men” described as brutish people, “fools” in need of true wisdom (Ps. 94:8–11).

Unlike the other YHWH texts we have discussed, it is not as clear whether Paul has God the Father or the Lord Jesus in mind. Other instances of *kyrios* in

the vicinity of 1 Cor. 3:20 appear to refer to Christ (e.g., 1 Cor. 3:5; 4:4–5). Yet there are good reasons to conclude that God is the referent to this YHWH/*kyrios* text. Beginning in 1 Cor. 1:18 Paul's argument has centered on the "wisdom of God." As the argument reaches its conclusion in chapter 3, explicit references to God far outpace any mention of Jesus or his special significance. Jesus the Messiah may be identified with the wisdom of God (1:30) and the foundation on which believers are to build (3:11), but God is the center of Paul's thought: God is the one who gives the increase (3:5–6); the apostles are God's fellow workers (3:9); the Corinthians are God's field/God's building (3:9); God granted Paul grace to lay the foundation (3:10); the church is God's temple, where God's Spirit dwells (3:16–17); and this world's wisdom is folly in God's eyes (3:19). The theocentric focus of the argument's conclusion would make a patrological reading clear enough, but the final verse of the chapter puts it all in perspective: "You belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God" (1 Cor. 3:23). In a dramatic reversal of slogans (1:12—"I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," etc.), Paul shows reality from God's vantage: all things belong to the Corinthians, including the celebrated, gifted servants of God—Paul, Apollos¸ Cephas—the world, death, life, the present, and the future. It "all" belongs to the Corinthian believers, and the "all" belongs to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. The subordination of Christ to God is a consistent theme in Paul's Letters even when he associates Jesus closely with the Father (see 1 Cor. 15:20–28). The same pattern is resident in other, later NT writings such as the Gospel of John (e.g., John 5:19–24; 8:28). The subordination of Christ to God plus the theocentric direction of Paul's argument, especially near its conclusion in 3:20, make it virtually certain that the apostle quotes this YHWH text (Ps. 94:11) with God in mind.

Says the Lord . . . Almighty (2 Cor. 6:17–18)

The relationship of 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1 to the rest of the letter has been a subject of debate. With its concentration of features not typical of Paul, similarities to the teachings of Qumran, and lack of connection to the rest of the letter, scholars wonder whether Paul wrote it at all or whether it is something Paul wrote for another setting. If Paul didn't write it or insert it into his letter, then we could simply ignore the YHWH references in this passage, but since the questions remain unresolved, it is best to include it in the discussion here.

Because the pericope appears to be a self-contained unit, there is no need to appeal to a wider context. The structure of the passage consists of the following:

admonition: Do not associate closely with unbelievers. (6:14a)
A series of rhetorical questions (6:14b–16a)
rationale: We are the temple of the living God. (6:16b)
A catena or chain of scriptural quotations and allusions (6:16c–18)
final appeal: Let us cleanse ourselves and perfect our holiness. (7:1)

The rhetorical questions, rationale, scriptural quotations, and final appeal reinforce the initial admonition. There is a great deal in this passage to consider, but we must restrict our investigation to the contexts and texts of the YHWH texts in 6:17–18. What is important to note is that this passage is a plea for Christians to avoid relationships that would lead them away from righteousness, purity, and Christ into sin, unbelief, and idolatry. Further, the apostle grounds the appeal on ecclesiology: the church is "the temple of the living God."

The final rhetorical question sets the stage for what follows (6:16a): "What agreement has the temple of God with idols?" Prompted by the question, the apostle declares (6:16b): "For we are the temple of the living God" (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16). For Paul and most Jews, the temple represents the one place on earth where God lives and walks among his people. But early Christians viewed the temple in Jerusalem suspiciously—not unlike other Jewish groups—as an institution corrupted by powerful people. With the death and resurrection of Jesus, the temple function shifted away from geography to community: the temple of the living God can be anywhere believers gather and live out the gospel. But to be the temple, Christ believers must avoid defilement and pursue holiness. For the apostle, this is a message consistent with Israel's sacred Scripture.

Unlike other chains of quotations in Paul's Letters, this one contains what appears on the surface to be three quotation formulas:

1. At the beginning of the first quotation (Lev. 26:12; Ezek. 37:27): "as God said, . . ."
2. In the middle of the second quotation (Isa. 52:11; Ezek. 20:34, 41): "says the Lord [*kyrios*], . . ."
3. At the conclusion of the third and final quotation (2 Sam. 7:14): "says the Lord Almighty [*kyrios pantokratōr*]."

Each statement amplifies the initial exhortation and stresses the validity of the claim that the church is now the temple of the living God. Rather than being added on to the chain to transition from one quotation to another, the second and third formulas happen to be organically connected to the texts quoted, as we will

see below. With references to “the Lord” and “the Lord Almighty,” both qualify as YHWH texts.

The second quotation in the chain harmonizes two prophetic voices, Isa. 52:11 and Ezek. 20:40–41 (2 Cor. 6:17):

> Therefore come out from them,
> and be separate from them, says the Lord [*legei kyrios*],
> and touch nothing unclean;
> then I will welcome you.

Paul’s merged quotation varies from both the Hebrew and Greek readings, but the verbal affinity to the LXX is sufficient to consider this a quotation. The context of both quotations reflects similar prophetic themes: God himself will bring his people back from exile and separate the pure from the impure. Both quotations also reveal a deep concern for the holiness and purity of the temple in Jerusalem. In Isaiah’s oracle the threat of impurity is from outsiders. In Ezekiel’s the impurity comes from within the covenant people. In both oracles the faithful must avoid impurity at all costs.

Isaiah’s oracle declares that the exile is coming to an end and a separation is coming between the circumcised and uncircumcised, between the oppressed and their oppressors (Isa. 52:1–6). The gospel/good news is heralded on the mountain: “Your God reigns!” (52:7). YHWH is returning to Zion, and every eye will see him as he comes to bring victory and glory back to Jerusalem. The passage quoted in Paul’s letter is addressed originally to exiles carrying the temple vessels back from exile to Zion (Isa. 52:11):

> Depart, depart, go out from there!
> Touch no unclean thing;
> go out from the midst of it, purify yourselves,
> you who carry the vessels of the LORD.

It is likely that the temple context of Isaiah’s oracle attracts this quotation into the chain. Those deputized to carry the holy vessels of the Lord back to the holy mountain must leave the land of exile with its loathsome idols and avoid further contact with its impurities. Their proximity to holy objects and to the Lord himself demands that they distance themselves from uncleanness. From Paul’s perspective, now that Christ believers form the temple of God, they too must separate from unbelievers and have nothing to do with darkness and idolatry.

The final line in the merged quotation, “then I will welcome you,” comes from Ezek. 20:40–41. Ezekiel’s oracle (20:1–44) begins with God refusing to respond to an inquiry from the elders in exile; but the prophet hints that this is not God’s

final answer. The prophet rehearses Israel's rebellious history and envisions a new exodus. In the past, though God wanted to redeem the sons of Abraham from slavery and bring them to the land of promise, Israel's rebellion—in Egypt and later in the wilderness—stymied his plan. Now that Israel is scattered to the winds, YHWH wants to gather them together and bring them back to the land in a new exodus, but first they must return to the wilderness to face judgment. According to Ezekiel, God will cast out of Israel those who continue to rebel against him, practice idolatry, profane the Sabbath, and sacrifice wherever they please. YHWH would rather they go "all in" to their fetishes and idols than to play both sides and corrupt the pure worship of the one true God, but those who are willing to change their ways and repent of their evil will return to the land flowing with milk and honey. The climax to the oracle comes in 20:40–44, which begins with a temple scene (Ezek. 20:40): "For on my holy mountain, the mountain height of Israel, says the Lord GOD [YHWH], there all the house of Israel, all of them, shall serve me in the land; there I will accept them, and there I will require your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your sacred things." Once again, it is probably this temple scene that attracts this line to the rest of the pericope. This language of acceptance/welcome (20:40–41) reverses God's refusal to answer the inquiries of the exiled elders. The holy mountain is, of course, the temple mount, and the contributions and gifts are sacrifices acceptable to God in the one true temple.

There is a common refrain in and around both oracles: "says the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*]" and "says the Lord GOD [YHWH/*kyrios*]." In the Hebrew this is a special oracle formula that comes either in the middle or at the end of a statement. The LXX typically renders it "says the Lord [*kyrios*]," the same phrase found in 2 Cor. 6:17. The special oracle formula "says the LORD [YHWH]" occurs over twenty times in Isaiah. A similar formula "says the LORD GOD [YHWH]" occurs nearly eighty times in Ezekiel. Although the phrase is not part of the quoted text from Isa. 52:11, it is found twice, back-to-back in the oracle along with other quotation formulas just a few lines earlier (see 52:5). Similarly, the phrase "says the LORD GOD" is found six times in the immediate context of Ezekiel's oracle (Ezek. 20:1–44). In each case the formula appears as an integral part of the oracle and not an introductory formula. It guarantees that the prophet speaks with the authority of the one God who stands in covenant with Israel and whose redemption in the past prefigures their future rescue. But perhaps more significantly, it lays on God's people particular obligations to maintain the covenant in good order. Paul appears to be aware of these features of both Isaiah's and Ezekiel's oracles, for he does not situate the oracle formula at the beginning of the merged quotation; instead, he sets it within the prophetic

verse itself, the same way it appears in the oracles of the prophets. Rather than serving as just another introductory formula, Paul employs it to reinforce the kinds of demands made by Israel's prophets on behalf of God.

The third quotation in the chain comes from 2 Sam. 7:14. The passage is taken from a foundational text describing the events leading up to the building of Solomon's temple. It is again likely that the temple context of this oracle attracts the quotation to the chain. The prophet Nathan is sent to tell David that God objects to David's plan to build him a house. Instead God makes a series of promises to the king: (1) the LORD (YHWH) will establish David's house, that is, David's dynasty, and make it last forever; (2) David's son will build God's house, that is, the temple; and (3) God will have a father-son relationship with David's son. It is this last promise that is leveraged to make the point that all who believe and enter into Christ, that is, David's son, are included in that promise. The Messiah is, above all, a representative of his people; they are summed up in him and share a common destiny with him. To make the point from Scripture, certain adjustments are necessary: (1) "I will be his [David's son's] father" must be recast as "I will be your [plural] father," and (2) "he shall be my son" must be read "you [plural] will be my sons and daughters." The author expands the promise of God's fatherhood to David's son to include the entire believing community, who constitute the holy temple, sons as well as daughters (see Rev. 21:7; Heb. 1:5).

Isaiah 43 may also lurk in the background of this passage. The prophet envisions a day when God himself will call the exiles home (Isa. 43:6–7):

> I will say to the north, "Give them up,"
> And to the south, "Do not withhold:
> bring my sons from away
> and my daughters from the end of the earth—
> everyone who is called by my name
> whom I created for my glory,
> whom I formed and made."

Isaiah's references to "my sons" and "my daughters" returning from exile could well have influenced how Paul recasts Nathan's prophecy in this pericope.

The final quotation in the chain concludes with this statement: "says the Lord Almighty." This phrase "Lord Almighty" is found nowhere else in Paul's Letters, so it is not part of his standard way of addressing God. Where then does it come from? It is not part of the original quotation, but it is found in its immediate context. As one reads through the Greek version of the story, the heart of the oracle begins (2 Sam. 7:8): "This is what the Lord [*kyrios*] Almighty says, I took you from the sheepfold." But the Greek version represents a slight departure

from the Hebrew, which contains the divine name (2 Sam. 7:8): “Thus says the LORD [YHWH] of hosts: I took you from the pasture.” In both cases the word “Lord” (YHWH/*kyrios*) is stable. The difference is in the additional title or epithet added: Lord of hosts (Hebrew) or Lord Almighty (Greek). Did translators of the Septuagint alter the original epithet, or did they render it exactly as they found it? Did later Hebrew scribes adjust it away from what had become a demonstrably Christian appropriation of the text? We cannot say for certain. What does seem clear is that Paul’s quotation owes its substance to the Greek version. Moreover, for Paul the concluding formula is not merely an add-on to the text; it forms an integral part of the quotation, thus establishing this text as an OT YHWH text.

The phrases “says the Lord” (2 Cor. 6:17) and “says the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:18) in the chain of quotations are integral parts of Paul’s scriptural appeal. They are not simply introductory formulas or transitions from one quotation to another. They sit prominently within the context of the quoted texts, all of which are concerned with the building of or maintaining the purity of the temple. Though none of the quotations mention the temple explicitly, each has to do with God establishing a dwelling place among his people. The demands for purity associated with God’s temple are now transferred to the Corinthian congregation, who in the new age constitute the temple of the living God.[7]

There are good reasons in the texts and contexts to conclude that Paul read these YHWH references patrologically. First, the initial introductory formula in the series reads “as God said,” establishing God as the one who speaks each of the oracles. Second, the first quotation contains a clear reference to “God” (2 Cor. 6:16c; taken from Lev. 26:11, augmented perhaps by Ezek. 37:27):

> I will live in them and walk among them,
> and I will be their God,
> and they shall be my people.

Third, the temple context of this pericope is also determinative. Paul never describes the church as “the temple of Christ” but as “the temple of God” (1 Cor. 3:16–17; 2 Cor. 6:16; cf. 2 Thess. 2:4; Eph. 2:21). The apostle may be fond of referring to the church as “the body of Christ” (e.g., 1 Cor. 12:12–31), but that draws on a different analogy. Christ does appear in the passage as one of the mismatched partners, but the passage overall has a theocentric focus. Fourth, the father image at the heart of the final quotation belongs exclusively to Christian depictions of and addresses to God. Jesus is never called the Father. The Father is never a title for Jesus. They may be viewed as one, but they are distinguished

as two. Taken together, these four factors indicate that the YHWH texts quoted in 2 Cor. 6:17–18 have God the Father as their referent.

Conclusion

There is a final group of texts we need to consider briefly. On three occasions Paul quotes OT texts and inserts explicit references to *kyrios* when there is no direct equivalent in the OT (either Greek or Hebrew version).

> Lord [*kyrie*], they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars; I alone am left, and they are seeking my life. (Rom. 11:3 quoting 1 Kings 19:10)
>
> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord [*kyrios*]." (Rom. 12:19 quoting Deut. 32:35)
>
> In the law it is written,
>
> "By people of strange tongues
> and by the lips of foreigners
> I will speak to this people;
> yet even then they will not listen to me,"
>
> says the Lord [*kyrios*]. (1 Cor. 14:21 quoting Isa. 28:11)

These quotations are not included among YHWH texts because the divine name is not found in them. The divine name may be mentioned in the contexts of the quoted passages, but they are not integral to the quotations themselves. Paul's insertion of *kyrios* into these quotations, however, is instructive. It shows that *kyrios* was part of Paul's language for God. As Larry Hurtado notes, "In Paul's inherited religious vocabulary the term *Kyrios* could serve to designate God and functioned as a Greek substitute for God's name."[8]

None of this should come as any surprise. Paul was a Jew schooled in his faith from childhood, so quoting OT texts containing the divine name in order to describe the identity and activity of the one, true God was probably second nature. This is exactly what we would expect him to do. But when one factors in other texts, where he applies the divine name to Jesus, one begins to realize what a remarkable appropriation of language and Scripture this is to the central figure of Christianity.

Had Paul quoted these texts and made only christological application of them, we may well question whether Paul was aware the divine name was represented in these texts. But that Paul associates these passages so closely with God via a title he most often uses for Jesus indicates he knew the divine name was an

appropriate way of depicting the one, true God of Israel. Furthermore, had the apostle quoted these texts and made only christological applications of them, we may well conclude he failed to distinguish the two figures. That he did not refer all YHWH texts to Jesus and in some contexts retained them as designations of God underscores that he envisioned a distinction between them.

Our own investigation reveals that Paul referred OT YHWH texts to God in several contexts: (1) justification and faith-righteousness (Rom. 4:7–8), (2) in defense of God's elective and sovereign purposes to establish and maintain a people (Rom. 9:27–29), (3) the incomparability of God and divine wisdom manifest in the word of the cross (Rom. 11:34; 1 Cor. 3:20), (4) the inclusion of the gentiles into the people of God (Rom. 9:27–29; 11:34; 15:9–11), and (5) in describing the church as the temple of God with a concomitant call to purity and holiness (2 Cor. 6:17–18). In the next chapter we will turn our attention to those texts and contexts where Paul applies OT YHWH texts to Jesus via the *kyrios* predicate.

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1. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 10.

2. See Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 11. Note Rom. 11:3 (1 Kings 19:10); Rom. 12:9 (Deut. 32:35); and 1 Cor. 14:21 (Isa. 28:11). In these passages Paul inserts *kyrios* for God, but there is no direct equivalent in the Hebrew or Greek.

3. For a complete analysis of these texts and the rationale for the exegetical decisions, see David B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology*, WUNT 2/47 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 90–159.

4. On Hillel's rules of exegesis, see Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 40–42.

5. Steve Moyise, *Paul and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 37.

6. In Gal. 3 the apostle presents Abraham again as a model for Christian faith and shows how deeply blessing is connected with the patriarch (Gal. 3:8–9, 13–14). Closely related to this is all the promise language in Paul's Abrahamic narratives (Gal. 3:14, 16–18, 19).

7. Moyise, *Paul and Scripture*, 91–92.

8. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 112.

5

YHWH Texts with Christ as Referent

We turn now to consider those passages where it is likely Paul applies an OT YHWH text to Jesus. Scholars disagree over whether this or that passage should be read as a referent to God or Christ. In some cases the scholar's decision seems to rest on assumptions about Paul's use of these texts and not the texts themselves. So in what follows we lay out the reasons from the text and context why we think these passages are best read christologically. Even if scholars debate the christological focus of a particular passage, they do not doubt that Paul's habit of explaining the significance of Jesus by linking him with the title *kyrios* in Scripture referencing the divine name amounts to a remarkable moment in the development of Christian theology.

Calling on the Name of the Lord (Rom. 10:13)

In our earlier discussion of Rom. 9–11, a passage dedicated to the status of Israel and the nations in God's plan, the theocentric nature of Paul's teaching became evident. But in the middle of this section (9:33–10:17) Paul's thoughts shift to Jesus the Messiah and his role in the divine plan. This is clear in the ways he reads and interprets a variety of scriptural texts.

Take, for instance, Rom. 9:33:

> As it is written,
>
> "See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall,
> and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

In this passage Paul merges the language of two oracles—Isa. 28:16 and 8:14—linked by the key word "stone." The "I" who speaks is none other than Israel's God. God, Paul says, lays in Zion a stumbling stone. Some will stumble and trip

over him/it; others will put their trust in him/it and not fall victim again to shame. Paul reads this prophecy of the stumbling stone as a depiction of the Messiah. We know this because a few verses later Paul once again takes up the language of Isa. 28:16—"No one who believes in him will be put to shame" (Rom. 10:11)—with a christological focus, namely, to expound what happens to those who confess "Jesus is Lord" and "believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead" (Rom. 10:9). Now, both quoted texts are taken from oracles of judgment against Israel and Judah; but like other oracles of judgment, the prophet envisages a time when hope will eclipse the despair of exile. In Isa. 28:16 the Lord GOD lays a foundation stone in Zion, a cornerstone that establishes justice and cancels the "covenant with death" his people made. In other words, the "stone" appears to be something other than YHWH himself. But when one considers the broader context of Isa. 8:13–15, YHWH (*kyrios*) is the stone of stumbling: "But the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*] of hosts, him you shall regard as holy; let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. He will become a sanctuary, a stone one strikes against; for both houses of Israel he will become a rock one stumbles over—a trap and a snare for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken."

Paul takes Isaiah's oracle describing YHWH as the stumbling stone for both houses of Israel and transfers those words to Christ. He apparently has concluded that prophetic statements about Israel's God can appropriately be used to describe the crucified and risen Messiah. This is not the only time Paul refers to the crucified Messiah as a stumbling block (1 Cor. 1:23): "But we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles."

Paul continues his argument with a christological reading of texts from Deuteronomy that have to do originally with the law. The Messiah, he claims, "is the end [*telos*] of the law" (Rom. 10:4). Now by "end" Paul does not mean that the law is over and done with; his point is that the "goal" of God's gift of the law is now and has always been to ready the faithful for the Messiah. Through the Messiah the faithful of all nations are made right with God. In order to demonstrate this connection, Paul interprets texts that have to do originally with the law (Deut. 30:11–14) in light of the coming and resurrection of the Messiah (Rom. 10:6–8).

> But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say?
>
> "The word is near you,
> on your lips and in your heart"

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim).

Unlike ancient Near Eastern notions of the inaccessibility of divine wisdom, Deuteronomy insists that God's commandments are not beyond the reach of his people in heaven or across the sea; God has brought them near. Later Jewish texts link "law" with "wisdom" and read these texts as referring to divine wisdom. Wisdom is not up in heaven or down in the abyss;[1] God has made his wisdom available to his people. It is this later language—ascend into heaven and descend into the abyss—that Paul deploys in his Roman letter to portray the connection between law, wisdom, and the Messiah. No one needs to ascend into heaven to bring the Messiah down, a likely reference to what is later called the incarnation. That has already happened. Likewise, no one needs to descend into the abyss to bring the Messiah up from the dead; God already accomplished this in the resurrection.

My point here is to show the christocentric focus of this central portion of Paul's discussion in Rom. 9–11. In light of Jesus's faithfulness, Paul senses that some of Israel's sacred texts having to do with hope, justice, law, wisdom, and God can rightly be understood to have coalesced in and around Jesus the Messiah. Now, even though some of the quotations relate Jesus to the name of Israel's God, none of these qualify as YHWH texts because none contain a direct reference to the divine name. For that we need to consider Paul's quotation of Joel 2:32 (3:5 LXX) in Rom. 10:13: "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [*kyrios*] shall be saved." His quotation varies slightly from the Septuagint, which reads (Joel 2:32 [3:5 LXX]): "And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [*kyrios*] shall be saved."

Since *kyrios* translates the divine name in the Hebrew, Paul's quotation from Joel meets the criterion of what we are calling a YHWH text. In Joel the promise of deliverance regards a remnant of Israel prior to the day of the Lord. The phrase translated "everyone" suggests that even loyal Diaspora Jews would be involved in God's rescue. Paul takes this as scriptural warrant for the inclusion of believing gentiles along with faithful Jews; as the apostle reads the Scriptures, God has always had his eyes on the nations. His omission of the phrase "and it shall be" from the apostle's quotation could be due to textual fluidity or, more likely, to Paul's unique theological perspective. The apostle is convinced "the day" has already dawned and that Jesus's death and resurrection have inaugurated the new age. For Joel this vision belongs to the future.

There are four reasons for concluding that Paul applies this OT YHWH text to Jesus.

1. *The christological focus*. Whereas most of Rom. 9–11 is theocentric, the multiple references to Christ in 9:33–10:17 and the christological applications of Scripture detailed above demonstrate that this portion of Paul's presentation is christocentric. If he engages in a christological reading of OT texts pertaining to justice, law, wisdom, and God, then we are set up to expect a christological reading of Joel 2:32 as well.
2. *The resurrection emphasis*. In addition to the christocentric focus of Paul's discussion, clear references to the resurrection in this passage also suggest that *kyrios* in Rom. 10:13 refers to Christ. As we saw above, Paul explains Deut. 30:12–14 in christological terms. To the question "Who will descend into the abyss?" he answers in terms of bringing the Messiah up from the dead. Likewise, the only appropriate response to the word of faith he preaches is to confess "Jesus is Lord [*kyrios*]" and to believe that God raised him. As we saw earlier, Paul thinks that the title *kyrios* now belongs to Jesus on the basis of the resurrection (Rom. 1:3–4; Phil. 2:9–11), and resurrection is frequently associated with the title. Therefore, the resurrection emphasis in this passage also makes it likely Paul applies this YHWH text to Jesus.
3. *The eschatological interest*. If we take into consideration the tense of key verbs in 10:9 ("will be saved"), 10:11 ("will be put to shame"), and 10:13 ("will be saved"), it is obvious Paul understands that ultimate vindication (the reversal of shame) and salvation belong to the future. Paul relates his notion of last things to the person of Jesus the Messiah above all with the *kyrios* title. For the apostle, Joel's "day of the Lord" has become the "day of our Lord Jesus Christ." A major difference between them is that for Joel that day was still in the future, while for Paul that day has already begun in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah. Yet for Paul the "already" is not absolute; there is a "not yet" aspect to his eschatology. Ultimately, salvation will not be complete until the parousia. It is his habit to employ the *kyrios* title christologically in these ultimate matters.
4. *The christological confession*. If these other reasons are not enough to conclude that Paul interprets Jesus to be the *kyrios* of Joel 2:32 (3:5 LXX), Rom. 10:9 provides decisive evidence: "Because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord [*kyrios*] and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." The apostle characterizes his gospel and believers' appropriate response to its proclamation by the confession "Jesus is Lord." He proceeds to quote Joel 2:32: "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [*kyrios*] shall be saved." The internal

> logic of the passage requires that the one who is confessed as Lord is the same Lord called upon by everyone to be saved.

The confession "Jesus is Lord" or variations of it are found in other places in Paul's Letters (1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:11), indicating it is a standard part of what true believers confess. He then proceeds to quote Joel 2:32, a text containing the *kyrios* predicate. That Jesus is *kyrios* of both the confession and the quotation can hardly be doubted.

In the Hebrew Bible the phrase "call upon the name of the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*]" involves cultic activity such as altar building and sacrifice, prayer and petitions, worship and praise.[2] Likewise, the phrase distinguishes God's people as those who call on his name (Isa. 41:25; cf. Jer. 10:25; Ps. 79:6). Carl Davis describes "calling upon the name of the Lord" as "a religious act which characterized and even determined God's people."[3] Davis traces the theological association of Joel 2:32 in pre-Christian and Jewish texts and concludes the phrase refers to cultic activity directed to Israel's one God and that there is little evidence it ever applies to any other figure.

Paul's use of the phrase "call upon the name of the Lord" (from Joel 2:32 [3:5 LXX]) in Rom. 10:13 is echoed in 1 Cor. 1:2, where he portrays the universal Christian community as those who "call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The application of Joel 2:32 to Christ and its attendant cultic associations appear to imply the worship of Jesus by Paul and the churches with which he associates. The christological appropriation of these texts and the veneration of Christ practiced in Paul's churches relates Jesus to God in surprising and substantial ways.

It should not be overlooked that other YHWH texts in Rom. 9–11 have a patrological rather than a christological focus. Paul apparently had no qualms about shifting his focus from God to Christ or back again when quoting texts containing the divine name. This is a remarkable feature of Paul's understanding of Jesus that should not be neglected if we want to get the full picture of his relationship to God and his church.

Every Knee Shall Bow (Rom. 14:11)

Though Paul has limited knowledge of the issues facing the Roman Christians, his extensive discussion of the challenges facing the "weak" and "strong" indicates he has either heard or suspected that a factious spirit is troubling the church. The weak are those Jesus followers of Jewish heritage who observe

certain holidays, abstain from eating certain foods, and are critical of those non-Jews who are not observant. The strong are Jesus followers from among the nations who have no such scruples but project a judgmental demeanor against those who are observant. In other words, a critical, unhealthy air may have hung over the Roman church.

Paul encourages the strong to welcome the weak in faith since God has welcomed them (Rom. 14:1–3) and to renounce the judgmental attitude that infects the church. Both groups, he thinks, are acting in good faith before the Lord (Rom. 14:6–8):

> Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.
>
> We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

According to Paul, Christians must not judge one another, since all they do, they do to the Lord, to whom they belong. Interestingly, whereas Paul typically connects belongingness to Jesus with the title "Christ," he associates it here with the Lord (*kyrios*), for reasons that will become clear.[4]

Paul identifies the *kyrios* to whom they belong as Christ in the next verse, expressing the purpose of his death and resurrection: "For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord [*kyrieusē*] of both the dead and the living." The verb translated "he might be Lord" (*kyrieusē*) is cognate with the noun *kyrios*. Paul's hearers or readers would not have missed the similar sound or meaning of it, especially after hearing the word *kyrios* three times in the sentence prior. We should never lose sight of the fact that Paul's Roman audience heard this letter read publicly. Our experience of it may be first and foremost as a written text, printed letters on a page, but for them it was an oral and aural event. What is unusual here is how Paul speaks of the resurrection of Jesus. It is his custom to depict the resurrection using words having to do with "raising" (e.g., 1 Thess. 4:14; 1 Cor. 15:3; cf. 2 Cor. 5:14–15). In this setting, however, he replaces his customary expressions for resurrection with a verb meaning "to live" or "to come to life." Now this may have something to do with what he has just said about believers:

8b whether we live (A) . . . whether we die (B), we are the Lord's
9a he died (B′) . . . and lived again (A′), so that he might be Lord

Paul is fond of the chiastic structure (ABB′A′) in his letters and appears to make use of it here. But it is probably best to see this unusual use of the verb "to live" as a link to an OT quotation in Rom. 14:11.

Since all will stand before the judgment seat of God (Rom. 14:10), Paul regards it as unthinkable that one Christian would judge another. He turns to the prophet Isaiah (45:23) to remind all that each will be held accountable:

> For it is written,
>
> "As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me,
> and every tongue will confess to God." (AT)

The Greek version from which he draws probably read:

> "By myself I swear, . . . every knee will bow to me
> And every tongue will confess to God." (AT)

What is immediately apparent is the difference between the two oath formulas. Does this reflect the fluidity of the biblical manuscripts available, or is Paul's faulty memory to blame? Probably neither. The statement "As I live, says the Lord [YHWH/*kyrios*]" is a more standard oath formula than "By myself I swear . . ."; and it appears to be drawn from Isa. 49:18. It should be noted that Paul quotes from and alludes to Isa. 49–55 more than from any other section of the scroll. He knows these prophecies inside and out. Though he is aware of the entire book of Isaiah, he finds in these oracles (chaps. 49–55) a message coherent with his own. As Richard Hays puts it: "Paul was a hermeneutical theologian whose reflection on God's action in the world was shaped in decisive ways by his reading of Israel's sacred texts."[5] For the apostle to the gentiles no text was more influential than Isaiah; for it, more than any other sacred text, envisages the restoration of Israel and the spread of the gospel to the nations. That is another way of saying that Paul found his own life and ministry prefigured in its poetry. This makes complete sense for one who considered himself the apostle to the gentiles.

So the quotation Paul sets before his Roman audience conflates Isa. 49:18 with Isa. 45:23. I do not regard this as accidental. I think Paul intentionally substitutes one oath formula for the other in order to associate the Lord who lives ("As I live, says the Lord," Rom. 14:11) with Jesus, who died and came back to life so he might be Lord over the living and the dead (Rom. 14:10).[6] This reading accounts for the unusual use of the verb "to live" to refer to the resurrection and for the possible substitution of one oath formula for the other.

If this is correct, then the text should be understood as follows: “As I live [again by the resurrection], says the Lord [Jesus], every knee will bow to me, and every tongue will confess to God [at the judgment seat].” The oath formula and first line of the prophetic couplet would refer to the Lord Messiah (the bowing of the knee); the second would refer to God (confession of the tongue and giving an account at the judgment seat). *Kyrios* in the oath formula translates the divine name (Isa. 49:18) and would therefore properly refer to Christ, who died and lived again.[7] We find a similar sort of union of the Lord Jesus and God (the Father) in 1 Cor. 8:6, in Paul’s revision of the Shema: “yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” In this statement the first line refers to God the Father, the second to the Lord Jesus Christ. The close association of God with Jesus in both texts provides a remarkable window into Paul’s thought about the significance of Christ and his relationship to God.

Here then would be the apostle’s overall argument:

> Stop disputing and judging one another; rather, welcome one another. All believers (Jews and gentiles), whether or not they adhere to certain rules and regulations, are governed by their own minds. They eat and observe holidays in honor of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God. If they live, they live to the Lord Jesus; if they die, they die to the Lord Jesus. After all, they belong to the Lord Jesus. This is why Christ died and lived again, to be Lord over the living and the dead. So stop judging and despising your brothers and sisters (who also belong to the Lord Jesus), because all of us shall stand before the judgment seat of God. Remember what the Scripture says, “As I live again, says the Lord Jesus, every knee will bow to me and every tongue will confess to God.” Each person will give an account of himself or herself. (Rom. 14:1–12)

Now, before we draw further conclusions on this text and context, it is important to understand the gist of Isaiah’s prophecy. Scholars admit that Isa. 45 is the most stridently monotheistic passage in the Hebrew Bible. It begins with a message addressed to Cyrus, king of Persia, whom God chose to liberate Israel from exile. Cyrus will be an instrument in God’s hands to bring salvation to Israel. Then, when the rest of the world witnesses the LORD’s faithfulness to Israel, the nations will abandon their idols and join Israel in worshiping the one, true God. Over and again the oracle proclaims that there is one God, who brooks no rivals (Isa. 45:4–7):

> For the sake of my servant Jacob,
> and Israel my chosen,
> I call you by your name,
> I surname you, though you do not know me.
> I am the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*], and there is no other;
> besides me there is no god.

I arm you, though you do not know me,
so that they may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is no one besides me;
I am the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*], and there is no other.
I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe;
I the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*] do all these things.

The "I" of the oracle is Israel's God, and the "you" is Cyrus, astonishingly designated God's anointed or "Messiah" (45:1). Absolute, exclusive claims about God's existence and power characterize the entire oracle. YHWH is God alone; there are no others. YHWH is behind the scenes, animating Cyrus and his empire. YHWH is God of the whole world, east to west, north to south. YHWH alone creates all things. YHWH is the true master of history.

In Isa. 45:9 God turns and rebukes those with the chutzpah to question God's plan to redeem Israel by the hand of a Persian king. In the end, however, God invites the survivors from all the nations to abandon their idols and seek the one, true God (45:21–22):

Declare and present your case;
let them take counsel together!
Who told this long ago?
Who declared it of old?
Was it not I, the LORD?
There is no other god besides me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is no one besides me.
Turn to me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.

The strident, monotheistic refrains of this prophecy offer remarkable insight into the nature of Second Temple Jewish thought about God. Perhaps even more remarkable is that Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, believes that God has sanctioned his application of the heart of Isaiah's prophecy to Jesus (Phil. 2:9–11). This can be possible only if Paul sees Jesus as the embodiment of the God of Israel, or, to borrow Richard Bauckham's phrase, Paul includes Jesus within the unique identity of Israel's God.[8]

As we will see later, Paul refers the same OT text (Isa. 45:23) to Jesus in the Philippian hymn (Phil. 2:6–11). It is one of the most striking examples of the apostle's christological use of YHWH texts, drawn again from a bold, unapologetically monotheistic oracle. Though not everyone is convinced that Christ is the *kyrios* of Rom. 14:11, as I have argued here, no one doubts he is the

kyrios before whom every knee will bow as every tongue confesses “Jesus the Messiah is Lord” (Phil. 2:10–11). If Christ is the clear referent in Phil. 2:9–11, it is reasonable that he is the one referred to in Rom. 14:11 as well. But there are two other reasons within the context of Paul’s discussion to conclude he means *kyrios* in the quotation to refer to Jesus. First, as we have seen, Paul links the resurrection to Jesus above all with the title *kyrios*. Resurrection is at the heart of this passage, mentioned directly in 14:9 (“lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living”) and indirectly in the substituted oath formula “As I live, says the Lord” (14:11). Second, in passages dedicated to shaping the ethics and behavior of the church, Paul employs the title *kyrios* most often with christological force. If Jesus presently reigns as Lord over the living and the dead, then the church ought to be willing to abide by his teaching and follow his example (Rom. 15:2–3, 7–8). The ethical import of Paul’s teaching for the life of the Roman church—in particular, how the weak and the strong are to get along in the same community—is without question.

Taken individually, any one of these arguments may not be enough to convince a skeptical reader that Rom. 14:11 is a YHWH text (Isa. 45:23; 49:18) that Paul applies to the Lord Jesus. But when one combines the following pieces of evidence, such a conclusion seems likely:

1. The clear statement regarding Christ’s lordship in 14:9
2. The way Paul theologically alters the text, including the verbal link between “as I live, says the Lord” in 14:11 and “he lived again” in 14:9
3. The application of Isa. 45:23 to the Lord Jesus in Phil. 2:10–11
4. The association of this passage with the resurrection
5. The ethical import of the entire discussion

Boast in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:31)

During one of Paul’s extended visits to Ephesus, he heard a report from Chloe’s people (1 Cor. 1:11) that the congregation in Corinth was plagued with divisions. That report along with a letter received from the church prompted him to write the letter we know as 1 Corinthians and address this thorny problem. The first major section of the letter (1:10–4:21) is a deliberative argument against factionalism filled with scriptural quotations and expositions. If the priority and length of Paul’s argument are any gauge, then it is clear he regards the splintering of the community’s fellowship a clear and present danger to its

future. The problem is this: many Corinthian believers are apparently fascinated with rhetorical displays that border on arrogance and have led to internal rivalries. Certain outstanding personalities serve as rallying points for the different factions with or without their permission.

Paul counters their craving for rhetorical eloquence (1:17) by appealing to the nature of the gospel, which he characterizes as "the message about the cross" (1:18) and "Christ crucified" (1:23). The true gospel, he believes, contradicts human wisdom and keeps any reasonable person from boasting in the frail wisdom of human beings (1 Cor. 3:21). The remedy for factious boasting, according to the apostle, is to find common ground and a common identity in boasting in the Lord: "As it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord'" (1 Cor. 1:31, quoting Jer. 9:23 and perhaps 1 Sam. 2:10 [= 1 Kgdms. 2:10 LXX]). Since "Lord" translates the divine name, this quotation qualifies as a YHWH text.

Before we consider this text, however, it is important to get the drift of Paul's overall argument (1:18–31). In contrast to those who showcase their eloquent wisdom, Paul proclaims the unfettered gospel, that is, the word of the cross. For those infatuated with human wisdom, the message of the cross looks like folly; but for those who are being saved, it is the power of God. Paul finds this new reality prefigured in Scripture (1 Cor. 1:19, quoting Isa. 29:14):

> For it is written,
> "I [God] will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
> and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

As we suggested earlier, Paul's quotations from Israel's sacred texts do more than import a few prepackaged, convenient lines; they carry with them contexts and associations embedded deep within the biblical story. To hear these resonances and enter into that story, we must know more about Isaiah's oracle.

Centuries earlier the prophet Isaiah was busy condemning Israel for its empty, heartless rituals. This was a common theme among the prophets. Lip service (eloquent speech?), routine, and human traditions had replaced vibrant worship in Solomon's temple, and the so-called wise, that is, the leaders of the people, were largely to blame. So, Isaiah says God is about to step in and perform "amazing things with this people, shocking and amazing" (Isa. 29:14). Exactly what shocking and amazing things Isaiah has in mind, he does not say. No doubt some likely interpreted Isaiah's prophecy in light of Sennacherib's unexpected departure during the siege of Jerusalem (701 BCE). When it seemed certain the temple city would fall to superior Assyrian forces, it was spared when the army suddenly withdrew. But Paul is living in a different day. For him, that "shocking

and amazing" act can be summed up in the crucified and resurrected Messiah. As Richard Hays puts it: "God has already put the wise to shame through the foolishness of the cross, the apocalyptic event that has shattered the old order of human wisdom."[9] In a sense the cross unmasked the wise, the scribe, and the skilled debater and showed them to be what they are (compared to God): foolish and weak. At the same time the word of the cross has turned the world upside down—or should we say right side up—so that the despised, the marginalized, and the castoffs are revealed to be the chosen and truly wise of the new age. Any way one cuts it, God has put an end to boasting in human wisdom through the cross.

The apostle demonstrates the only legitimate basis for boasting by appealing to Scripture: "As it is written, Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord [YHWH/*kyrios*]" (1 Cor. 1:31). Most scholars regard Jer. 9:24 (9:23 LXX) to be the scriptural starting point for Paul's quotation. Paul quotes the passage again in 2 Cor. 10:17 with the exact wording, but that time without an introductory formula. It is possible that this form of the text has come down to him as a standard, abbreviated version of Jeremiah's text. The full text of Jeremiah (9:23–24 LXX) reads: "This is what the Lord [*kyrios*] says: Let not the wise boast in his wisdom, and let not the might boast in his might, and let not the wealthy boast in his wealth, but *let him who boasts boast in* this: that he understands and knows that I am *the Lord* [*kyrios*] when I do mercy and justice and righteousness in the earth, because in these things is my will, says the Lord [*kyrios*]." I have italicized the words quoted in Paul's truncated form of the saying. His quotation replaces "in this: that he understands and knows that I am the Lord when I do mercy and justice and righteousness in the earth, because in these things is my will" with the simple phrase "in the Lord." To put it another way, boasting "in the Lord" is a shorthand way of saying that a person knows the identity, character, and ways of Israel's God.

The apostle is likely aware that Jeremiah's oracle (Jer. 8:4–9:25) has roots deep in the wisdom tradition. That is why a key verse from the oracle is appropriate as Paul exposes the audacity of human wisdom. The portion he quotes is immediately preceded by a lament (Jer. 9:10–22) for Jerusalem and Judah, which will soon (from Jeremiah's perspective) be lying in ruins. Rather than following God's wisdom revealed in Torah, the people and their leaders in Jeremiah's day followed their own and pursued the Canaanite gods. In view of the judgment that is sure to come the prophet urges: "Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth" (Jer. 9:23). Paul's rhetoric in 1 Corinthians mirrors three

similar classifications: not many of the Corinthian believers can be counted among the wise, the powerful, and the noble (1 Cor. 1:26).

There is, however, another possible scriptural source behind Paul's statement. Ross Wagner has written persuasively that Paul's quotation actually conflates Jer. 9:24 (9:23 LXX) with 1 Sam. 2:10 (= 1 Kgdms. 2:10 LXX).[10] The two passages are closely parallel in the Greek. Hannah's song reaches its crescendo with these lines (1 Kgdms. 2:10 LXX):

> The Lord [*kyrios*] will make his adversary weak;
> the Lord [*kyrios*] is holy.
> Let not the clever boast in his cleverness,
> and let not the mighty boast in his might,
> and let not the wealthy boast in his wealth,
> *but let him who boasts boast in this*:
> to understand and know *the Lord* [*kyrios*]
> and to execute justice and righteousness in the midst of the land.

We have again italicized the words in common between Paul's quotation and the climax of Hannah's song. Even if Paul does abbreviate the statement, he retains the essential message: do not boast in wisdom, might, or wealth; boast only in the Lord.

Hannah's song celebrates the theme of reversal: the mighty will be made weak, the weak will be made mighty. God will raise up the poor and the needy (1 Kgdms. 2:3–8 LXX). This great reversal theme is echoed in the context of Paul's argument (1 Cor. 1:26–29): "Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God."

In concert with Hannah's song, Paul's rhetoric of reversal views God's action in the crucified Messiah as an event of apocalyptic proportions; through the cruelty of the cross God has elevated the foolish, the lowly, and the despised (according to worldly standards) and cut the worldly wise down to size. So there is a strong thematic connection between Hannah's song and Paul's rhetoric of reversal. But there may be another element of Hannah's song that keeps playing in Paul's mind. Hannah's song begins (1 Kgdms. 2:1–2 LXX):

> My heart was made firm in the Lord [*kyrios*/YHWH];
> my horn was exalted in my god;
> my mouth was made wide against enemies
> I was glad in your deliverance,

> Because there is none holy like the Lord [*kyrios*/YHWH]
> and there is none righteous like our God;
> there is none holy besides you.

The language of the song revels in the uniqueness of Israel's God: none like the Lord, none like our God, none besides you. The parallelisms are typical of Hebrew poetry. The Lord (*kyrios*), of course, translates the divine name in the Hebrew Bible (1 Sam. 2:1–2). The saving actions and character of God constitute his greatness: God's deliverance, holiness, and righteousness. In light of the opening to Hannah's song, consider how Paul concludes this portion of his scriptural argument (1 Cor. 1:30): "He [God] is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." With Hannah's song playing in the background, Paul transfers to Christ Jesus characteristics similar to those associated with the God of Israel. For Hannah YHWH was unique in his holiness and righteousness; his deliverance was a cause for joy. For the church Jesus has become wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification (i.e., holiness), and redemption. Though the attributes do not match exactly, there is enough volume to hear an echo of Hannah's praise of YHWH in the praise and boasting offered now to the Lord Jesus Christ. This relational aspect is key for Paul and his high Christology: the language and relationship YHWH has with Israel can and ought to be reflected in the language used to describe Christ's relationship with the church.

Paul's description of how Christ stands now in relation to the church (1 Cor. 1:30) makes it likely the YHWH text he quotes in 1:31 refers to the Lord Jesus. Arguing christologically against human wisdom (*sophia*), the apostle claims that Christ has become God's Wisdom: "but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). Human boasting before God is therefore out of order whether it is based on wisdom, power, or birth. Now the only boasting acceptable is boasting "in the Lord [*kyrios*]," that is, in what Christ accomplished on the cross (1:18, 23). Paul takes up a similar theme in other letters. In Phil. 3:3 he insists that those who believe in Christ are the true circumcision, for they serve God in the spirit and boast in Christ Jesus while putting no confidence in the flesh. In Gal. 6:14 Paul writes: "May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (cf. Rom. 5:11).

With the exception of Paul's negative use of boasting in one's privileged status before God and the law (e.g., Rom. 2:17, 23; 3:27; Gal. 6:13) and his ironic use of boasting against the "super-apostles" (2 Cor. 10–12), Paul employs boasting positively in praise of the finished work of Christ on the cross, which effected

salvation. This was both a shocking and amazing turn of events (Jer. 9:22–24) and an event that turned the counterfeit world upside down (1 Kgdms. 2:3–8 LXX). So, when he writes 1 Cor. 1:31, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord,” he applies this OT YHWH text to Jesus, whom he understands to be the “wisdom of God.”

Boast in the Lord (2 Cor. 10:17)

Paul cites the same passage again in 2 Cor. 10:17: “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” This time he quotes it without an introductory formula and in a very different context. Gone is the factious spirit and infatuation with human wisdom typical of the early chapters of 1 Corinthians. There is no rhetoric of reversal that serves as a grand prelude to this quotation of an OT text containing the divine name.

In 2 Cor. 10 Paul appeals to Christ believers to remain obedient and loyal to him in the face of a series of challenges against their founding father by a group of agitators. Although we cannot identify them exactly, they appear to have arrived recently from Palestine and are proud of their Jewish heritage. They portray themselves as apostles and ministers of Christ, but Paul regards them as false teachers and sarcastically refers to them as “super-apostles” (11:5; 12:11). Despite the amount of ink Paul spills to refute them, it is difficult to construct an entirely coherent picture of them due to his sarcasm and combative style. Nevertheless, their attacks on Paul’s apostolate appear to be his primary concern. These opponents denigrate his relationship to Christ and accuse him of lacking rhetorical skill and having an unimpressive physical presence (10:7–10). They find fault with his insistence on working without accepting financial help from the Corinthians and say he probably takes advantage of the people’s generosity (11:5–15; 12:11–13). They have infiltrated Paul’s field of ministry, upset his territory, and boast continually in their accomplishments (10:13–18).

Prompted by his opponents’ constant self-commendation and boasting, Paul once again quotes an abbreviated form of Jer. 9:24 (9:23 LXX; and/or 1 Sam. 2:10 [1 Kgdms. 2:10 LXX]): “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” In contrast to his quotation of the same text in 1 Cor. 1:31, he does not use an introductory formula; still, he probably does intend it as an explicit quotation.

Little in the context reveals whether Paul has in mind God or the Lord Jesus when he quotes this OT YHWH text. Perhaps the verse following provides some guidance. It affirms: “For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord [*kyrios*] commends” (2 Cor. 10:18). This

statement gives a polemical twist to the quotation. Despite Paul's opponents' self-commendation and boasting in their work, it is the Lord's commendation that matters. Since the issue at hand is Paul's apostolic authority and jurisdiction in Corinth, this provides the most likely context for his use of the quotation here. When we consider that Paul typically associates his apostolic calling and authority with Jesus, frequently employing the title "Lord" (*kyrios*; e.g.,1 Cor. 9:1; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10),[11] the most likely reading of "Lord" here is Messiah Jesus. This, along with the fact that (1) he uses the same text to refer to Christ in 1 Cor. 1:31 and (2) he typically employs the term "boasting" positively with regard to Christ's work in salvation indicates that he understood Jesus to be the *kyrios* of this quotation as well.

"The Mind of the Lord" (1 Cor. 2:16)

In 1 Cor. 2 Paul continues his message to the church regarding the nature of true wisdom. He makes no claims to be a polished speaker, skilled in rhetoric or worldly wisdom; rather, he preaches only "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Yet, demonstrations of God's Spirit and power also accompany his message; this alone, Paul feels, ought to coax the Corinthian believers to back away from those who espouse human wisdom and eloquence over the cross.

The structure of Paul's argument in 1 Cor. 2:6–16 has few discernible features. It appears to be Paul's ad hoc argument shaped by OT quotations (1 Cor. 2:9, quoting Isa. 64:4 [64:3 LXX]; 52:15 [?]):

> But, as it is written,
>
> "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
> nor the human heart conceived,
> what God has prepared for those who love him."

Most interpreters regard Isa. 64:4 the source of these poetic lines, but Paul's quotation differs from both the Greek and Hebrew versions. It is clear from the introductory formula that Paul takes it as Scripture and therefore authoritative. Exactly how it came down to him in this form is impossible to say. If Isa. 64:4 is the main text, it is also likely that Isa. 52:15 hovers somewhere in the background of his thought. Central to both texts is the hope that God will act in ways nobody can expect. Isaiah 52:15 envisions the ultimate vindication of the servant of the Lord; against all odds, the servant will achieve greatness, silencing kings and astonishing the nations.[12] Isaiah 64:4 rounds out the prophet's prayer, pleading with God to come down, rend the heavens, and show up to do amazing

things like he did in the past. What seems clear is that the apostle takes the things no eye has seen nor ears heard nor heart conceived as things God has revealed through the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10).

At this point Paul launches into one of the most Spirit-rich discussions in his letters. The Spirit accompanies the preaching of the gospel, manifests it, searches the depths of God, and enlightens believers to the gifts given by God. For what could be more astonishing than Paul's gospel, the crystal-clear declaration that through the rejection and crucifixion of God's Anointed, God had entered into our humble world in order to redeem it. The worldly "wise" would have never chosen such an unorthodox scheme to set the world to rights, which is one of the reasons they reject it.[13]

At the conclusion of the section Paul quotes Isa. 40:13: "For who has known the mind of the Lord [*kyrios*] so as to instruct him?" (2:16). Since the word "Lord" in Paul's quotation translates the divine name in the Hebrew text, we have here another example of a YHWH text. As we saw in the previous chapter, Paul quotes this same text with a slightly different emphasis (Rom. 11:34):

> For who has known the mind of the Lord?
> Or who has been his counselor?

In both cases Paul abbreviates the form of the quotation found in the Septuagint (Isa. 40:13):

> Who has known the mind of the Lord,
> and who has been his counselor to instruct him?

In 1 Cor. 2:16 Paul omits the phrase "who has been his counselor." The net effect of this change is to emphasize the contrast between God's revelation of wisdom by the Spirit and the natural person's inability to recognize and discern spiritual realities. The natural person (2:14) can no more penetrate God's mind or hope to instruct him than he can grasp spiritual things without divine gifts (2:12). So, when Paul asks the (rhetorical) question "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" the only possible answer is this: on a human level, "no one." But, Paul replies, "we have the mind of Christ" (2:16). The gospel infused with the Spirit does what no mortal can.

Since Paul's quotation and commentary come at the end of his discussion on the Spirit's role in revealing divine wisdom, it is possible that he hears resonances of the Hebrew text. Instead of the phrase "the mind of the Lord [*kyrios*]" (LXX/Paul), the Hebrew reads "the Spirit of the LORD [YHWH]." This appears to be the only place in the LXX where translators chose "mind" to

render the Hebrew “spirit” (*rûaḥ*). It is also possible, though less likely in my view, that Paul simply considers “mind” synonymous with “Spirit.” More than any other NT writer, Paul uses the word “mind,” and his use of it here is clearly determined by the context.[14] The Spirit, he claims, has revealed to believers God’s hidden wisdom contained in the message of the crucified Messiah. And it is the Spirit who enables them to understand spiritual gifts and discern spiritual things (2:12, 15). The natural person, however, has never received these gifts, nor the ability to comprehend them (2:14). The hermeneutical key for understanding Paul’s phrase “the mind of the Lord” is found in his notion of God’s revelatory Spirit.

Paul’s comment following the OT quotation underscores this fact. While the natural person does not have the Spirit (= “the mind of the Lord”), believers (“we”) have “the mind of Christ” (cf. Rom. 8:9; Phil. 2:5). To have the mind of Christ means reciprocally to have the Spirit and thereby be let in on the divine mystery. The clarity of Paul’s statement invalidates any serious objection to taking Paul’s quotation of Isa. 40:13, an OT YHWH text, as applying to Jesus as “Lord.” Larry Kreitzer explains: “He [Paul] goes on to further amplify this reference, and christologically redirect it, by emphasizing that the Christian has ‘the mind of Christ.’ . . . Of course, such redirection involves a shifting of the focus of concentration from God to Christ and serves as an example of the way in which theocentrism and christocentrism are interwoven in a complex pattern within many of the Old Testament quotations and allusion occurring within the NT documents.”[15]

We should not overlook that Paul quotes Isa. 40:13 reading “Lord” as God and not the Lord Jesus in Rom. 11:34. Here, in 1 Cor. 2:16, when addressing the role of the Spirit in the life of believers, he redirects the title to Christ. We will need to say more about the “Lord” and the Spirit in our discussion of 2 Cor. 3:16–18. For now, it is enough to recognize how Paul’s christological reading of Isa. 40:13 illustrates his flexibility in utilizing OT quotations containing the divine name. His ambiguity in delineating strictly between the Lord Jesus and God the Father may challenge his readers but does not seem to concern him. Modern readers may accuse Paul of inconsistency, but no one can accuse him of being uninteresting. First Corinthians 2:16 is another example of the way Paul reads Israel’s sacred texts to associate Jesus with God in remarkable, unprecedented ways.

“The Earth Is the Lord’s” (1 Cor. 10:26)

In correspondence now lost, the Corinthians posed to their spiritual founder a question regarding food sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. 8:1). We have Paul's answer (chaps. 8–10), but we do not know the exact question. We can, however, get a sense of the question from his answer. Given the amount of space Paul devotes to the topic, it is a serious matter for the fledgling church.

In 1 Cor. 8:1–13 and 10:23–11:1 the issue appears to relate to two things: (1) the act of eating food sacrificed to idols and (2) the effect this freedom might have on the "weak." In 10:1–22, however, Paul's concern centers on eating food sacrificed to idols in connection with pagan worship. If 1 Cor. 8:10 is a measure, then it seems the second question for him is a deeper, more pressing matter. In the main, Paul agrees with the "strong": an idol has no real existence, and there is no God but one (8:4). However, he also warns that one person's liberty can prove to be a stumbling block for another; and so for the good of others one must be willing to sacrifice one's freedom. He illustrates this by pointing to his own example; as an apostle of Christ, he has certain rights but does not insist on them (9:1–27).

In a real sense the Lord's Supper makes the participation of Christ followers at a pagan table indefensible. Since coming to the Lord's table amounts to participation in Christ's sacrifice and in "one body" (10:17), Paul cautions against sharing in any pagan cultic rite, because what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to the one, true God (10:20). So, for Paul, drinking the cup of demons and eating idol meat at a pagan table are not neutral activities; they amount to partnership with demons (10:20). If we read between the lines, then it could well be that some Corinthian Christians insisted that they had the right to continue going to these cultic meals. Such feasts were common in antiquity and accounted for a major part of people's social lives. Native Corinthians had probably participated in these meals all their lives and saw no reason to stop after they started coming to the Lord's table.[16]

In concluding his answer to their question, Paul returns to his previous posture: when eating at home or at a neighbor's, eat what is sold at the market or served without asking questions. Thus, in 8:1–11:1 it seems Paul is concerned to address two separate situations: (1) eating idol meat in private homes and (2) eating idol meat in connection with pagan worship. As he concludes his response, he alternates between two ethical concerns: (1) personal freedom and (2) the good of others. For Paul, the two must be kept in balance to maintain the integrity of the community.

Taking up a slogan that was evidently popular among certain Corinthians —"All things are lawful"—Paul qualifies their claim in light of his concern for others (10:23). All things may be lawful, but not all things will benefit others,

nor will they build up the church. For the apostle, personal freedom must not be exercised at the expense of the welfare of other believers: “Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other” (1 Cor. 10:24).

For the “weak,” pursuing what is good for one’s neighbor means eating whatever is sold in the market or served in a private home without asking questions. If someone, however, makes a point to let a believer know that the meat is from a sacrifice, then the believer is not to eat it out of regard for the conscience of the informer (10:27–29). Nowhere is Paul more un-Jewish than when he advises the Corinthians not to ask any questions on matters related to food; much of his focus as a Pharisee had been about asking questions, considering options, and exercising caution so as not to violate God’s law, not least when it came to the food he put in his body.[17] Paul’s directive, then, represents a liberalizing of his Jewish views regarding food; yet even this, he thinks, is consistent with the testimony of Scripture.

The scriptural warrant for Paul’s advice comes from Ps. 24:1 (23:1 LXX): “For ‘the earth and its fullness are the Lord’s’” (1 Cor. 10:26). Since the word “Lord” translates the divine name, we have another example of a YHWH text. With the exception of “for,” which serves to introduce the excerpt, Paul’s quotation reproduces verbatim the text of the Septuagint. Paul offers scriptural support for his “liberal” stance toward eating food in a neighbor’s house with his quotation of Ps. 24, a text cited by Jewish teachers to encourage the faithful to bless God for the food before a meal (e.g., b. Ber. 35a). Paul’s remark in 1 Cor. 10:30 suggests he has in mind not only the food eaten but also the act of giving thanks: “If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks?” If the Lord created and owns the earth and everything in it, and if God is thanked for the meal, then, he reasons, all food is clean (see Mark 7:19; Acts 10:15).

Now, by “Lord” does Paul mean God the Father or the Lord Jesus? At the heart of the Jewish faith is the conviction that YHWH, the God of Israel, is the Creator of all. As Creator, God is also the ruler and owner of all things. These are fundamental themes of the OT. And it is clear that Ps. 24 had a firm place in a creation motif in Second Temple Judaism. Consider the superscription given to the psalm (23:1 LXX): “A Psalm for David. For the first day of the week” (AT). The first day of the week, that is, Sunday, is the day of the Jewish calendar traditionally ascribed to creation. The LXX superscription demonstrates the strong tie this psalm had to Jewish creational theology. But this does not necessarily prove Paul has God in mind when he quotes this verse. In fact, the weight of evidence demonstrates that he applies this YHWH text and these particular teachings to the Lord Jesus.

First, the entire discussion in 1 Cor. 8:1–11:1 deals with problems arising in everyday life in Corinth. Paul urges the strong to surrender their liberty for the good of others. He instructs both weak and strong to avoid any real or perceived participation in idolatry. He urges the weak to eat food set before them without asking questions, unless someone points out that it was sacrificed to another god. These are ethical instructions, concerned primarily with the behavior of Corinthian followers of Jesus. As we saw earlier, in ethical dealings Paul appeals to Jesus's lordship and typically uses the *kyrios* title in reference to Jesus.

Second, throughout Paul's discussion the christological use of *kyrios* dominates. In matters related to the Lord's Supper (10:14–22), he states "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons" (10:21). Earlier in the same passage, he alludes to the cup of blessing as participation in the blood of Christ and the bread as participation in the body of Christ (10:16). In 11:20 he refers to the practice itself as "the Lord's Supper." There are no good reasons for taking phrases such as "the cup of the Lord" and "the table of the Lord" as anything other than references to Christ.

Perhaps the most significant reason that *kyrios* in this YHWH text must refer to Christ regards how Paul structures his line of reasoning on where and when believers should and should not eat meat. He begins by affirming that idols have no real existence and there is no God but one (8:4). Then he makes a powerful, binitarian statement about God the Father and the Lord Jesus, which we discussed earlier (8:6). Some scholars regard it as a preformed Christian tradition. Others are not so sure and consider Paul the likely author of it. Regardless, the confession appears to be a reformulation of the Shema. The central confession of God's unique identity and his relationship to Israel is taken up and expanded to include Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. 8:6): "Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist." This distinctive Christian formulation presents Jesus Christ as the "one Lord [*kyrios*]," who serves as mediator in creation and redemption. As Jesus Christ is cocreator with God the Father, Paul can affirm that the earth and its inhabitants belong to the Lord Jesus. But is Paul's point in chaps. 8–11 to capitalize on the creational motif or the soteriological one? The answer is both. Creation and soteriology are closely related in Scripture and therefore in Paul's worldview. The Corinthian church is a community of the reconciled (see 2 Cor. 5:17–21), and Paul is interested in showing how reconciliation works itself out in community and society among people who are very different. In Ps. 24:1 his

primary aim is to show how something as daily as food ought to be regulated based on the fact that "the earth and its fullness are the Lord's."

Consequently, in answering the Corinthians' question regarding food sacrificed to idols, Paul begins his discussion by denouncing rival gods and quoting a revised version of the Shema that affirms the one God and one Lord (*kyrios*) Jesus as source of "all things." Paul's binitarian Shema superintends the entire discussion (chaps. 8–10). Toward the end of his response, he again denounces idols and pagan sacrifices as offerings to demons (10:19–22) and quotes a scriptural tradition that acknowledges the Lord (*kyrios*) as Creator and Redeemer of all things. Since Paul's revised Shema extols Jesus the *kyrios* as an agent of creation and redemption, it is likely the same idea should be carried through to the *kyrios* of Ps. 24:1. So, ethical considerations, the context of the discussion, and the structure of Paul's entire discussion indicate that Paul applies Ps. 24:1, an OT YHWH text, to the Lord Jesus.

Allusions to YHWH Texts in Paul's Letters

We want to consider now a number of allusions Paul makes to YHWH texts. It is often difficult to distinguish between a quotation, an allusion, and an echo in a particular passage. More than anyone Richard Hays has tried to show the illusive nature of these intertextual moves:

> The volume of intertextual echo varies in accordance with the semantic distance between the source and the reflecting surface. Quotation, allusion, and echo may be seen as points along a spectrum of intertextual reference, moving from the explicit to the subliminal. As we move farther away from overt citation, the source recedes into the discursive distance, the intertextual relations become less determinate, and the demand placed on the reader's listening powers grows greater. As we near the vanishing point of the echo, it inevitably becomes difficult to decide whether we are really hearing an echo at all, or whether we are only conjuring things out of the murmurings of our own imaginations.[18]

If volume is key here, then consider this: a quotation is more akin to a loud statement made so that people across a room can hear it, while an allusion might have more in common with a whisper spoken to a close friend. Everyone in the room will hear and "get" the bold statement, but only a friend will hear and "get" the whisper. Analogies are imperfect, of course, but they at least hint at the reality. In the following discussion, we will stick to those allusions that are commonly "heard" by the majority of interpreters.

Allusions in 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 10:21

When Paul warns the Corinthians to avoid pagan feasts, he alludes to an OT YHWH text in 1 Cor. 10:21 with the phrase "the table of the Lord [YHWH/*kyrios*]." The context of the passage is the unfortunate way the Corinthians are behaving in regard to "the Lord's Supper" (10:16–17). The allusion comes from Mal. 1:7, 12, a passage in which the Lord condemns the priests for defiling the altar, that is, "the table of the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*]," by sacrificing blind and crippled animals. The law is clear that only unblemished, healthy animals are acceptable to YHWH (e.g., Exod. 12:5; 29:1; Lev. 1:3, 10; 22:22). For similar reasons, Paul considers it unacceptable for the Corinthians to participate in pagan cultic rites, especially if they think they can remain immune to their influences.

Paul's use of the phrase "the table of the Lord" within the context of "the Lord's Supper" does not appear to reflect pagan cultic meals, for there is no evidence that pagans employed this sort of terminology in their religious feasts. They may have dedicated a meal to Lord Sarapis or some other local deity, but they did not refer to the table as "Lord Sarapis's table." So the phrase must have come down to him through Jewish tradition. Now this does not mean that Christ followers had a literal table they reclined around called "the table of the Lord" in their house churches. The phrase is metaphorical, signifying an act, not a piece of furniture. So "the table of the Lord" in Paul (= the Lord's Supper) is associated with "the table of the Lord" in Malachi (= the altar in the temple) above all through the image of sacrifice. Paul's interpretation of the Lord's Supper appears to bear this out: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). The acts of eating "this bread" and drinking "the cup" are linked to the Lord's death. Here, of course, "Lord" means Jesus, and the notion of sacrifice occupies the foreground of Paul's rhetoric and theology of the Lord's table (1 Cor. 10:20–21): "No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and table of demons."

The sacrificial imagery in this passage is clear. Christ followers must not think that they can sit in the shadow of a pagan temple and eat food sacrificed to idols; to do so is to become a partner with demons. "The Lord's table" is exclusive; it demands single-hearted devotion not unlike the altar (YHWH's table) in the temple in Jerusalem. The Lord's table is the unique place where believers

participate in the body and blood of Christ and enact the gospel. That act is to continue as a regular feature of the church's life until the parousia.

1 Corinthians 10:22

Jealousy appears to be the divine character trait that animates Paul's discussion. One verse later Paul echoes a statement made by God (Deut. 32:21): "They made me jealous with what is no god, provoked me with their idols." It is taken from a section of the Torah that rehearses God's care for his people even as it recalls their idolatry and subsequent rejection by God (Deut. 32:1–26). The apostle turns the statement into a question (1 Cor. 10:22): "Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy?" It is important to note that Paul's entire discussion (chap. 10) draws heavily from Israel's experience in the wilderness to warn against participation in idol worship. What happened to Israel—that is, being struck down by God in the wilderness—becomes an example for the Corinthians so that they will not follow their "ancestors" in the error of idolatry.

Now the text Paul alludes to, Deut. 32:21, does not contain the divine name, but it is obvious from the context of the passage that YHWH is the one who is speaking (Deut. 32:19). Paul replaces the first-person reference, "me" ("They made me jealous"), with *kyrios*, "the Lord"; in this context "the Lord" can refer only to God's unique, covenant name. He replaces "they" (the Israelites) with "we" in order to modernize the text by asserting that believing gentiles are members of the covenant family. Paul appears to be aware of the original context, and so he creates this truncated allusion in the same way he does the quotations in 1 Cor. 1:31 and 2 Cor. 10:17.

At first, one might conclude the volume of the verbal affinity in the echo is slight, until one compares other verses in the immediate context:

Deut. 32:17 LXX:	"They sacrificed to demons and not to God"
1 Cor. 10:20:	"They sacrifice to demons and not to God"

The "they" in Deuteronomy refers to God's people, who have vexed him and shown him no loyalty by bowing before the gods of other nations. Moses's Song (Deut. 32) appears to anticipate the disloyalty that led ultimately to exile. The "they" in Paul's Corinthian letter refers to the pagan neighbors of Christ believers who innocently invite them to participate in their feasts. By extension, the "they" can also refer to believers who insist on exercising their freedom by

participating innocently in these pagan feasts. But any innocence is shattered by the reality that their sacrifices are made to demons and not to God. Given the similar contexts of the two passages—that is, an explicit warning against idolatry and its consequences—and the verbal affinity between these texts, it does appear that Paul intends an allusion to Deut. 32. Furthermore, since Christ is referred to as "Lord" so frequently in the immediate context, it can hardly mean otherwise here. It seems likely then that 1 Cor. 10:22 provides another example in which Paul applies to Christ an allusion to an OT YHWH text.

Allusions in the Thessalonian Letters

1 THESSALONIANS 3:13

Although Paul earnestly desired to revisit Thessalonica, when he writes 1 Thessalonians he has been prevented from doing so. So he sent Timothy to instruct and encourage the church. When Timothy returned with an overwhelmingly positive report of the Thessalonians' dedication, the apostle celebrated the good news and concluded this section (1 Thess. 2:17–3:10) with a prayer to God the Father and "our Lord Jesus." The closing words of the prayer contain an allusion to Zech. 14:5d: "Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him." Paul's prayer in its entirety reads: "Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints" (1 Thess. 3:11–13).

While it is clear Paul contextualizes the allusion to Zechariah within his prayer and departs from the exact wording, the conceptual linkage between these two passages is unmistakable. Both passages expect that (1) the Lord will come and (2) he will be accompanied by his "holy ones." The "holy ones" typically are interpreted as angels. For Paul, the time of the Lord's coming with all the holy angels that Zechariah expected will find ultimate fulfillment in the parousia of the Lord Jesus.

Paul's allusive use of Zechariah remains consistent with the kind of language typically employed in OT theophanies; destruction awaits Israel's enemies, while God's people may look forward to the blessings in store for them at the dawning of the day of the Lord (Zech. 12–14). Paul's adaptation of the text reflects his understanding of the new eschatological situation brought about by Christ's death and resurrection. The Lord Jesus is the one who will return to present the

Thessalonian faithful as blameless before God at the parousia. Paul replaces Zechariah's "the LORD [YHWH] my God comes" with "our Lord Jesus comes." The application of this YHWH text from a theophanic context to Jesus is dramatic.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:3

In the paraenesis following the prayer, Paul encourages the Thessalonian Christians to pursue lives pleasing to the Lord and warns specifically against sexual immorality (4:3). His exhortation alludes to an OT concept that finds clear expression in Ps. 94:1: "O LORD [YHWH], you God of vengeance, you God of vengeance, shine forth!" Psalm 94 is a communal lament pleading with God to deliver the faithful from evildoers. For God's vengeance to shine forth is for God to appear (again, a theophany) and act decisively to judge the wicked and provide relief to God's suffering people.

The Septuagint version is similar (Ps. 93:1): "The Lord [*kyrios*] is God of vengeance, the God of vengeance spoke openly!" It is likely this refrain is picked up by Paul in admonishing the Thessalonians to sexual purity rather than exploitation "because the Lord [*kyrios*] is an avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you beforehand and solemnly warned you" (1 Thess. 4:6b–c). Though the wording is different, the sentiment is the same. In the psalm the Lord identifies with the afflicted and acts to avenge their suffering. The apostle casts sexual exploitation in the same mold with wickedness and evil. He admonishes the Thessalonians to remain pure, or else the Lord himself will judge their sin and pay them back for overstepping the bounds. The "Lord" about whom Paul spoke is no doubt Jesus; otherwise the specific reference to God (4:7) is unnecessary. This is suggested more clearly by the phrases "in the Lord Jesus" (4:1) and "through the Lord Jesus" (4:2), which are the kinds of phrases that typically accompany Paul's ethical instructions. Since Paul seldom refers to Jesus as "God" (e.g., Rom. 9:5; cf. Titus 2:13), his omission of direct reference to God (*theos*) from Ps. 94:1 (93:1 LXX) makes it possible for him to apply the text to Jesus.[19]

Paul's statement clearly indicates that he warned them about sexual purity ahead of time, likely during his first visit to Thessalonica. Since this teaching is directly connected to a scriptural allusion, it is reasonable that at least some of what Paul teaches his new churches is derived from the Hebrew Scriptures—or the Greek version of them. If we press the matter further, it is likely in my view that Paul applied YHWH texts to Jesus and made these kinds of scriptural

allusions to him not only in his written correspondences but also during his initial visit to a new city.

“When One Turns to the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:16)

According to Paul, God had made him and his apostolic coworkers ministers of a new covenant (2 Cor. 3:1–4:6). Unlike others who carried with them letters of recommendation,[20] Paul considers the Corinthians themselves to be his letters of recommendation, written with the Spirit of the living God. The passage offers Paul’s most stirring contrast between what *was* in the old covenant and what *is* in the new. Paul has no doubt that the former agreement chiseled in stone was accompanied by glory. What he insists is this: the glory of the new covenant eclipses the glory of the old. By its very nature the old covenant was transitory because it was waiting for the inauguration of the new, more permanent covenant. Now, it is unlikely that Paul is equating the old covenant with the collection of scrolls we know today as the OT. Paul’s attitude toward Scripture and Torah is far too positive for that. The “old covenant” here refers to the agreement at Sinai between God and Israel. In the new work of God this agreement has been taken up and expanded to include the church.

At the heart of the passage are several allusions to Exod. 34:29–35 (2 Cor. 3:7–18). These allusions expand the meaning of “the letter” over against the Spirit. He characterizes “the letter” as “the ministry of death” and “the ministry of condemnation” (3:7, 9) while describing the Spirit as life giving and the “the ministry of justification” (3:9).

The contrast is animated in part by Paul’s scriptural recollection of what happened when Moses descended Mount Sinai the second time with the tablets of the Torah. The skin of his face was shining because he had been talking with God (Exod. 34:29–35). The transfiguration created so much fear that Moses put a veil over his face when speaking with the people; but when he went to speak to God he removed it. Paul rereads the entire episode: Moses veiled his face to keep the people from realizing that the glory was fading. According to Paul a veil remains when the sons of Abraham and daughters of Sarah read the old covenant in Paul’s day (3:14). Only in Christ (3:14) is the veil taken away. In 3:16 he writes: “But when one turns to the Lord [*kyrios*], the veil is removed.” This statement echoes Exod. 34:34 LXX, which reads, “Whenever Moses went in before the Lord [*kyrios*] to speak to him, he removed the veil” (AT). Since the divine name is found in the Hebrew, Paul echoes a YHWH text.

Now by “Lord” does Paul mean the Lord Jesus or God? Scholars have argued vigorously on each side of that question. But those who regard the allusion as referring to God appear to do so primarily because their starting point is that *kyrios* in Paul’s quotations and allusions to Scripture typically refers to God and not Christ. I think I’ve said enough so far in the book to call that assumption into question. In the case of 2 Cor. 3:16, a good argument can be made for reading *kyrios* here as Christ.

First, 2 Cor. 3:14 and 3:16 ought to be read in tandem. In 3:14 Paul explains that only “in Christ” (or possibly “by Christ”) is the veil taken away. Note the Greek verb translated “set aside” (NRSV) or “taken away” (ESV) is passive, requiring another to remove it, in this case “Christ.” Since the veil does not remove itself, Christ must be the agent who takes away the veil. This stands in contrast to Exod. 34:34, which clearly says Moses removed the veil before going in to speak to the Lord. Paul’s statement echoes but also alters Exod. 34:34: “When one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.” Again the verb “removed” is passive, meaning that the one who removes the veil is not the one who turns to the Lord. When a person turns to the Lord (*kyrios*)—contextually a reference to repentance and conversion—the veil is removed by another, most likely the Lord himself, or Christ, as in 3:14.

Second, 2 Cor. 3:17 identifies *kyrios* (“Lord”) with the *pneuma* (“Spirit”) utilizing the closest relationship language can express: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” Since 2 Cor. 3:3 the crux of Paul’s argument has been the connection between the Spirit and the new covenant. Although it is possible for Paul to associate the “Spirit” with “God,”[21] it is not unusual for him to relate “Spirit” with “Christ” (Rom. 8:9–11; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:13; Phil. 1:9; Gal. 4:6). Further, since Paul typically associates “freedom” with “Christ” (Rom. 8:1–2; Gal. 2:4; 5:1, 13–15), the link between “Spirit” and “freedom” in 3:17 implies we should read “Spirit” christologically.

Third, in 2 Cor. 3:18 Paul writes that believers behold “the glory of the Lord” and are transformed into the same image. The phrase “the glory of the Lord,” while frequent in the LXX (e.g., Exod. 16:7; 24:17; 40:34–35; Lev. 9:23), is rare in Paul. It occurs only here and in 2 Cor. 8:19, where, according to 8:23, it refers to Christ (“the glory of Christ”). Later, in this same context, Paul may clarify what he means by “the glory of the Lord” when he writes (4:4): “In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” Believers who behold “the glory” are subsequently transformed or metamorphosed into the “same image.” Perhaps it is also instructive to consider

those passages where Paul insists that an encounter with the divine results in conformity to Christ (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:20–21).

There is one further bit of evidence to be considered in order to answer the question whether the YHWH text in 2 Cor. 3:16 refers to God the Father or the Lord Jesus Christ. Since 2 Cor. 3:1 Paul has been combating the influence of rivals who carry letters of commendation and, most likely, exalt Moses and the law. His own ministry, he insists, stands in contrast with theirs: compared to those who commend themselves, Paul and his coworkers preach Jesus Christ as "Lord"/*kyrios* (2 Cor. 4:5). The clear declaration of Jesus Christ as "Lord" is not only the content of Paul's gospel—a gospel veiled to those perishing—but it can and ought to inform the previous statement: "When one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed." When taken together, these contextual factors suggest that Paul applies the YHWH text in 2 Cor. 3:16 to Christ.

The Philippian Hymn (2:6–11)

In the Philippian hymn (2:6–11), Paul appropriates the language from Isa. 45:23 and applies it to Jesus, who is identified as "Lord" in the confession. We note here only the second part of the hymn (2:9–11):

> Therefore God also highly exalted him
> and gave to him
> the name that is above every name,
> so that at the name of Jesus
> every knee should bend,
> in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
> and every tongue should confess
> that Jesus Christ is Lord
> to the glory of God the Father.

The passage from which these stanzas are derived reads (Isa. 45:23):

> By myself I have sworn,
> from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness
> a word that shall not return:
> "To me every knee shall bow,
> every tongue shall swear."

In our discussion of Rom. 14:11 above, we had occasion to detail some of the contextual factors around Isa. 45. There is no need to repeat that here. We need only remember that scholars agree that Isa. 45 contains the most stridently monotheistic language in all the Hebrew Bible and that the covenant name

YHWH/*kyrios* is at the heart of it. The declaration "I am the LORD [YHWH/*kyrios*] and there is no other" forms a refrain that dominates the oracle. The core of the prophecy consists of a promise of the restoration of Israel as a prelude to the universal acclamation of the one, true God by the nations. Paul recognizes and expands the universal timbre of the promise by envisioning a time when every heavenly, earthly, and subterranean knee bends before the Lord Jesus.

The christological application of Isa. 45:23, every knee bowing and every tongue confessing, is beyond doubt in his hymn. Whether Paul composes this prose or adopts a preformed hymn does not change his basic agreement with its Christology. Here Paul is consciously and deliberately associating this YHWH text with the crucified and now resurrected (highly exalted) Jesus. Kreitzer remarks: "It is difficult to imagine any first-century Jew or Christian even remotely familiar with Isaiah 45 hearing this final stanza of Philippians 2:9–11 without recognizing that words of theistic import have now been applied to Christ."[22] Paul's clear use of Isa. 45:23 as a reference to Christ in the Philippian hymn makes it likely he intends the same use in Rom. 14:11. Moreover, one should note well the phrase "the name which is above every name." To what name does he refer? Some scholars interpret the phrase "at the name Jesus," identifying "Jesus" as an epexegetical modifier of "name." In other words, the name is "Jesus." This is grammatically possible. Given the context, however, it is best to take the genitive "Jesus" as possessive, yielding the translation "at the name that belongs to Jesus." This would be identical with "the name above every name" bestowed by God on the obedient Christ and is revealed only at the climax of the hymn in the acclamation "Jesus Christ is Lord."

The response to God's exaltation of Christ is the universal acclamation expressed in the language of Isa. 45:23: "Every knee will bow" and "every tongue will confess." These reverent phrases belong to one of the most significant monotheistic passages from the OT and refer originally to YHWH. Although the passage alters and expands the text to accommodate Christian cosmological and eschatological interests, there can be little doubt that Jewish believers would have recognized the core phrases as scriptural language reserved for YHWH now applied to their Lord Jesus. Reginald Fuller approaches the correct conclusion when he writes: "For this is no unreflective transference to the Exalted one of a LXX text about *Yhwh*, but a conscious and deliberate transference of the 'name.' It is not just a *functional* identity between the Exalted one and Yahweh, but an *ontic*, though not yet ontological, identity: 'Name declares dignity and nature, radiates being and makes it manifest.'"[23]

Without a doubt the language Paul employs describes the universal worship of Jesus as Lord by creatures inhabiting the heavenly, earthly, and subterranean realms. Such veneration, however, does not threaten God or his unique position. Indeed, the way Paul understands it, to worship Jesus brings glory to the Father. Since God has exalted him and given him the name *kyrios*, we must see the worship of Jesus as being in full accord with the will and purposes of God.

Conclusion

Now let me offer some analysis of Paul's exegetical practice. First, we should probably take into account how Paul could preface both patrological and christological uses of YHWH texts with a citation formula. This clearly marks his intent to engage in explicit citation with either God or Christ in view.[24] Second, the fluid nature of the manuscript tradition at the time of Paul means it is difficult to determine whether a quotation is a verbatim or loose quotation. It is therefore unwise to assume that quotations close to any known version would more likely be God directed. Third, whether Paul intends God or Christ as referent must be worked out through a rigorous exegetical and contextual analysis. We find that Paul reserves YHWH texts for God primarily in theocentric passages such as Rom. 9–11. Additionally, when Paul wants the reader to understand the Father rather than the Lord Jesus, he states it clearly in the context and/or an introductory formula. When discussing the following themes, the apostle customarily utilizes the YHWH text with God as its referent:

1. Justification (Rom. 4:7–8)
2. Divine wisdom (Rom. 11:34; 1 Cor. 3:20)
3. The Fatherhood of God (2 Cor. 6:18)
4. The relationship of Jews and gentiles (Rom. 9:27, 29; 15:9, 11)

Furthermore, whenever other descriptive titles are added to the *kyrios* predicate, such as "Lord of hosts" or "Lord Almighty," he retains these as directed toward God (e.g., Rom. 9:27–29; 2 Cor. 6:18). In contrast he seldom offers a straightforward statement that he intends to refer to Christ. Perhaps this is because Paul uses *kyrios* overwhelmingly as a christological title.

The apostle applies YHWH texts to Christ in passages with a christological focus under the following themes:

1. The universality and cosmic scope of the gospel (Rom. 10:13; 14:11; Phil. 2:10–11)
2. Eschatological judgment and parousia (e.g., Rom. 10:13; 14:11; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:6; 2 Cor. 3:16)
3. The resurrection of Jesus (Rom. 10:13; 14:11)
4. Christian ethics and belonging to Christ (Rom. 14:11; 1 Cor. 10:26; 1 Thess. 4:6)
5. Divine wisdom as "Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1:31; 2:16)[25]
6. The Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10:21, 26)
7. The role of the Spirit in the life of the believer (1 Cor. 2:16; 2 Cor. 3:16)
8. Paul's apostolic authority (2 Cor. 3:16; 10:17; cf. 2 Tim. 2:19)

It is important to note how Paul interweaves theocentric and christocentric readings of YHWH texts throughout his letters. He can read a passage patrologically in one place and christologically in another, depending on its context. While this move may throw off a modern reader, it appears never to confuse Paul. As we can see, Paul is able to identify Jesus with God in remarkable ways through scriptural exegesis, yet he is also able to keep him distinct and subordinate to the Father. It is also significant how often Paul applies the divine name to Jesus in discussions of the church gathered in worship directed toward Christ, confessing him as Lord and observing the Lord's Supper. The church universal consists of those who "call upon the name of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:2), a phrase clearly derived from OT descriptions of the kinds of cultic activity that took place toward YHWH in the temple.

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1. In wisdom texts "heaven" and "abyss" often signify the inaccessibility of wisdom. Sirach 24:5 reads: "I [Wisdom] encircled the vault of heaven alone and I walked in the depths of the abyss." In Job 11:5–9 Zophar declares that wisdom is as high as the heavens and deeper than Sheol. One's search for wisdom takes one to the depths of the sea. Though one may search for wisdom, one does not find it in the land of the living (Job 28:13–14, 22–28). Paul's use of Deut. 30 appears to have been influenced by these wisdom texts.

2. Gen. 12:8; 13:4; 26:25; 1 Kings 18:24–26; Isa. 12:4–6; Pss. 105:1; 116:4, 13, 17.

3. Carl Judson Davis, *The Name and Way of the Lord: Old Testament Themes, New Testament Christology*, JSNTSup 129 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 106.

4. See Rom. 1:6; chap. 6; 1 Cor. 3:23; 6:12–20 (both "Christ" and "Lord"); 7:22–24; 15:23; 2 Cor. 10:7; Gal. 3:29; 5:24.

5. Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 25–49.

6. Matthew Black, *Romans*, NCBC (Greenwood, SC: Attic, 1973), 167.

7. N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 702, thinks a solid case can be made for taking *kyrios* here as a referent to Jesus. This is a reversal of 1 Cor. 8:6: the first line refers to Jesus, the second to God. We have here a coupling of Jesus's messianic identity as coming judge with his embodiment as the return of YHWH.

8. Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), vii.

9. Hays, *Conversion of the Imagination*, 14.

10. J. Ross Wagner, "'Not beyond the Things Which Are Written': A Call to Boast Only in the Lord (1 Cor. 4:6)," *NTS* 44 (April 1998): 279–87.

11. See Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1, 17; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 2:6; Philem. 1.

12. A christological reading of the servant is not necessary here, although it would be consistent with how some early Christians read Isa. 52 and 53. The identity of the servant has been the subject of debate for centuries. Some regard it as an image of all Israel. Though Israel has been mistreated by Assyrians, Babylonians, and other nations, God had still pledged to vindicate and rescue his people. Others think it is best to interpret the servant collectively as a remnant out of Israel, a small minority of people who are destined to suffer on behalf of the sins of the nation. Still others read the servant individually as one of the prophets: Moses, Jeremiah (see Jer. 10:18–24), or Isaiah of Jerusalem. Some targumic texts and Jewish commentaries link the servant to the Messiah, though, of course, they did not recognize the Messiah as Jesus. Jewish Christians not long after Jesus's death began to interpret the passage in light of him. This christological interpretation is possible with this text. After Paul stakes his gospel on the cruelty of the cross, a passage such as Isa. 64:1–4, echoing the promise that God would act in unexpected ways, is consistent with the vindication of Jesus via the resurrection.

13. Steve Moyise, *Paul and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 88.

14. See Craig S. Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016). Keener's work is the most extensive study of Paul's understanding of "mind" to date; but he recognizes that Paul uses a range of expressions and words to deal with the reality of transformed thinking and understanding.

15. Larry Kreitzer, *Jesus and God in Paul's Eschatology* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 19.

16. W. L. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10*, SBLDS 68 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 8–64.

17. C. K. Barrett, "Things Sacrificed to Idols," in *Essays on Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 49; see, e.g., Acts 10:9–23; 11:2–3; 4 Macc. 5:2; b. Hul. 13b; m. Avod. Zar. 2.3.

18. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 23.

19. I. Howard Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: Based on the Revised Standard Version*, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 112.

20. Paul's opponents in Corinth may have criticized him for not carrying letters of recommendation (2 Cor. 5:12). The entire argument suggests that they linked their authority with Moses. If so, Paul counters their claim by asserting that Moses's ministry faded over time, giving way to the new covenant.

21. Rom. 8:9, 11, 14; 1 Cor. 2:10–14; 3:16; 6:11; 7:40; 2 Cor. 3:3.

22. Kreitzer, *Jesus and God*, 116.

23. R. H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (London: Lutterworth, 1965), 213.

24. For the christological use of a YHWH text with introductory formula, see Rom. 14:11 and 1 Cor. 1:31.

25. Divine wisdom related to God the Father stands somewhat in contrast to divine wisdom related to Christ. The latter has to do with the specifics of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The former (Rom. 11:34; 1 Cor. 3:20) appears connected to God's mysterious plan of the ages.

6

Pauline Exegesis and a High Christology

In this chapter we want to explore some of the implications of what it meant for Paul to call Jesus "Lord" and associate him so closely with God's covenant name. What we will discover is that Paul's exegetical maneuvers and conclusions are shared among other early Christian writers and embedded in standard Christian practices. These habits associate Jesus with God in remarkable and even unprecedented ways. Very early, at the beginning of the Christian movement, influential voices such as Paul considered Jesus constitutive of God's unique identity. Paul's use of *kyrios* for Christ and the way he associates him with the divine name offer us an early look at a remarkable feature of the early Jesus movement. Toward the end of the chapter we want to consider some of the forces and factors that led Paul and other Christian theologians to associate Jesus unambiguously with the divine name and thereby with God himself.

Before we proceed, however, let's consider an objection raised by some scholars who think too much is made (by me and others) of Paul's application of the divine name to Jesus and his use of YHWH texts to describe his Lord's significance.[1] They point out that other Jewish texts from the period make similar exegetical moves related to various figures. For example, among the Dead Sea Scrolls 11QMelchizedek (11Q13) is cited as applying to Melchizedek a YHWH text from Isa. 61:1–2:

> The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
> because the Lord has anointed me;
> he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
> to bind up the brokenhearted,
> to proclaim liberty to the captives,
> and release to the prisoners;
> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
> and the day of vengeance of our God;

to comfort all who mourn.

Specifically, there appears to be an allusion to Isa. 61:2 in 11QMelchizedek 2.9, where the scroll reads "It is the time for the year of Melchizedek's favor" (AT). As a result the phrase "the year of the LORD's [YHWH] favor" is interpreted as "the year of Melchizedek's favor."

Scholars are not exactly sure what to make of Melchizedek in this text. Some regard him as none other than Michael the archangel, a heavenly being whose main function is to exercise God's judgment in the end. Others think it is best to identify him with the mysterious priest-king of Gen. 14 and Ps. 110. If so, he is an exalted human being to whom God has granted extraordinary—one could even say "divine"—status.[2] To muddy the waters just a bit, there may be a second significant figure in 11QMelchizedek, the messenger anointed by the Spirit (2.18–20), who appears to serve as a kind of forerunner to the judgment and deliverance exercised by Melchizedek. Should the messenger be regarded as distinct from Melchizedek or identified with him?[3] As with many of the scrolls, the fragmentary nature of the evidence makes it hard to be definitive on these matters. Still, applying the phrase "the LORD's [YHWH] favor" from Isa. 61:2 to Melchizedek amounts to an extraordinary interpretive move. But does it rise to the same level as Paul's use of YHWH texts to refer to Jesus? It is one thing to substitute Melchizedek for the divine name; it is quite another to refer to Melchizedek by the divine name. In other words, Melchizedek is not routinely referred to as YHWH in the same way Paul routinely refers to Jesus as *kyrios* in scriptural exegesis.

Similarly, the commentary on Hosea (4Q167 frag. 2.2) offers another potential example. It summarizes a series of YHWH's judgments by indicating they are to be performed by another figure, this time "the last priest." "For I will be like a lio[n [to E]phrai]m [and like a lion cub to the House of] [Judah. Its interpretation con]cerns the last priest who will stretch out his hand to strike Ephraim . . ."[4] The text is fragmentary, so it is unwise to speak with certainty about what the scroll is trying to say. What seems likely is that judgments spoken by YHWH in the first person in Hosea 5 are brought into the present to refer to the actions of "the last priest." No text in Hosea 5 says specifically that YHWH will stretch out his hand to strike Ephraim. The statement seems more like a summary of divine judgments at the hands of the high priest.

So there do appear to be a handful of instances in contemporary Jewish literature where scriptural texts associated with the divine name are applied to another figure. So the questions are as follows: Are these examples analogous to Paul's use of YHWH texts to refer to Jesus? And do these instances in any way

detract from the significance of Paul's christological exegesis of the YHWH texts discussed above? I think not, for several reasons.

First, christological YHWH texts in Paul's Letters occur with some frequency and are part of a corpus of a single individual, all composed within a narrow period of time of little more than a decade. They represent a pattern of thought and exegesis unique to a self-consciously Jewish writer. In contrast, among contemporary Jewish scrolls, YHWH texts applied to other figures are rare and found only in a handful of texts composed (probably) by various authors over what was likely a century or more. In other words, there is no pattern or programmatic use of YHWH texts among the scrolls like we see in Paul's Letters.

Second, Paul applies YHWH texts to only one figure other than "God the Father," namely, Jesus the Messiah. On the other hand, the Dead Sea Scrolls typically cited as associating YHWH texts with figures other than God refer these texts to a variety of figures including Melchizedek, the last priest, and possibly the Teacher of Righteousness (e.g., 1QpHab 8.1–3). Unless these figures can be collapsed into a single person, what Paul is doing by applying OT YHWH texts to a single individual, Jesus the Messiah, is therefore unique.

Third, not only does Paul insist that Jesus should be understood as the proper referent to various YHWH/*kyrios* texts, but he also claims that God has bestowed on Jesus the divine name (e.g., Phil. 2:9–11) and regularly refers to Jesus as *kyrios* independent of any reference to Scripture. As we saw earlier, Paul routinely refers to Jesus as *kyrios* in ethical, eschatological, and liturgical contexts. There is nothing remotely like this among the other Jewish writings available from the period.

Fourth, as we have seen, Paul's Letters contain a variety of quotations and allusions to YHWH/*kyrios* texts with Christ as referent, whereas these other, possible YHWH texts are not quotations. They are at best allusions to a particular phrase or expression found in a text. Also, because of their fragmentary nature, it is difficult to determine whether we have strategic exegesis regarding the divine name or individuals acting as God's agents. In fact, these texts may be little different from those that depict Cyrus the Persian subduing the nations for God (Isa. 45) or the Babylonians marching throughout the earth to judge and correct the nations, including Judah, directed by God (Hab. 1). In both cases, they serve as God's agents of judgment or deliverance in the world. But they are not personally invested with the divine name.

Finally, we should not miss that Paul's use of YHWH texts to refer to Jesus has to do with a person of recent memory, a person whose years overlapped the life of the apostle himself. He is not applying these texts to a man of the distant

past, a person shrouded in mystery (assuming Melchizedek refers to the priest-king of Gen. 14), or a heavenly being (assuming Melchizedek is to be identified with Michael the archangel).

Granted, there may be a handful of pre-Christian Jewish books that allude to a YHWH text and refer certain phrases to another figure, but the phenomenon we encounter in Paul's Letters is of a different order. The apostle describes Jesus as bestowed by God with the name above every name, YHWH/*kyrios*, and routinely refers to Jesus as *kyrios* in particular contexts. There is nothing like this in other Jewish texts from the era. At the same time, he sets Jesus in relation to the church as its Lord (*kyrios*) using the same terms and concepts his Bible employs to describe the relationship of YHWH to Israel. Furthermore, in those letters where he often quotes Scripture, he has no qualms about taking texts that originally refer to God by the divine name and applying them to Jesus. This he does right alongside quotations of YHWH texts that refer to God the Father. Taken together, what we have in Paul's Letters is an unprecedented application of God's unique covenant name to Jesus that results in a lofty estimation of his significance for the churches. The apostle does not present this as something new; he appeals to it as if it is the common property of the church. None of these other examples from Second Temple Jewish texts cited by scholars comes close to the pattern and practice we see in Paul's Letters. This adds yet another layer to the "emerging consensus," which holds that a high Christology can be traced back to the earliest years of the Jesus movement before it left its original, Jewish moorings.[5]

Exegetical Implications: A Divine Christ

Paul's christological use of *kyrios* and especially the way he links Jesus with YHWH texts has significant implications for understanding early Christianity. Indeed such an appropriation of scriptural language containing the divine name appears to be unprecedented. It implies he considers Jesus the Messiah to be more than a man. It suggests he includes Jesus within the name and dignity of God. In a crucial sense, then, he identifies Jesus with YHWH in remarkable ways. Given Paul's view of Scripture and the reverence accorded the divine name, as demonstrated in Jewish religious manuscripts and liturgical practices, these conclusions seem warranted.

The validity of any conclusion, of course, depends on how well it explains relevant data. To understand the risen Jesus as bearing the name of God or as the embodiment of YHWH explains many aspects of early Christian faith and

practice. It explains why early Christians were comfortable offering prayers and worshiping Jesus. It makes clear why followers of Jesus met in his honor and celebrated a meal commemorating his life and death. It provides a basis for the occasional application of the title *theos* (God) to Jesus (e.g., Rom. 9:5; cf. Titus 2:13). It clarifies why early Christians gave the words of Jesus authoritative status equal to Israel's sacred texts. Furthermore, the conviction that Jesus occupies divine status with God accounts for other christological notions such as his preexistence, his role in creation, and his place as the coming eschatological Savior and Judge. Exactly how and in what order these features of Christian devotion to Jesus developed is difficult to say. What seems obvious is that they developed early.

The texts and contexts where Paul calls Jesus *kyrios* call into question the scholarly construct that Christianity moved from a "low" Christology, represented by Paul's Letters, written in the 50s, to a "high" Christology, represented by the Fourth Gospel, written in the 90s. This developmental scheme is based on the supposition that, during the three to four decades separating Paul from John, significant changes occurred with regard to the Christian disposition toward Christ. It assumes that Paul never identified Jesus with God in any substantial way. For example, apart from some debated texts (Rom. 9:5; cf. Titus 2:13) Paul never explicitly refers to Jesus as *theos* (God), while John asserts clearly and often the unity of the Father and the Son.[6] The two most cited examples are "The Word was God" (John 1:1) and Thomas's confession after the resurrection: "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). These texts, along with others, indicate the Johannine community thought Jesus was fully divine. Yet it is supposed that Paul never took that step.

On close examination, it is evident that Paul shared some important similarities with John in his understanding of Jesus. As we argued above, Paul's use of YHWH texts for Jesus and religious devotion to him indicate that he considered the Lord Jesus to be equal with God, or to put it in Johannine language, to be one with him (e.g., John 1:1–18; 5:17–19; 10:37–38; 14:9–11). At the same time Paul has no qualms about asserting that Jesus is distinct from God, a notion reflected in the Fourth Gospel's declaration "The Word was with God" (John 1:1). This statement clearly implies individual existence distinct from God. Furthermore, Paul claims that Jesus is subordinate to the Father. The classic expression of this is 1 Cor. 15:23–28:

> But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when

> it says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.

In the end, Paul says, Christ hands the kingdom over to God the Father, and the Son puts himself in subjection to God “so that God may be all in all.” Clearly Paul regards the Son as subordinate to the Father. Similarly, the Johannine Jesus states: “Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise” (John 5:19). Later in that same chapter Jesus reiterates his disposition to the Father: “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me” (John 5:30). There are other examples, of course, but these are sufficient to make the case that John’s Jesus is subordinate to the Father, not unlike Paul’s. He has no independent will. He has no authority on his own. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Yet, for John, Christ’s subordination to God does not undermine thoughts of his equality with God. A modern reader may trip up over these claims as being inconsistent, but the biblical writers never seem to be bothered by them. On the basis of these texts from John’s Gospel, Robin Scroggs concludes: “*Complete subordination means complete equality*!”[7] If that is true of the Fourth Gospel, might it also be true for Paul’s Letters, written decades earlier?

In acknowledging this construal of Paul’s Christology, it is important to note that the apostle never confuses Jesus with God. He continues to assert that Jesus is distinct from and even subordinate to the Father, much as we find in the Fourth Gospel (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:25–28; cf. John 1 and 5). Yet the subordination does not somehow undermine thoughts of his equality with God or, more importantly, preclude invoking his name in prayer or composing a lively hymn of praise about him to be used among spirit-enthused worshipers. In this way Paul remains a monotheist, and he chooses his words carefully so that no charge of ditheism can apply. Nevertheless, he wants to accord Jesus the highest honor and praise due him. Such honor resounds to the glory of God (Phil. 2:5–11; cf. Eph. 1).

Later generations of Christians expressed the relationship between Jesus and God in other ways. They faced different challenges and “heresies,” such as the denial of Jesus’s humanity (John 1:14; 1 John 4:2–3; 2 John 7). Ironically, the challenge facing the community of the Fourth Gospel is a Christology too high, a Christology with no humanity. Paul’s use of YHWH texts to refer to Jesus calls into question any developmental scheme in which the earliest Christians held a

“low Christology,” which evolves over decades to a “high Christology,” represented by the Gospel of John. Paul’s use of YHWH texts suggests he is already working from a high Christology, a Christology in which Jesus bears the divine name, and full religious devotion to Christ is the will of God.

Christological Monotheism

The question must now be asked: How does Paul accommodate the application of YHWH texts to Jesus and accord him full religious devotion and remain a “monotheist”? Has the apostle in effect become a ditheist?

Larry Hurtado considers the evidence carefully and concludes that early in the Christian movement Palestinian Jews worshiped Jesus. This is reflected particularly in confessions such as 1 Cor. 8:6 and depict what he calls the “binitarian shape” of Christian devotion.[8] Yet how do Jewish Christians accommodate the worship of Jesus and remain monotheists? Hurtado’s answer lies in the divine agency concept, which together with powerful religious experiences helps to reshape monotheistic belief and practice in early Christian communities. Having surveyed Jewish texts from the era, he notices that many Jews believed that God has a chief agent, second to him only in rank. God’s agents carry out divine functions in creating, sustaining, and administrating the world under God’s hand. He classifies these agents into three main categories: (1) divine attributes (e.g., Wisdom and Logos); (2) exalted patriarchs (e.g., Enoch and Moses); and (3) principal angels (e.g., Michael, Melchizedek, and Yahoel). Though close to God and at times exercising divine powers, these agents never pose a threat to the exclusive monotheism of the Jews because they are never worshiped.[9] For Hurtado, cultic devotion to Christ distinguished early Christian practice from Judaism’s appreciation of the role of divine agents. The worship of Jesus presented a unique challenge to monotheism and resulted ultimately in a “mutation” of Jewish monotheism that allowed Jesus to be worshiped alongside God. The catalyst for this innovation lay in (1) the influence Jesus had on his followers, (2) the conviction that God raised Jesus from the dead and exalted him to heaven, and (3) the refinements that came as Christians encountered theological opposition in their mission.[10]

Even though Hurtado makes his case about divine mediators and Jewish monotheism in the first century, the rabbinic response suggests an increasingly complicated situation. There is substantial evidence that later rabbis look on these mediator figures with suspicion. Alan Segal investigates rabbinic opposition to the “two powers” heresy and notes that the rabbis in the second

century CE and beyond considered the principal angel figures to be a threat to monotheism;[11] yet he finds little in pre-Christian speculation that could have been deemed heretical.[12] Segal writes that by Yavne "mediation traditions were seen as a clear and present danger within rabbinic Judaism."[13] Appealing to Deut. 32 and Isa. 44–47, many rabbis condemned the sectarians for violating belief in the one God. Yet the earliest rabbinic opposition to two powers was against the principal angel, not against the Christian claims regarding Jesus.[14] This suggests that a modification of monotheism did take place, not in the first century among Jewish Christians, but after 70 CE among the rabbis who wanted to maintain their Jewish particularity. In other words, a hardening had come on monotheism as rabbis struggled over the soul of Judaism in debates against apocalyptic mystics, Christians, and gnostics.[15]

A dissenting voice in these matters belongs to James Dunn. He finds it unlikely that early Christians such as Paul worshiped Jesus, and he therefore denies that Paul violated his monotheistic heritage. While affirming Hurtado's thesis "in the longer term" and recognizing early hymns, prayers, and benedictions including Christ as "remarkable" and "astounding," Dunn stops short of agreeing with him that this amounts to the worship of Jesus by earliest Christians. Regarding the christological hymns, Dunn argues they are hymns about Christ, not hymns to Christ. Prayers to Jesus, he says, are limited and do not utilize regular prayer language. Ultimately, Dunn finds nothing in Paul's language or practice that would have offended the sensibilities of the apostle's Jewish contemporaries.[16]

Let me offer two objections to Dunn's conclusions. First, Dunn is certainly correct that the Pauline hymns (Phil. 2:6–11; Col. 1:15–20) are hymns about Christ, not hymns to Christ. They are written in the third person, not the second, which is also true of many psalms. More significant, however, is what the hymns say. The second half of the Philippian hymn describes an eschatological scene in which all heavenly, earthly, and subterranean creatures bow the knee and confess Jesus to be Lord. The language of bowing and confessing, appropriated from the YHWH text of Isa. 45:23 and now applied to Jesus, clearly envisions a day when Jesus is worshiped by all creatures. If Paul views such worship as appropriate in the *future*, would he not also find it appropriate in the present for those who "call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:2)? Ironically, Dunn views a similar scene in Rev. 5:8–12 as proof that Jesus was worshiped by the Christian communities who composed and read the Apocalypse. We should note as well that Paul's Letters contain no hymns to God, only hymns to Christ.

Second, Dunn finds no evidence in Paul's Letters that his Jewish contemporaries would have raised a concern that he violated monotheism.

Dunn's point would be valid except for one major problem: Paul's Letters contain little to nothing about what outsiders are saying about the church. And why would they? Paul's Letters are pastoral responses to needs that have arisen among believers in churches he knows. They are not a thorough record of Paul's debates with nonbelievers, be they Jews or Greeks. The opposition faced by Paul recorded in the letters comes from believers who insist that gentiles observe Torah. We have no sure evidence regarding what nonbelieving Jews thought about Paul's Christology except that the preaching of a crucified Messiah is a stumbling block (1 Cor. 1:23). We cannot say for certain that the Philippian and Colossian hymns in the hands of a Jew would not have been deemed a violation of the uniqueness of God. In the end Paul's Letters are silent on these matters, and so the use of this criterion as a guiding principle in assessing other evidence should be rejected. Once again, however, Dunn's argument highlights that more clarity is needed on what cultic acts and religious attitudes constitute worship and where the line is in violating the uniqueness of God.

Richard Bauckham offers a promising proposal and a bit of helpful language for understanding the relationship between Jewish monotheism and early Christology.[17] Bauckham argues that the high Christology expressed in the NT does not find its antecedent in the semidivine, intermediary figures in Second Temple Judaism; rather, he proposes that "early Christians included Jesus, precisely and unambiguously, within the unique identity of the one God of Israel."[18] For Bauckham, to understand the interplay between Jewish monotheism and the early Christian assessments of Jesus as divine, one must understand the identity of God as it is understood in Second Temple Judaism. Some of the earlier discussions of Christology were not helpful because they tried to distinguish between functional and ontic categories. This approach proved to be misleading and ambiguous. Divine identity, Bauckham holds, provides a better grasp of the evidence found in contemporary literature. As with human identity, divine identity regards who God is: God as a person who acts, speaks, knows, and is known. Identity distinguishes God from everything that is not God. Bauckham discusses two features relevant to Second Temple Jewish thought: (1) God in his relation to Israel and (2) God in relation to all reality. For Israel God reveals himself as a covenant partner, making himself known through his acts in history (see, e.g., Exod. 34:6). For the rest of reality God relates as the Creator and Ruler of all things. Ultimately God alone is responsible for creating and governing the world, though he does use myriads of angels to execute his purposes.

Bauckham focuses on the character of early Jewish monotheism. Against those who think the lines of distinction blur between God and certain divine

mediator figures, Bauckham argues that Second Temple Judaism was strictly monotheistic. Indeed, strong evidence suggests that Jews drew hard lines of distinction between God and all that is not God. In contrast the evidence for mediator figures who blur this distinction is ambiguous and limited. In particular, the notion that God has a principal angel as his second-in-command is not commonplace in the literature and should be forgotten. Angels serve God's purposes, never occupy the throne of God, and flatly refuse worship. The only exception in Bauckham's opinion is the Son of Man figure in 1 Enoch (46.5; 48.5; 61.8; 62.2–9; 69.27, 29). On the other hand, personified and hypostatized divine aspects such as the Word and Wisdom do participate in God's creation and administration over the cosmos and so should be recognized as "intrinsic to the unique divine identity."[19] Whether these aspects should be understood as literary devices or beings distinct from God is a question Bauckham leaves unsettled, though he seems sympathetic to the latter possibility. In the end it is important to view Second Temple monotheism as unique but not unitary.

Bauckham assesses the evidence regarding how the NT writers include Jesus within the identity of the one God of Israel. They acknowledge him as Creator and sovereign Lord. They view him as bearing the divine name and without hesitation worship him. In fact, according to Bauckham, this fully divine Christology characterized the early church before any NT documents appeared.[20] Although this "christological monotheism" was an innovation, it was continuous with Jewish monotheism, properly understood, and does not require either a setting in a community where belief in God's oneness had eroded or the repudiation of monotheistic faith. The very nature of Jewish belief allowed this development. For Bauckham the catalyst for this innovation emerged in scriptural exegesis. Generally, he thinks, Christian theology develops through creative readings of biblical texts. Early Christians mined every resource available in Scripture to sculpt a theology that includes Jesus within the unique identity of Israel's one God. Specifically, Bauckham points to the NT's appropriation of Ps. 110:1 to portray Jesus sitting on the throne, exercising God's rule. Further, he notices how 1 Cor. 8:6 appears to be Paul's revision of the Shema. The apostle continued to consider himself a monotheist, and so the confession "one God, the Father" and "one Lord, Jesus Christ" cannot be understood as ditheistic. Bauckham finds divine identity the most satisfying category to understand how Jesus's followers include him in the identity of God.

Bauckham makes a significant proposal for how NT Christology relates to Jewish monotheism. The category of "divine identity" offers a refreshing way out of the functional/ontic cul-de-sac, which incorrectly bifurcates action and nature. It takes seriously the undeniable evidences that Christians worshiped

Jesus at a very early stage. It challenges those who continue to insist that devotion to Christ developed in a setting where the constraints of monotheism had grown weak. It accords with the findings here that Christians early on used the name of God as a referent for Jesus as they applied sacred Scripture to him.

For N. T. Wright, early Christology was not some modification of antecedent traditions about Jewish divine mediator figures; it was instead a robust concretizing of hopes concentrated on the one, true God and his promise to return one day to Zion.[21] Scholars who appeal to mediation traditions, therefore, have started in the wrong place. If it is evident that early Christians referred YHWH texts to Jesus and engaged in worship of him in ways that previously had been thought appropriate only to God, why should scholars not begin with God rather than with some other exalted agents? Were there stories, hopes, ambitions within Second Temple Judaism that early Christians could have tapped into in order to say what they wanted to say about Jesus? Indeed, according to Wright, there are. Central to Second Temple Judaism was the conviction that Israel's God, having abandoned Jerusalem and the temple prior to its destruction, had promised to return to his people one day. That return would be in person and in glory. That return would be to judge and to save, specifically, to bring about a new exodus, overthrowing Israel's enemies and releasing God's people from bondage. In short, God would return to be king. In Wright's own words, "the long-awaited return of YHWH to Zion is . . . the origin of Christology."[22]

Israel's God promised to return, and return he did in the person of Jesus, the Messiah. Before Paul wrote a single letter, the first followers of Jesus found themselves not only permitted to use God language for Jesus but compelled to use Jesus-language for God. Paul's version of this conviction may not be as clear as John's, with his "Word became flesh and dwelt among us" language, but there is ample evidence from Paul's Letters to conclude that "Israel's God was fully and personally present in and as Jesus the Messiah."[23]

Therefore, Paul had inherited a Jewish-style brand of religion, which some scholars refer to as Second Temple Jewish monotheism. But he redrew the lines to include Jesus within the divine identity. This was all based on the hope that YHWH would return personally, save his people, and establish his glorious presence in the (new) temple. If Paul believed that in Jesus God had returned, then everything that could be said about God could also be said about Jesus. All those biblical texts that refer to *kyrios* translating the divine name could be transferred to Jesus. Thus to worship Jesus and invoke him in prayer was not considered out of bounds or a violation of the central confession of God's oneness. The language used to describe the relationship of Jesus to his followers

found its clearest analogy with the way Jews spoke of their relationship with their covenant God.[24]

In the midst of the twentieth century, A. R. Johnson published *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God*.[25] Johnson considers the Hebrew concept of the human the best analogue when thinking about God. He begins with the observation that the Israelites conceived of humans as possessing "an indefinable 'extension' of the personality." This "corporate personality" became the basis for attributing to God similar extensions of his personality, such as the Spirit, the divine Word, the name, and the ark of the covenant. Johnson concludes that within a monotheistic framework, the Israelites envisaged their one God as having multiple manifestations, and he goes on to suggest some possible christological applications.[26] Bauckham and Wright seem to advance similar theories under the categories divine identity and return-to-Zion theology. Their similarities may be coincidental. Nevertheless, that Johnson, Wright, and Bauckham, working independently, can arrive at similar conclusions speaks to the strength of their arguments.

In my view, Bauckham and Wright dismiss too quickly Jewish mediation traditions as a key component to Paul's Christology. One of the major distinctions between God the Father and the Lord Jesus is evident in the prepositions used to describe their creative and redemptive activities. For example, in 1 Cor. 8:6 God the Father is described as the one "from [*ek*] whom are all things and for [*eis*] whom we exist"; on the other hand, the Lord Jesus is the one "through [*dia*] whom are all things and through [*dia*] whom we exist." The prepositions here tell the story. God the Father is the source of creation and the goal of redemption. The Lord Jesus is the agent of creation and redemption. Jesus's role as mediator is a dominant theme of Paul's revised Shema. Similarly, the Colossian hymn celebrates the preeminence of Christ by saying he is the image of the invisible God, "the firstborn of all creation," for "in [*en*] him all things . . . were created," and "all things have been created through [*dia*] him and for [*eis*] him" (Col. 1:15–16). The hymn goes on to acclaim Christ as head of the body, the church, the one in whom the fullness of God is pleased to dwell and "through [*dia*] him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things . . . through the blood of the cross" (Col. 1:20). We could, of course, cite other examples, but these key passages demonstrate how important Jesus's agency as mediator is in Paul's Christology. This role is not discontinuous with Second Temple Judaism's concept of divine agency, particularly regarding the role of Wisdom and perhaps principal angels (e.g., the angel of the LORD and Yahoel).[27]

In the end, understanding Paul's high Christology vis-à-vis his Jewish heritage likely draws from a variety of traditions, hopes, and aspirations, including the

categories of divine agency, divine identity, and return-to-Zion theology. As we will see, there were factors and forces at work in the earliest period that caused early believers to attribute to Jesus the divine name and to reread Scripture containing God's name as ultimately pertaining to the Messiah. Exactly when these traditions converged and coalesced around Jesus is impossible to say. What we can say is that by the time Paul put ink to papyrus, a high Christology was the common property of the church.

Recently, Richard Hays has made the case that we should retire the use of the terms "low Christology" and "high Christology" because this sort of language assumes a conceptual distinction that is not present in the texts themselves.[28] Furthermore, for many scholars, implicit within these terms is a clear path of development from a strictly human Jesus to a high or divine Christology that unfolded over decades. But, as we have argued, the Christology we find in the earliest layers of the NT appears already to place Jesus within the realm of the "divine," therefore, "high." So I am sympathetic with Hays's concern, but I am not sure what we can replace it with. Discerning or creating new terms and loading them with the proper associations is a real challenge. Still, there are christological concepts that depict Jesus as an idealized human being (therefore, low), but these do not sit far from language that portrays Jesus in the most exalted terms (therefore, high). To continue to use these terms effectively, we need to strip from them any association with a clearly defined developmental scheme, and we must recognize that the NT texts themselves undermine the kind of distinctions we often try to make.

The Catalysts for Paul's Christological Use of YHWH Texts

As we have seen, Paul deliberately and unambiguously applies to Jesus OT texts that contain the divine name. Along with other patterns of religious devotion, this means that Paul identifies Jesus with God in remarkable ways, situating Jesus in relation to the church as YHWH is related to Israel. To borrow Bauckham's language, Paul includes Jesus within the unique identity of Israel's God. Yet, it is also clear that he continues to see Christ as distinct from and even subordinate to the Father. Even so, these exegetical habits expressed in the earliest extant documents of the Christian movement are evidence of what scholars refer to as a "high Christology" or a divine identity Christology. At the same time Paul is a Jew, a monotheist, cut from the same cloth as the author of Joel or Isaiah. He wants to maintain the oneness of God in a world populated with polytheists and idolaters (1 Cor. 10:14–22). Nevertheless, he offers Jesus

the highest honor, rank, and reverence any monotheist ever bestowed on the one God of Israel. The title *kyrios* provided Paul with the particular language and sets of associations he needed in order to make bold and audacious claims about the risen Jesus and his significance for the new people of God. In particular, his use of OT YHWH texts represents an astounding appropriation of scriptural language to express Paul's devotion to Christ and should not be underestimated.

So why did this happen? What convinced Saul the persecutor of the church to accord to Jesus so exalted a status? There were at least two catalysts for this unprecedented use of Scripture and the divine name. First, the immediate background may be found in the Pharisee's own powerful religious experiences. We cannot say for certain what happened during Paul's first contact with the followers Jesus inspired. We do know from his own testimony and the Acts of the Apostles (8:1–3; 9:1–2) that after a time he became one of their primary opponents. In his own letters, he admits that he violently persecuted the church (Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6), actions that apparently plagued him for much of his life (1 Cor. 15:9). Nevertheless, Paul was transformed from one of the movement's chief opponents to its greatest missionary. The transforming event is often referred to as Paul's Damascus road experience, because of the way Luke narrates the story (Acts 9:1–9; 22:6–11; 26:12–18). But Paul himself alludes to a transformational event in his own letters. Employing language found in Scripture for the call of a prophet (Isa. 49:1; Jer. 1:5), he claims his own call/conversion took place apart from any human agent as a result of divine "revelation" (Gal. 1:15–16). He claims to have seen Jesus, that is, the risen Lord (1 Cor. 1:9). The shorthand way in which Paul refers to these events suggests the apostle is reminding his audience of things he has already told them. In fact, 1 Cor. 15:3–9 seems to bear this out as he reminds the Corinthians of the gospel he proclaimed during his initial visit with them:

> For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Although Paul's call experience is unique, he locates himself in a stream of tradition that extends back into the OT Scriptures. He relates his call to be an apostle to a time when the risen Christ appeared to him, but the key events—the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah—stand in harmony with the Scriptures themselves. Paul situates himself last in the record of resurrection

appearances. This could mean that, as far as he knows, the resurrection appearances stop with him or—more likely—he is last in rank because of his career as a persecutor. Clearly, that life-changing revelation was not his last. He goes on to talk about other visions and revelations of the Lord (2 Cor. 12:1–10), although he is unable to determine the exact nature of the event (2 Cor. 12:3: "whether in the body or out of the body I do not know").

In order to understand Paul's visionary and ecstatic experiences, Alan Segal turns to Jewish mystical and apocalyptic texts from the first centuries CE.[29] According to Segal, Paul was a "convert" in the modern sense of the word, although he never used the term. The most accurate term to describe Paul's experience is "transformation," a term in vogue among contemporary Jewish mystic circles. Segal finds considerable affinity between Paul's mystical, apocalyptic experiences and what came to be known later as *merkabah* mysticism. The term *merkabah* (throne) goes back to the throne-chariot vision in Ezek. 1 and the manlike figure who appears on the chariot. During the sixth century BCE Ezekiel lived among the exiles by the Chebar River and received a spectacular vision that included, among other things, a manlike figure seated on a throne chariot. Ezekiel calls this figure "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD [YHWH]" (Ezek. 1:28). Brilliant lights accompanied the vision, surrounding it and emanating from it. When he saw it, he fell to the ground and heard God calling him to go and preach to the rebellious nation of Israel (Ezek. 2:1–10).

Merkabah mysticism emphasized God's manifestation of himself as this manlike figure, the *Kavod* (often translated "glory").[30] Although *merkabah* mysticism appears later in its developed form, in Segal's judgment Paul represents an early version of it or perhaps a mystical tradition that ultimately gave rise to it.

Paul's own letters provide evidence he saw his own experiences in a similar light. Consider how often Paul links the language of glory with Christ (e.g., Phil. 3:21; 4:19; 1 Cor. 2:8; Rom. 6:4; 9:23). In particular, as we have already seen, Paul alludes to his own conversion and ongoing transformation utilizing "glory" language in association with Christ: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord as reflected in a mirror, are being changed into the same likeness from glory into glory, and this is from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18 AT). Later, in the same context, he unites images of light and brilliance with descriptions of the Lord's glory (2 Cor. 4:4–6): "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. . . . For it is God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our

hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

While this text is important for a number of Pauline themes, our concern here is twofold: (1) he describes his and others' transformation as effected by the believer's encounter with "glory," and (2) he understands this experience of "glory" as an experience of Christ ("the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"). This suggests that Paul understood his revelation of Christ as an experience with the glory of the Lord, or in the language of Scripture and mystical tradition, the *Kavod* YHWH. If this is true, then it would be only a natural next step for Paul to identify Christ as the embodiment of YHWH and therefore be able to quote YHWH texts and apply them readily to Christ.

Having seen this, Alan Segal concludes that Paul's transformation and his periodic mystical ascensions form a key basis of his theology. He writes: "His language shows the marks of a man who has learned the contemporary vocabulary for expressing a theophany and then has received one. This language of vision has informed his thought in a number of crucial aspects. First, it has allowed him to develop a concept of divinity of Christ or the messiah both as a unique development within the Jewish mystical tradition and as characteristically Christian. Second, he used this Jewish mystical vocabulary to express the transformation experienced by believers."[31] Apparently, the apostle became convinced that his encounters with the risen Lord were actually encounters with the glory of YHWH. This made it possible for him to identify Jesus with the God of Israel. He emphasizes this identity by attributing to Jesus God's name, selected aspects of God's work, and then Scripture texts that referred originally to YHWH himself.

Historians hesitate to assign a significant causative role to religious experience in understanding new religious developments because experience itself lies outside the data historians can access. Reports of religious experience found in sacred texts are not the same things as the experiences themselves and cannot validate that a person really has encountered God. Still, accounts of religious experience are too widespread to be ignored if one wants to understand the emergence of religious beliefs and practices. Enough records of these experiences in early Christianity and other religions offer analogies that can prove helpful in grasping what communities and individuals mean as they describe these transformative events.[32]

In early Christianity powerful religious experiences were catalytic for theological development. Early Christian literature is filled with references to potent encounters between the risen Jesus and his followers. In Paul's case religious experience likely played a role in generating new readings of Scripture,

profoundly reshaping what Paul had received and what he passed on. The apostle's new insights did not merely validate his preexisting beliefs; they challenged them and reframed them in light of the new community he had joined. Paul, of course, continued to see himself as a Jew, but now he was a Jew who thought Jesus was the Messiah and the embodiment of Israel's God. These insights did not just come to Paul as he was reading Scripture; they came after his visions and revelations and caused him to read Scripture in new and profound ways. Larry Hurtado posits a primary causative role to revelatory experiences in attempting to account for the emergence of the kind of religious devotion toward Christ expressed in the earliest Christian writings. No Jew, it seems, had read Scripture the way Paul did. While he employed many of the same methods and techniques used by his contemporaries in reading Scripture, his conclusions were different because he was now reading these texts in light of his experience with the crucified and risen Messiah. To press the point more clearly, no Jew had ever read YHWH texts this way before. It may be one thing to "slip up" and link Christ with God's name in a single text; but Paul programmatically read texts containing the divine name in relation to Jesus over and over again in a variety of contexts. And we should not forget that Paul was reading these texts in relation to a man of recent history, not a religious figure from two thousand years ago. This is a remarkable development that took place within only a few years of Jesus's execution.

David Aune refers to the widespread habit of early Christians to engage biblical texts to create novel readings as "charismatic exegesis."[33] Indeed it is likely that key christological developments in the first century proceeded down the track of charismatic exegesis. The crises created by Jesus's execution, resurrection, and ongoing mission drove the followers of Jesus back into Scripture to discover the truth about who he is/was and what he came/continued to do. Paul's own rereading of Scripture in light of the cross, resurrection, and his experiences of the risen Christ afforded him remarkable new insights into Jesus's ultimate significance, especially in relation to God.

Jesus Remembered

Related to this is another factor that we must consider. Since Paul believed the risen Christ was identical with Jesus of Nazareth, another primary source for the conviction that the Messiah was the embodiment of Israel's God must be connected to the impact Jesus made on his followers. There must have been something in his words and actions that led these pious Jews to offer Jesus a key

place in their devotion to God. We would be negligent if we did not consider some of the ways in which full religious devotion is credited to Jesus so soon after his crucifixion.

Despite Rome's efforts to stop the Jesus movement, a year or two after his execution the movement still survived. The movement was successful enough and considered dangerous enough to attract the violent attentions of religious leaders in Jerusalem, including Saul the Pharisee. Paul's own testimony of his former life was that he sought to destroy an assembly of Jews (the church) in which Jesus figured prominently in their beliefs and practices (e.g., Gal. 1:11–17). In fact, their religious devotion to Jesus is probably the reason he sought to destroy them in the first place. Yet his conversion to "the Way" had to have occurred only a few years after Jesus's death.[34] And for Saul to join the movement he had previously persecuted meant that he had to accept a highly exalted view of Jesus as God's Son (see Gal. 1:14–16).

If we want to understand why Jesus figured so prominently in the religious lives of these first Christ followers, then we must take seriously the impact Jesus and his ministry had on the first generation of disciples. It is hard to account for the kind of reverence and exegetical moves within Scripture made by early Christians without appeal to this factor. The point here is not to debate whether Jesus actually said this or that saying or performed this or that miracle; the point is to underscore the impression he made on his followers.

Take, for instance, Jesus's reputation as a miracle worker. It is hard to imagine Jesus gaining this kind of reputation without actually performing some actions that amazed and astounded onlookers. Each Gospel in its own way reports that Jesus performed deeds that amazed his followers and the crowds. Even his opponents recognized Jesus as having power over demonic forces, but they credited that power to Beelzebul, the prince of demons (Mark 3:22–27). Now, accounts of miracles, especially healing miracles, were common in the ancient world, but it was the nature miracles in particular that caused his followers to wonder who he was. The reaction of the disciples to the miracle of the stilling of the storm is especially instructive (Mark 4:35–41): "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" Richard Hays is right on target when he writes: "Mark provocatively leaves the question unanswered. The words hang suspended over the story—leaving the reader to supply the answer. For any reader versed in Israel's Scripture, there can be only one possible answer; it is the Lord God of Israel who has the power to command wind and sea and to subdue the chaotic forces of nature."[35]

There is only one right answer to the question. YHWH works his wonders in the depths of the sea as well as the heights of heaven. He whips up storms and

melts the hearts of the most seasoned sailors. But when they call out to him in their trouble, he rescues them from their distress. He stills the storms and hushes the waves (Ps. 107:23–32). The disciples of Jesus, in peril on the sea, experience this storied psalm for themselves. Whether or not it came to mind immediately, it probably did come to mind eventually as they read and reread Israel's Scriptures again in light of their experience of Jesus. As YHWH, the God of Israel, exercised authority over creation, so now Jesus is remembered as exercising that same authority in order to rescue his people.

Consider too the audacious claim of Jesus to forgive the sins of the paralyzed man (Mark 2:12 and parr.). While the reaction of his disciples to this claim is not recorded, the scribes who heard Jesus that day knew the implications of his offensive statement. They accused him of blasphemy for usurping the prerogative of God; after all, who can forgive sins but God alone? Now the scribes should be applauded for doing what they could to defend God's honor and protect his reputation. But Jesus responds to the charge of blasphemy by healing the man of his paralysis, demonstrating that he, the Son of Man, has authority on earth to forgive sins.

The same charge is leveled against Jesus later in the story at the trial scene before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53–64). When the high priest asks Jesus whether or not he is the Messiah, Jesus breaks his silence: "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'" At this the high priest charges him with blasphemy, and the Sanhedrin condemns him to death. So what did Jesus say that was blasphemous? Even though it may have been politically unwise, it was not blasphemy to claim to be the Messiah. It is what he said next that sealed his fate. His opponents understand Jesus to be identifying himself as the "Lord" seated at the right hand of God (Ps. 110:1) and "the Son of Man" coming on the clouds of heaven before the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:13). Jesus's opponents took these statements as implicit claims to a status so high, so exalted, that God's very honor was at stake. As Mark tells the story, Jesus's entire life and ministry is framed against his opponents' charges of blasphemy. In other words, Jesus is remembered as associating himself with God in astonishing ways.

This is consistent with how Mark begins his Gospel, where, from Scripture, Jesus is clearly associated with God's name in a passage from Isaiah (Mark 1:2–3):

> As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
>
> "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
> who will prepare your way;

> the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
> ‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
> make his paths straight.’”

In a quotation blended from Mal. 3:1; Ezek. 23:20; and Isa. 40:3, Mark lays out a startling claim regarding Jesus’s true identity. As the story unfolds, it is clear that John the Baptist is the messenger preparing the way and crying out in the wilderness. His preaching, baptizing, and prophetic actions are paving the way for another who is more powerful than he. For Mark the identity of that one can be none other than Jesus. The Isaiah passage in view is the beginning of chap. 40, a remarkable prophecy about the return of YHWH and his glory to Jerusalem after the exile. The prophets declare that God had left the land along with the exiles (e.g., Ezek. 8–11); but now that they have paid the penalty for their sins, there will be a new exodus, which will restore the exiled people of God back to their land. The Baptist comes to set the stage for the return of the Lord. In Isaiah the phrase “the way of the Lord” refers to the desert highway that God will take as he leads the liberated exiles back to the city of Jerusalem. “The Lord” translates the divine name in Hebrew (YHWH). Mark now appropriates this prophecy in order to describe the arrival of John the Baptist and Jesus. John is the messenger, the voice calling out in the desert. Jesus is “the Lord.” For Mark the coming of Jesus and his ministry fulfill the prophetic promise that YHWH will return to Israel. In other words, Mark begins his Gospel with an implicit claim of Jesus’s divine status grounded in the rereading of Israel’s sacred texts.

Mark’s christological reading of these texts could well have been inspired by how Jesus was remembered to have spoken of John the Baptist and his ministry. After John has been imprisoned, he sends his disciples to question Jesus (Matt. 11:3): “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” Jesus responds to John’s inquiry by reflecting on his own ministry in light of various prophetic promises (e.g., Isa. 29:18–19; 35:5–6). After John’s emissaries leave, Jesus praises John to the crowds, echoing the prophecies of Malachi (cf. Matt. 17:11–12; Mark 9:12–13; Luke 7:27):

> What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,
>
> “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
> who will prepare your way before you.”
>
> Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John came; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.

Employing Mal. 3:1 and 4:5–6 (3:23–24 MT), Jesus describes the key role John has played in preparing the way. Both passages envision a future when the Lord (YHWH) returns to put the world to rights, judging the wicked, perfecting temple sacrifices, restoring the land, and opening the heavens to bless the righteous. In Mal. 3:1 the LORD (YHWH) of hosts speaks and promises to send "my messenger" to prepare the way for him. Suddenly, the prophet says the Lord will come to his temple. There is a long history of debate about the identity of this figure. Then, in Mal. 4:5–6 (3:23–24 MT), YHWH says that he will send Elijah the prophet prior to the arrival of the awesome and fearful day of the LORD (YHWH). Given their similar function, it is likely that "my messenger" and Elijah refer to the same "forerunner." At least, that is how Jesus appears to have interpreted these texts. What is significant is how Jesus is remembered as having adopted these prophecies and related them to the ministry of John the Baptist. If Jesus considered John the forerunner promised by the prophet Malachi, then it is a small step for his followers to see Jesus's ministry linked with the coming of YHWH at the turn of the age.

While we are considering the impression Jesus left on his followers, we ought also to reflect on the way Jesus is remembered as having a special, intimate relationship with God. This is expressed above all in his unique use of *Abba* for God (Mark 14:36) and his instruction for followers to pray "Our Father" (Matt. 6:9; cf. Luke 11:2). This impression is early enough and consistent enough to imprint itself on Paul and his letters. In Rom. 8:15 he writes: "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!'" Likewise, in Gal. 4:6 Paul instructs: "And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"[36] That Paul employs an Aramaic word ("Abba") for "Father" in a prayer address spoken by Greek-speaking Christians suggests it goes back to the earliest Christian communities and may reflect Jesus's own prayer address. In other words, the apostle encourages believers to remember and imitate Jesus's own unique way of praying to God the Father. In Gal. 4:6 this is reinforced, since it is "the Spirit of his Son" who cries out "Abba! Father!" Jesus is remembered as having a unique consciousness of God's Fatherhood not only in how he prayed but in what he taught: "All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). The clear impression left by Jesus on his followers is that he was conscious of a unique connection with God that (1) no one else shared, (2) was best expressed in the language of Father-Son, and (3) positioned the Son

uniquely as the mediator of God's revelation. His followers accepted that and built on it. It affected the way they read and interpreted Scripture.

Finally, we need to consider the way Jesus is remembered as having applied to himself concepts and texts that the OT applied to YHWH. In Mark 13:31 (cf. Matt. 24:35; Luke 21:33) Jesus, speaking of his own teaching ministry, says: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." This saying echoes Isa. 40:8, which refers to the enduring effects of YHWH's words: "The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever." The context of this oracle is the revelation of the glory of YHWH, which all the world will witness and is guaranteed because the mouth of YHWH has spoken it. According to the Gospel record, Jesus implies that his words and teachings will endure using similar language to the prophet's description of the enduring quality of YHWH's promises, a rather audacious claim by the Nazarene.

Following the temple incident (Matt. 21:12–17), Jesus's opponents become indignant because of the way the children in the crowds are praising and extolling him. Jesus responds to them with the question: "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babes you have prepared praise for yourself'?" His response appears to be a rather explicit quotation of the Greek version of Ps. 8:2. We quote here the first four verses of the psalm translated from the LXX to provide some context:

> O Lord, our Lord,
> how admirable is your name in all the earth,
> because your magnificence was raised beyond the heavens.
> Out of the mouths of infants and nurslings
> you furnished praise for yourself,
> for the sake of your enemies,
> to put down enemy and avenger,
> because I will observe the heavens, works of your fingers—
> moon and stars—things you alone founded.
> What is man that you are mindful of him
> or son of man that you attend to him? (NETS)

The psalm reflects on the original creation account (Gen. 1) and celebrates the exalted status of human beings within creation. It is addressed to "the Lord" (*kyrios*), which renders the divine name in Hebrew (YHWH). Even as his name is admired throughout the world, YHWH is said to ordain praise from the mouths of babes and nursing infants to silence his enemies. Jesus appears to adopt this same language as his defense against the chief priests and scribes in Jerusalem who object to the chants of "Hosanna to the Son of David" on the lips

of children that day (Matt. 21:15). The praise offered Jesus on that fateful day is associated with the praise offered YHWH in Ps. 8.

When Jesus sends out seventy of his disciples to the cities and villages ahead of him (Luke 10), the evangelists return rejoicing in their success. They say (Luke 10:17): "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" Jesus responds: "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you." His words are reminiscent of Ps. 91, a psalm that promises God's faithful protection against enemies, both human and demonic. The psalmist says that the LORD (YHWH) is "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust," because he will deliver him from all sorts of danger. The LORD commands his angels, and his angels rush to guard the faithful and help them bear up under the threats that come. In particular the language of Ps. 91:13 may be the most influential on Jesus's saying: "You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot." That Jesus grants the seventy "authority" to tread over enemies is explained by Jesus's joyful prayer (Luke 10:21–22): "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

This statement sets Jesus apart in a wholly other category. He is no guardian angel dispatched by God to rescue an imperiled child of God. "All things" have been handed over to the Son by the Father, and this includes the power to confer blessings, authorities, and abilities on specially selected followers in a manner reminiscent of God's own actions. Throughout Luke's Gospel Jesus is portrayed as conferring power and blessings on those who put their trust in him (Luke 22:28–30; 24:49; cf. Acts 2:33). To put it another way, as YHWH is said to protect his people, now Jesus protects those who faithfully go out on kingdom business.

During his final week Jesus taught a number of parables, and one of the most significant is known as the parable of the wicked tenants (Matt. 21:33–46; cf. Mark 12:1–12; Luke 20:9–19). The parable is based on Isa. 5:1–7, a memorable parable in its own right often known as the song of the vineyard. In it Jesus allegorizes the key players in these tense moments. Although the vineyard is traditionally a symbol of Israel, in Jesus's parable the focus appears more on Jerusalem and its power structures. For our purposes we should note the allusions and quotations Jesus uses to drive home the point. As he concludes the

parable, he skillfully weaves together bits and pieces of the Scripture from Dan. 2:34–35, 44–45 and Isa. 8:14–15: “Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls” (Luke 20:18). These words are reminiscent of Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, which features a stone that shatters a statue and turns it to dust. That stone, not cut by human hands, goes on to become a great mountain that fills the earth (Dan. 2:31–35). Daniel links that stone with “a kingdom that shall never be destroyed”; it shall crush all other kingdoms and bring them to an end. Isaiah sees a similar fate for some in Israel; he warns that YHWH himself will become a stumbling stone: “He [the LORD of hosts] will become a sanctuary, a stone one strikes against; for both houses of Israel he will become a rock one stumbles over—a trap and a snare for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken” (Isa. 8:14–15).

The clear impression of Isaiah’s prophecy is that for some in Israel (both houses) and especially Jerusalem their God, YHWH, will become a stumbling stone. Jesus, however, alludes to these texts and appears to apply them to himself as the son of the vineyard owner. Jesus did not have to be omniscient to know that the power brokers in Jerusalem had aligned against him and that trouble was soon to follow. If the servants of the owner (the prophets) were abused, stoned, and killed, should the son and heir expect a more congenial fate?

At the end of his parable, Jesus asks his opponents the following (Matt. 21:42–43):

> Have you never read in the scriptures:
>
> “The stone that the builders rejected
> has become the cornerstone;
> this was the Lord’s doing,
> and it is amazing in our eyes”?
>
> Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.

The question, of course, is not really a question but an accusation. Jesus sees his own future wrapped up in the words of this prophetic psalm (118:22): “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing.” The tenants and builders may reject him, but he will be vindicated by his Father; he will be made the cornerstone. The internal logic of the parable and saying is summed up in this: Jesus is not only the rejected son but the rejected

stone, a stone that will be established by God and on which many will stumble and be broken.

Now these examples imply that Jesus's disciples remembered his actions and words and interpreted them in light of many of the images that the OT reserves for YHWH. Even if some scholars dismiss many of Jesus's sayings and deeds in the Gospels as inventions of the early church, they cannot dismiss all of them, nor can they ignore the impression he left on those who knew him best. Likewise they cannot discount the rapid rise of religious devotion to him in a largely Palestinian context. A Jesus who said nothing worth remembering and did nothing worth talking about could hardly have influenced his followers in such a way that they called him "Lord" and worshiped him so soon after his crucifixion. Indeed, the impact he made on them should not be underestimated.

These deeds and sayings by Jesus, therefore, in conjunction with the belief that he had conquered death, may well have been the ultimate catalyst for the conviction that Jesus the Messiah occupied divine status. The first believers apparently saw in his life and ministry something surprising and unexpected; they saw in him the coming of God into the world, fulfilling specific promises made by the prophets that YHWH would personally return to his people.

Before his conversion, Saul the Pharisee probably persecuted the church for beliefs and practices like these; he was not convinced of their validity until the risen Christ apprehended him on the Damascus road. Following that transforming encounter, he became a bold proponent of a gospel that centered on a crucified Messiah, whom he identified with the risen Lord. As he read and reread the Scriptures in the aftermath of those fateful encounters, he sensed it was God's will for him and all believers to bow the knee and confess "Jesus the Messiah is Lord." They were to relate to Jesus as *kyrios* in the same way Israel related to YHWH, their God. Not only did Paul believe he was permitted, but he felt he was obliged to read Scripture in profound, new ways, programmatically situating the Lord Jesus in Scripture texts reserved for YHWH. Although we cannot say for sure, Paul may be the first Christian to make such bold, exegetical moves; but he certainly was not the last.[37]

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1. E.g., Daniel Kirk, *A Man Attested by God: The Human Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 137–38. As one example, Kirk refers to the commentary on Habakkuk (1QpHab 8.1–3), pointing out how loyalty shifts from God to the Teacher of Righteousness. While significant, this example falls outside the scope of this inquiry, since the divine name is not part of Hab. 2:4 or QpHab 8.1–3. Furthermore, in many texts loyalty to a human figure (priest, king, bishop) is taken as loyalty to God/Christ. This does not mean that they should be identified.

2. E.g., Crispin Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*, vol. 1, *Christological Origins: The Emerging Consensus and Beyond* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 195, is correct to point out that 11QMelchizedek should figure more in discussions among advocates of an early high Christology.

3. Andrew Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation: Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology*, WUNT 207 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 259–60.

4. Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 1:333.

5. Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*, 1:3–30.

6. E.g., John 1:1–18; 5:17–19; 10:37–38; 14:9–11; perhaps we should include here the "I am" sayings in John 4:26; 6:35; 8:12, 58; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6.

7. Robin Scroggs, *Christology in Paul and John* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 79.

8. Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988; 2nd ed., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 1–15. Page references are to the 1988 edition.

9. Ibid., 17–39.

10. Ibid., 93–124.

11. Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, SJLA 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 33–155. According to Segal, the evidence shows that the "two powers" struggle originated in Palestine (147) and that "the early biblical theophanies which picture God as a man or confuse YHWH with an angel are the basis of the tradition" (261). The book of Daniel, with its heavenly Son of Man and speculation regarding Enoch, likely set the controversy off. At the heart of the debate between rabbis, Christians, and other "two power" sectarians was a debate over the meaning of Scripture, i.e., the angelic and theophanic texts and the plurals used to refer to God. Segal notes that the synagogues and academies were the original arenas for the debate, and "exegesis was the earliest battleground for the conflict" (154).

12. Ibid., 187–201.

13. Ibid., 264.

14. Ibid., 149.

15. Ibid., 264. Segal notes that after 70 CE Christians were excluded from participation in synagogue services amid a growing emphasis on a strict monotheism.

16. James D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1991), 204–6.

17. Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

18. Ibid., vii.

19. Ibid., 21.

20. Ibid., 27.

21. N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 633.

22. Ibid., 654. This return-to-Zion theology is a purely Second Temple Jewish answer to the perception that Israel's exile continued (Ezekiel; Isa. 40–66; Zechariah; Malachi). Already Sir. 24 described the return of YHWH to the temple in terms of wisdom, codified in Torah.

23. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1073.

24. Ibid., 701–3.

25. A. R. Johnson, *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1942).

26. For objections to the category of "corporate personality" see J. R. Porter, "The Legal Aspects of the Concept of 'Corporate Personality' in the Old Testament," *VT* 15 (1965): 361–80; J. W. Rogerson, "The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality: A Re-examination," *JTS*, n.s. 21 (1970): 1–16; S. E. Porter, "Two Myths: Corporate Personality and Language/Mentality Determinism," *SJT* 43 (1990): 289–307.

27. Yahoel is an angel God sends to help Abraham in Apoc. Ab. 10.3.

28. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 364. Hays's own project has to do with the NT Gospels, which were written decades after Paul's Letters. In private correspondence Hays affirmed Bauckham's phrase "divine identity Christology."

29. Alan Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), xi–xiii, 20–21.

30. Ibid., 39–52.

31. Ibid., 69.

32. Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 64–70.

33. David Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 339–46.

34. Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 31.

35. Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 22.

36. See Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1967), 54–62; and James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 21–26.

37. The earliest NT documents are Paul's Letters; however, his letters do contain a number of preformed traditions, hymns, and creedal statements. Scholars debate whether he composed or simply adopted them in his pastoral correspondences. Some of these (e.g., the Philippian hymn, Phil. 2:6–11) contain YHWH texts applied to Jesus. If Paul is not the author of these traditions, he clearly cites them with approval.

Conclusion

Modern Christians often sing worship songs that testify that Jesus is "Lord." They do so matter-of-factly because it has been a standard component of the church's beliefs about the significance of Jesus for many generations. When pressed about what it means to call Jesus "Lord," most Christians today will say something like "Jesus is the true king of the world" (corporately) or "Jesus is the boss of my life" (individually). Seldom do believers stop to think where this language came from and what it meant to those who first used it. Modern believers also take for granted the full divinity of Christ, since this has been part of the creeds and confessions of the church for nearly two thousand years. It appears much easier to believe in the divinity of one long gone from this world than it is a person of recent memory.

This book has attempted to give some historical and theological perspective on how the "Lord" language became associated with Jesus and why the deity of Jesus became a standard feature of Christian orthodoxy so early. Of course, as with all matters historical and theological, there were forces and factors at play that we have not touched on.

One of the most significant factors influencing Christians today in their devotion to Jesus, of course, is the Scriptures themselves. As we have seen, the OT uses the term "Lord" or "LORD" in reference to the God of Israel; then in the NT, "Lord" can refer to God the Father, Jesus, or occasionally the Holy Spirit. By bringing the two Testaments together, under one cover, it is an easy step for followers today to link the title "Lord" together for multiple figures.

There are different Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic words in the original texts, but in the English Bible tradition most translations render these key words by "Lord" or "LORD." When referring to the divine name in the Hebrew Scriptures, most English translations use small capital letters (either "LORD" or "GOD"). So the Christian Scriptures themselves provide a significant impetus to why "Lord" has become a standard and uncontroversial title for Jesus.

This may account for the modern habit, yet few Jesus followers today know when and how the conviction emerged that Jesus of Nazareth was more than a man; the conviction emerged early that he was the embodiment of the God of Israel, and as such the title "Lord" could appropriately be given to him. While

the title could simply be a polite address or recognition of Jesus's unusual authority, it became more among early Christians when they applied to Jesus OT texts containing the word "Lord [*kyrios*]" when that term refers to the unspeakable name of God.

Over the last thirty years, a scholarly consensus has emerged regarding the historical and theological origins of the divinity of Christ. Earlier generations of scholars figured the divinity of Christ was a "doctrine" that took decades if not centuries to hash out. In some ways this is true, for it is the very nature of doctrine that it takes time to develop and then become part of a broader network of thought. Yet what seems to have characterized the first believers was a deeply felt conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was more than a prophet from Galilee, even if he was regarded as an idealized human. In some of the earliest strata of Christian theologizing available to us, the apostle Paul associates Jesus with God in remarkable ways by bestowing on him the divine name, situating him in relation to his followers using the same language and terms his Bible used to describe YHWH's relation to Israel, and quoting scriptural texts containing the divine name with Christ as his referent. These are, by all accounts, remarkable features of Paul's Christology that provide the raw materials for later doctrinal development. These features point unambiguously to a divine Christ in the mind and devotion of Paul. Significantly, Paul's divine Christ is both a feature of his letters and the preformed traditions he inherits.

The apostle never argues for the divinity of Christ in his letters. He never tries to convince his readers that the man Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, ought to be worshiped along with God or as God. He seems to take these beliefs and practices as self-evident. He addresses his churches as if the confession "Jesus is Lord" and religious devotion to him are routine features of their own constitution and piety. Indeed, Paul characterizes the churches as "all those in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2 AT). As we showed above, this language is taken directly from OT passages that describe the actions of worshipers at the temple who "call upon" YHWH/*kyrios* through the official actions of priest and sacrifice. For the apostle, Christians are those who "call upon" the name of our Lord (*kyrios*) Jesus Christ. This means, among other things, that the Lord Jesus is so closely associated with God that he bears the divine "name" and is the rightful recipient of devotion (Phil. 2:9–11). To put it another way, early Christians included Jesus precisely and unambiguously in the identity of the God of Israel.[1] These convictions are at the heart of Paul's gospel and mission.

In part, the routine nature of Jesus's divinity reflected in Paul's Letters may be due to that fact that he has already found these convictions and practices

embedded in the traditions he inherits and passes on. It is no doubt a safe assumption that when Paul founded a church, he passed on to the believers his own convictions about the Lord Jesus Christ and modeled for them his own brand of religious devotion with Jesus as a rightful recipient of worship. But even when writing to a church he did not found, he expected the same robust convictions about Jesus's lordship to be part of their community (e.g., Rom. 1:3–4; 10:9–13). Indeed the confession "Jesus is Lord" and the full religious devotion directed to him appear to characterize all the churches and individuals to whom he writes. These beliefs and practices constitute the common core of convictions held by most Christians in those early decades.

As we have seen, the categories available to Paul to describe his convictions about Jesus and his significance are first century, apocalyptic, and Hellenistic Jewish. In the earliest decades of the Christian movement these beliefs and attendant practices were worked out through a close rereading of Jewish biblical texts fueled by intense religious experiences with the risen Christ. Inspired by the memory of Jesus—especially the kinds of bold things Jesus himself said and did and the example he set by his own engagement with Scripture—early Jewish Christians searched their sacred texts in order to make sense of the remarkable things that had happened in their day. The crisis of the cross and resurrection drove them back to Israel's sacred texts for consolation, assurance, and direction.

In the end Paul's convictions regarding the divinity of Christ owe a great deal to his own experience "through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12) when it pleased God to "reveal his Son to me" (Gal. 1:16). The apostle had other visions and revelations of the Lord (*kyrios*) that attenuated and sharpened his thinking about the transcendent significance of Jesus. As a Pharisee, Paul was compelled to rethink the core of his own convictions, which had led him to persecute violently the Jesus movement. For him Jesus was no longer a scandal-ridden, crucified pseudo-Messiah; he was God's Anointed. But he was far more than that. The convictions of those "in Christ" before him situated Jesus at God's right hand as "Lord" and Messiah. That meant for them, and ultimately for Paul, that God's unique, covenant name had been given to Jesus in the resurrection and that scriptural texts containing that divine name could properly be read to include him. This is a remarkable feature of early Christianity, a development that emerged soon after Jesus's first followers became convinced that their Master had conquered death and now occupied God's throne (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:25; Rom. 8:34; cf. Mark 12:36; Acts 2:34). The letters of Paul and his christological exegesis provide us a glimpse into the ways early Christians reverenced Jesus. They represent a particular, historical moment at the start of the Christian

movement. As the rest of Christian history shows, it will be up to others to develop what Paul has received and handed on.

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