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DEDICATION

To

Mr. Godwin Eziukwu

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Luke Eziukwu
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ABBRIVATION

Acts: Acts of the Apostles -----	11
AD: Anno Domino (in the year of the Lord)-----	18
BC: before Christ-----	18
C.E: Common era -----	40
Cf: Compare (confere) -----	7
Col: Colossians -----	42
Cor: Corinthians -----	42
Deut: Deutronomy -----	17
ed: edition, editor(s) -----	17
Ibid: the same source -----	17
Isa: Isaiah-----	54
Ltd: Limited-----	6
NT: New Testament -----	29
Ps: Psalm -----	69
Sam: Samuel-----	54
Thess: Thessalonians -----	71
v: Verse -----	10

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

“There is probably no subject more hotly debated or more central to the New Testament than the apostle Paul’s Christology. Is it ‘low’? Is it ‘high’? Did Paul understand Jesus Christ to be God? Was he a true monotheist?”¹ This statement by Nijay K. Gupta of Eastern University on the review article to Chris Tilling’s work “Paul Divine Christology”; in the *Journal for the Study of Paul and His letters*, captures the very nature of debate among scholars recently. The above statement personally fascinated me and I asked myself at the very beginning of this study, is Jesus really seen and worshiped as “God” in the New Testament or not? Did Paul teach that Jesus was divine, and to be worshipped as such? How should this be viewed in relation to Jewish and Christian-monotheism? Another thought that came to mind is to whether the later Christians strayed away from early Jewish root and idea of monotheism to conceive Jesus as divine. The debate over these and related questions is recently raging in academic circles. The debate revolves around “high” and “low” Christology. High Christology is seen as one in which Jesus is understood as fully divine and pre-existent being. In the contrast, low Christology is seen as one in which Jesus is human, however, exalted at resurrection. So, the question is, did Paul and the first followers of Jesus understand Jesus as pre-existent

¹ Nijay GUPTA K., review to: Chris TILLING, *Paul Divine Christology*. Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2012, 1-250.

divine being? Proponents of early high Christology argue that divine Christology originated in Jesus' own teaching as his first followers understood it. On the other hand, proponents of low Christology argue that the first Christians (apostle Paul inclusive) did not consider Jesus as divine nor render devotion to him.

After reading the great work of Chris Tilling, the critically acclaimed "Paul's Divine Christology", I was motivated and challenged by his agreement and disagreement with some conclusions of great thinkers and scholars like Larry Hurtado, Richard Buckham, Maurice Casey and James Dunn. Again, by reading further other contributions on Pauline Christology, I became provoked and then I saw the need to join in the debate. Nicholas Thomas Wright captures this feeling when he writes that:

Paul has provoked people as much in the twentieth century as he did in the first. Then, they sometimes threw stones at him; now, they tend to throw words. Some people still regard Paul as a pestilent and dangerous fellow. Others still think him the greatest teacher of Christianity after the Master himself. This spectrum of opinion is well represented in the scholarly literature as well as the popular mind.²

With this statement, Nicholas Thomas Wright also draws our attention to the wide range of the person of Paul and his theology and the different understanding of his works and theology in different time of history. So, in this study, I will enter the debate by referring to some significant Pauline Christological themes/titles in order "to see if one can find

² Nicholas T. WRIGHT, *What Saint Paul really said. Was Paul of Tarsus the real Founder of Christianity?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997, 7.

references to Jesus in relation to divinity in Paul's letters, and to see if one is justified in believing that the early Christians actually worshiped Jesus.”³

The Study then confronts us with all the major questions involving the debate concerning whether or not, to what extent or in what sense, Paul's own Christology should be considered 'divine'. Now as a further introductory step, I want to explain some phenomena that forms the subjects of the investigation. 'Divinity' is understood and attributed to figures or things believed to have originated from God or deity and as such, should be considered holy or sacred. So divine beings or things are considered as superior to things on earth. On the other hand, God and deity are two words that are related to beings who possess supreme powers and controls the universe and are as such worshiped throughout the world in various forms. However, while God is usually used in the Monotheistic context, the term deity is usually used in the context of Polytheistic religions. Another two concepts here are 'devotion' and 'worship'. Both concepts are expressions of religious feelings but are not the same. While devotion has to do with a strong feeling of love and loyalty to a person, place or thing, worship is an external act of devotion to a deity often expressed through prayers, rituals offerings and songs.

The significance of this study then will be to focus on a fresh understand of the Christology of apostle Paul as a divine Christology. Understanding the divine Christology of Paul is necessary for students of Dogmatics and also of great importance to know how we are to begin in the interpretation and homiletical approach.

³ Joshua TANIS, The divinity of Jesus in early Christian thought. A historiographical approach, Department of History, California University 2017, 58, URL: <https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/University%20Honors%20Program/Journals/tanis.pdf> [Accessed: May 12, 2023].

The aim of the study is to examine how Paul conceives the person of Christ. It considers in particular the person of Christ and his divine identity through the lens of some Christological titles used by Paul. This study offers a new contribution by using some significant titles in Pauline Christology to argue that Jesus is indeed divine. The aim of the study is not to treat comprehensively all aspects of Paul's Christology. Instead, to concentrate on major features that show how Paul conceives Jesus as a divine figure and recipient of devotion.

My study will not limit the entire Christology of Paul to the few themes mentioned and discussed in this study. But because Paul does not treat Christology as a separate category, but integrates this into the major Christological themes in his writings, this study will then examine few of the most significance themes that discuss more on his Christology. It is worthy to note that the study is not intended to serve as a comprehensive study of the origin of divine Christology,⁴ nor is the study a comprehensive explanation of the development of the phenomenon called high Christology, but a significant analysis of the understanding of the evidence for this kind of Christology of divine identity in Paul. The Christology of Paul is so vast that one cannot narrow it to the scope of this study, but here I am going to consider the central themes in his Christology and consider possible evidence to divine identity. That is to say, I am going to consider the theology of Paul basically on the understanding and analysis of the themes he used. What is avoided here is looking for the divine Christology

⁴ Recently in 1998, The International Conference on the Origin of the Worship of Jesus, held at St. Mary's College in the University of St. Andrews tries to evaluate Christianity praxis of Christ-devotions on the context of Jewish Monotheism. That is, how did the man Jesus come to be worshiped as a divine being by communities that had regarded themselves as Monotheists.

that emerges in each of the letters of apostle Paul. The effort here is to consider some significant themes used by Paul to understand Pauline divine Christology without full analysis of the individual letters of the apostle Paul.⁵

This Study is organized into four chapters and each of these chapters will discuss different aspects. Chapter one highlights the background of the study with a brief understanding of the person of apostle Paul, the idea of Jewish Monotheism and the idea of Christology. Chapter two concentrates on the survey of Scholarship and different contributions to the recently raging debate on divine Christology. Chapter three then examines significant Christological themes in Paul. Thus, offering the background of each title in the Jewish and Hellenistic culture and also the early Christian understanding of these themes. Furthermore, Chapter four considers the evidence of Pauline divine Christology. And finally, I will concentrate on the evaluation and conclusion and at the same time, what one can learn from this study.

⁵ Many scholars in the past have tried to use individual letters of Paul to argue for the divine Christology. Here see, Chris TILLING, *Paul Divine Christology*. Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2012. Here, he uses 1 Cor 8:1-10:22 in Chapter 5 to argue about the relation between the risen Lord and believers. In Chapter 8, he uses 1 Cor 16:22 to argue the Christ-relation. Also, Joshua TANIS, *The divinity of Jesus in early Christian thought. A historiographical approach*, Department of History, California University, 2017. Here, the paper examines specific passages from Paul's undisputed letters; Philippians 2:6-11, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Romans 10:9-13, and 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

1 THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.2 THE APOSTLE PAUL

To understand the life of apostle Paul, one has to consider definitely his family, his year of birth, his citizenship, his education and his call to discipleship. Such events surrounding his life can help one understand better the person of apostle Paul. In the first place, Robert Seesengood in his effort to compare the historical data for Paul and for Jesus rightly maintains that “among scholars at present there is no uniform image or biography of Paul.”⁶ Seesengood further suggested the reason for this lack of uniform image or biography of Paul as he observes that the historical reconstruction of the person of Paul is even more diverse and more problematic than that of the person of Jesus. The reason being that strong influence on the role and interests of historians and even that of the community can cripple any effort in reconstruction of the past, much as one would discover in the person of Jesus. In addition is the questions of how a scholar is to consider Pauline authorship, redaction, and even the reliability of the very agreed authentic letters of apostle Paul, that were ascribed to him. Also, how a scholar reconstructs the contingent circumstances that can result from any particular Pauline writing. Seesengood questions whether these biases are not enough to account for the divergent understanding and images of apostle Paul as found among scholars. He understands these elements as the very major challenges that will finally shape any attempt to reconstruct the history

⁶ Robert P. SEESENGGOOD, Paul. A brief History, United Kingdom: Wiley Blackwell publishing Ltd, 2010, 223.

of apostle Paul.⁷ Here, we see right from the beginning certain influences on every scholar who may attempt to reconstruct Pauline Chronology. These influences will definitely shape the final biography of Paul. Nevertheless, the very first question at the beginning of any consideration of the life of apostle Paul has to do with the possible sources available for such consideration. Ferdinand C. Buar offers us two possible sources when he writes that, “as in the Gospel history, historical criticism has here two statements before it, differing from each other, which must be weighed and compared, in order to get from them their pure historical value. These are the accounts contained in the Acts of the Apostles and the historical data comprehended in the Apostle's own Epistles.”⁸ From this statement, it becomes clear that the Acts of the Apostle written presumably by Luke the Evangelist together with the Pauline Epistles serve as possible sources for our investigations. That is to say, the Acts of the Apostles and the information of Paul about himself together can help us in an attempt to reconstruct the chronology of Paul. This claim is possible because “Paul is also the central figure in the second half of the New Testament’s Acts of the Apostles, and figures prominently in several second and third-century Christian writings.”⁹

Referring nevertheless to the possible contradictions which many scholars over the years have come to discover when comparing the Acts of the Apostle and Pauline Epistles, Ferdinand C. Buar points out that as in the case of the Gospel history where historical criticism has to compare and contrast two possible statements before hand in

⁷ Cf. Ibid., 223-225.

⁸ Ferdinand C. BUAR, Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ. His Life and Works, His Epistle and Teachings, Two Volume in One, Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003, 4.

⁹ Robert P. SEESGOOD, Paul. A brief History, 28.

order to know and decide from what is presented the pure historical value that is common to them, the same should be applicable while dealing with data from which is found in the Acts of the Apostle and Pauline Epistles. He suggests that in this case, where the account in the Acts of the Apostle does not completely agree with the account in Pauline Epistle, then greater claim and attention should go to the account in Pauline Epistle. However, this rule should definitely come from the nature of the particular case at hand. Buar further suggests that as far as there is a belief held without proof or certain knowledge of the identity of the statement in Pauline Epistle and his declaration, even when they cannot be denied, they should be considered to have slight weight attached to them for in some cases, we found greater opinions on the side of the Acts of the Apostle than on the side of the Epistle.¹⁰ From this assertion, it becomes clear that a possible consideration of the life of the apostle Paul is attainable thanks to the identified sources. Again, Ferdinand C. Buar compares the relationship between the Acts of the Apostle and Pauline Epistles to that of the Gospel of John and the Synoptical Gospels:

Between the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles, as far as the historical contents of the latter can be compared with the Acts of the Apostles, there will be found in general the same relation as, between the Gospel of John and the Synoptical Gospels. The comparison of both these sources must lead to the conclusion that, considering the great difference between the two statements, historical truth can only belong to one of them. To which it does belong can only be decided by the undisputed historical rule that the statement which has the greatest claim to historical truth is that which appears most unprejudiced and nowhere betrays a desire to subordinate its historical material to any special subjective aim.¹¹

¹⁰ Cf. Ferdinand C. BUAR, Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ, 4.

¹¹ Ibid., 5

Buar argues here that historical truth is attainable by careful comparison of these sources and by considering the statement which has the greatest claim to historical truth and which appears most unprejudiced.

Relating then to the family background of Paul, Michael Wolter refers us to two important insights from Pauline epistles, especially Philippians 3:5 and Romans 11:1 when he states that “from Paul himself we learn only that he came from a Jewish family that traced its descent back to the tribe of Benjamin.”¹² The two references from Wolter help us to learn directly from Paul about his Jewish family that traced back its descent to the tribe of Benjamin and born of Hebrews. The idea of circumcision on the eighth day points to the fact that he was a devout Jew. In the same line of thought, Jerome Murphy-O’Connor observes that Paul was not pretending to be a Greek, but rather Paul was actually proud of his heritage because he boasted twice about his heritage as he wrote to the Philippians 3, 4-5, about his circumcision after the eight days. He claimed here that he is a proper Jew, circumcised on the eighth day which shows that he is coming from a family that recognizes the Jewish traditions despite being in Tarsus. Paul is claiming that he is coming from a family that has high regards for Jewish practices even though they live in Tarsus. This connects him as a Jew to the lineage of Abraham and he even mentioned his tribe as coming from the tribe of Benjamin. He also extends this boast to being an Aramaic speaking Jew which according to him, was part of what he inherited

¹² Michael WOLTER, Paul. An Outline of His Theology. Trans. Robert L. BRAWLEY, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2015, 9. Here, he cited Phil 3:5: . . . circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews. Rom 11:1: I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

from his parents.¹³ So, the references here give the idea that Paul is a pure-bred Jew and proud of his Jewish heritage. In addition is that “his family lived outside of Israel, in Tarsus, the capital city of the Roman province of Cilicia, and yet they had maintained elements of Jewish culture. Paul could speak Hebrew or Aramaic, the ancestral Jewish languages, as well as Greek, the lingua franca of the first-century Roman Empire (Acts 21:40, 22:2-3).”¹⁴

Furthermore, to the very question about his immediate family, Michael Wolter states the fact that, “we know nothing of his family. In Acts 23:16-22, Luke mentions a nephew of Paul who lives in Jerusalem, the son of his sister (v. 16). That is all, however. We ought not to introduce into the text that besides him in Jerusalem there were other members of a narrower or extended family. On the other hand, neither is the possibility excluded.”¹⁵ From this, it becomes evident that a clear knowledge of the family of Paul is not ascertain even from his epistles and neither from the Acts of the Apostles. However, in Acts 23:16-22, a reference from Luke about a nephew of Paul who lives in Jerusalem, son of his sister becomes helpful to scholars in the reconstruction of the life of apostle Paul. Again, apart from the understanding that Paul’s birth occurs in the city of Tarsus, there is no common acceptance of the particular date of his birth. However, in reference to the time of the birth of Paul, many scholars like Jerome Murphy -O’ Connor

¹³ Cf. Jerome MURPHY - O’ CONNOR, Paul. His Story, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004, 1-2.

¹⁴ Marg MOWCZKO, Paul’s Hebrew Heritage: Philippians 3:4-8, May 1, 2010, URL: https://margmowczko.com/philippians-3_4-8/ [Accessed: May 12, 2023].

¹⁵ Michael WOLTER, Paul. An Outline of His Theology, 9.

suggests that “Paul would have been about two years old in 4 BC when the tranquil life of his parents was brutally disrupted.”¹⁶

Concerning the education of the apostle Paul, Jerome Murphy -O’ Connor maintains that “Paul’s letters show that he had an excellent education, both religious and secular. This was an expensive privilege, and was not available to the vast majority of Jews.”¹⁷ This means that Paul himself mentions his educational background for he once states, “I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel” (Acts 22:3). Speaking about the man Gamaliel Ferdinand C. Buar remarks to the fact that “the most zealous persecutor of the Christian Church of that time, Saul, had been educated in his school and on his own principles.”¹⁸ It is worthy to mention that this particular claim that Gamaliel had been one of his teachers has also undergo serious debate among scholars about the person of Paul before his Damascus experience. Nicholas Wright observes that the fact that Paul claims that Gamaliel had been one of his teachers with other evidence from his writings like his position on divorce, have given room for some scholars to suppose that apostle Paul was a Hillelite before his Damascus experience. It is worthy to note here that “Shamai and Hillel were two influential Jewish rabbis whose commentaries on the Torah shaped Jewish theology and philosophy for hundreds of years. The Shammaite and Hillelite Schools were the two dominant approaches to Jewish Law during the years of Jesus’

¹⁶ Jerome MURPHY - O’ CONNOR, Paul. His Story, 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹⁸ Ferdinand C. BUAR, Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ, 35.

earthly ministry.”¹⁹ The argument has been that if Paul was a student of Gamaliel who was associated with the Hillelite school, then there may be the tendency that apostle Paul was also a Hillelite. However, for Wright, Paul may have learned a lot from Gamaliel, but that does not mean that he shared all the ideas of Gamaliel.²⁰ Nevertheless, what is evidence here then is that Paul underwent formal education and studied under his famous teacher Gamaliel.

The Call to discipleship of apostle Paul has been designated recently as his conversion and vocation. The terms conversion and vocation of apostle Paul have been so closely connected that one term can easily replace the other. In the words of Nicholas Wright, “for Paul, conversion and vocation were so closely identified that it would be hard even for a razor-sharp mind like his to get a blade in between them.”²¹ Here Wright sees conversion and Vocation as inseparable in the case of apostle Paul. The incidence that happened to Paul on his way to the city of Damascus has been understood anyway as his conversion. Another scholar, Krister Stendahl observes from three accounts in Acts of the Apostle (9:1-19; 22:4-16; 26:9-19) and episode Galatians (1: 11-17), which give the ground to refer to Paul’s experience on the road to Damascus to be referred by most scholars as to his conversion. Here we see different citation where either Luke in Acts of the Apostle or Paul himself gives account of the experience of the conversion. Worthy of note is that the second account in Acts 22 which also differ a little from the Damascus experience describe the testimony during his trial before the Jews. Here we

¹⁹ Jewish Questions, “What were the Shammaite and Hillelite Interpretations of Jewish Law?” URL: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Shammaite-vs-Hillelite.html> [Accessed: May 13, 2023].

²⁰ Cf. Nicholas T. WRIGHT, What Saint Paul really said, 29-30.

²¹ Ibid., 39.

see for example that the Lord's message to Annanias as found in Acts 9, was not recorded. The most significant different is found in Acts 26. In this account, Paul was a prisoner and is seen testifying before King Agrippa. Irrespective of the differences from these sources however, what is important for Krister is that Paul a strong man that maintains all the elements of Jewish culture and religion suddenly becomes a Christian through an astonished experience. Krister further points out that this should not be understood as a change of religion as we usually understand the term conversion. Irrespective of the differences from these sources however, what is important here is that Paul receives a new special calling in the service of God and his call brings him to a new understanding of his mission, and a new understanding of the law. So, the emphasis is not on the conversion but rather on the assignment.²² Here we see that the Damascus experience of Paul did not only consist of his acceptance of the risen Lord but a change of orientation and a call to a new understanding of his mission. Nicholas Wright while affirming that Saul's vision on the road to Damascus actually equipped him with an entirely new perspective and new orientation towards new mission and vocation concludes that, "Saul of Tarsus, in other words, had found a new vocation. It would demand all the energy, all the zeal, that he had devoted to his former way of life. He was now to be a herald of the king."²³

So, with his Damascus experience, Paul became one of the greatest Christian theologians. His powerful pastoral insights and arguments have festinated even modern

²² Cf. Krister STENDAHL, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles, and other Essays*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976, 7-9.

²³ Nicholas T. WRIGHT, *What Saint Paul really said*, 37.

readers and biblical scholars. His theology is so important today because for many scholars, Paul can be regarded as the first and greatest Christian theologian. This is not to say that others are not theologians but as Dunn makes it clear that Paul without doubt is the first Christian theologian. This is not to say that all who engages in all forms of thinking and expressions of their faith as Christians are not theologians, but Paul belongs among those who understood the work of instructing others and articulating of their faith in writing as their life mission. Dunn associates Paul as a first Christian to commit himself to such calling and belongs to generation which was more creative in theological formulations than any other, and his influence and writings have shaped Christianity particularly, in the early Church, but even in the patristic period and also in the Middle Ages.²⁴ From this then, one can rightly call the Apostle Paul the first Christian theologian whose theology is worthy of studying. His theology had also great influence in the different periods of history of Christianity.

1.3 THE IDEA OF JEWISH MONOTHEISM

At the very beginning of his work “The Only True God”, James McGrath argues that “if one were to survey the religious ideas that have made the greatest impact on human history, among them would inevitably be included monotheism, the idea that

²⁴ James D. G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans publishing Company, 1998, 2-3.

there is only one true God.”²⁵ This idea of monotheism has actually made great impact on human history more especially, on the side that the idea was the first time the belief in many gods was challenged. The idea of monotheism has also been strongly debated among scholars. Hurtado captures this better when he says that “in recent years a number of scholars have given attention to the question of ‘monotheism’ in first-century Jewish religion, especially (but not exclusively) scholars interested in the emergence of ‘high Christology’ and the reverence given to Jesus as divine in early Christian groups.”²⁶ Worthy of mentioning here is that “some have postulated that Hebrew monotheism found its roots and inspiration in the counter-cultural ideology of Akhenaten”²⁷ This Akhenaten once became a famous Egyptian Pharaoh. These scholars were of the view that the spark of monotheism can be traced back to Atenism, a philosophy based around worship of the sun disk and made popular by the eighteenth dynasty Egyptian Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten). Beyond this anyway is the strange connection between the biblical figure of Moses and Akhenaten. Scholars like Sigmund Freud suggests that Moses was actually an Egyptian follower of Atenism who fled Egypt with other monotheists which was recorded in the Hebrew Scripture as the Exodus. Sigmund Freud in his work, *Der Man Moses und die Monotheistische Religion*, started by questioning whether Moses was a historical person or a legendary figure and the reason for his name ‘Moses’, which was

²⁵ James F. MCGRATH, *The Only True God. Early Christian Monotheism in its Jewish Context*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009, 1.

²⁶ Larry W. HURTADO, *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, 111.

²⁷ James JACK, *Akhenaten’s Monotheism and Its Relationship with Ancient Hebre Religion*, University of New England, 2016, 2, URL: https://www.academia.edu/33957139/Akhenatens_Monotheism_and_its_Relationship_with_Ancient_Hebrew_Religion [Accessed: May 13, 2023].

written as *Mosche* in Hebrew. With these, Freud argues that „ich habe hinzugefügt, dass die Deutung des an Moses geknüpften Aussetzungsmythus zum Schluss nötige, er sei ein Ägypter gewesen, den das Bedürfnis eines Volkes zum Juden machen wollte.“²⁸ Another Scholar, Schlomo Shoham claims that the Biblical Moses was actually the Egyptian prince. Thus, “when I was born, my father, King Amenhotep IV who later changed his name to Akhenaten, gave me the name Mose, a common Egyptian name which means ‘a man is there’. Quite soon, however, my name was changed to Me-Shu.”²⁹ Proponents of this view have argued that this Atenism represents the first monotheistic tradition ever to exist and to some, Moses left Egypt as a follower of monotheism together with other followers. To others however, Atenism is not monotheistic at all and to whether Moses was influenced by such claim is not yet verified. However, few other scholars like Mariya Shcherbinina believed that “while the Exodus was a step towards Monotheism in Judaism, we cannot assume that it was solely responsible for the Israelites’ beliefs narrowing down to Yahwist worship.”³⁰

This idea of monotheism has also among others been attributed to the ancient Jewish people. Judaism is traditionally considered as one of the oldest monotheistic religion in the world for the fact that its founder, Abraham was believed to have had a strong faith in one God. While citing some Jewish writers and historians like Jubilees, Philo, Josephus and the Apocalypse of Abraham, Bauckham argues that “Abraham was

²⁸ Sigmund FREUD, *Der Mann Moses und die Monotheistische Religion*, Netherland: Verlag Allert der Lange Amsterdam, 1939, 29.

²⁹ Shloma G. SHOHAM, *Moses: The Righteous Sky*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, 1.

³⁰ Mariya SHCHERBININA, *One God and the One God*, Theo 3930, 9, URL: https://www.academia.edu/20851609/One_God_and_The_One_God [Accessed: May 13, 2023].

widely regarded as the first to worship the only true God, the paradigm monotheist of exemplary faith.”³¹ However, “there is no consensus among modern scholars today concerning the Jewish religion prior to the Babylonian exile. Many Scholars believed that the ancient Jewish people are basically polytheistic, worshipping a plethora of gods and goddesses like El, Baal as well as Yhwh.”³² Worthy of note here is that there are many versions on how Israelites switched over to Monotheism. Michael Mach pointed out here that “in contra-distinction to the well-known story of Jubilees, the book of Judith contains different versions for the discovery of “Monotheism” in Chaldea.”³³ Although the different accounts differ in various aspects but the only thing central is the recognition of God as the creator of all things and also uncreated. For Michael Mach, “the famous ‘Hear, Israel, thy God is one’ (Deut 6:4) has mostly be understood as pointing to the singularity of that god and less to the prohibition to the worship of other gods.”³⁴ From this, we see also the idea of the worship on one God among many other gods and also the recognition of a number of intermediary figures. Michael Mach ties to categorize Jewish monotheism in three different forms. The first form of Monotheism is that which shows itself in the expression of a strong and critical attack or controversial

³¹ Richard BAUCKHAM, “The Throne of God and the worship of Jesus”, in: Carey C. NEWMAN et al (ed.), *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism. Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origin of the Worship of Jesus*, Boston: Brill, 1999, 46.

³² Benjamin D. SOMMER, *The Bodies of God and the Ancient Israel*. The Jewish Theological Society of America, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 145.

³³ Michael MACH, “Concepts of Jewish Monotheism in the Hellenistic Period”, in: Carey C. NEWMAN et al (ed.), *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism*, 27. Here, Mach cited Judith 5:6-8, “These people are descended from Chaldeans. At one time they settled in Mesopotamia because they did not what to worship the gods of their ancestors who were in the Chaldean. They had abandoned the gods of their ancestors and worshipped the god of Heaven, the god that they have come to know”.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

opinion against other cultures, nations and people thus recognizes exclusively one Jewish god. And this is predominantly in the period of the Babylonian exile. The second stage is in contrast with the first which totally did not identify with the other. Although this second type is exclusive like the first, it extends and includes those who belongs to the cultural stratum. In this case is the elite of Hellenistic culture. The third is the stage in which Jewish Monotheism has become inclusive rather than exclusive.³⁵

Another distinction of Jewish Monotheism has to do with the Jewish of the first Temple and Jewish of the second Temple. According to Jewish Tradition, the first Temple was built by King Solomon after King David conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital. Nevertheless, this Temple was destroyed in 586 BC by Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, when he conquered Jerusalem. The beginning of the Second Temple period (586 BC-AD 70) is marked by the return of the Jews to Jerusalem from their exile in Babylon in 538 BC. So, the Second Temple Judaism has to do with the designation of Jewish traditions between the return of exile from Babylon and the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple. The issue here is that the Second Temple Judaism has been associated with a strict monotheism and this made it to appear impossible to associate the divinity of other figures with God. With this idea in view on the one hand, many scholars argue that Jesus cannot have been treated and understood as such within the concept of such Jewish Monotheistic character. On the other hand, some scholars did not associate the Second Temple Judaism with such a strict Monotheism. Such scholars will not find it difficult to recognize Jesus in this way as divine. Speaking about the Second Temple Jewish Monotheism, Ricahrd Bauckham maintains that “YHWH the God of Israel is the

³⁵ Cf. Ibid., 24-25.

only God and that he may be worshipped were at the heart of Jewish religion self-understanding in the late Second Temple Period.”³⁶ Here, Bauckham refers to the recitation of the *shema* twice daily as concrete evidence which not only point to a simple belief that there is only one God, but that this same God requires exclusive devotion. Furthermore, Bauckham refers to the exegesis of Psalm 110:1 as a root to understanding the identification of Jesus with God. In this Psalm, Yahweh is portrayed as strictly judging the nations through the means of his throne partner, and this his throne partner, King David also sees as Lord and superior to him. So, for Bauckham the Lord who is addressed in this text can be identified with Jesus.³⁷

This identification of Jesus with God brings to our minds the idea of the relationship between Monotheism and Christology. Casey offers us two main considerations for any attempt to understand the relationship between Monotheism and Christological development when he says that “one is the absolute nature of the dogmatic commitment to the oneness of God which formed a boundary marker between the Jewish and the Gentile communities. The other is the varied and flexible nature of messianic and intermediary figures which provided a pattern of development to permit a generation of new figures with unique aspects.”³⁸ For Casey, the recognition of monotheism as a boundary marker for Jewish community and at the same time, the functions of a number of intermediary figures are of great importance in any consideration of Christological development in Jewish monotheism. In relation to these intermediary figures, Yarbrow

³⁶ Richard BAUCKHAM, “The Throne of God and the worship of Jesus”, 43.

³⁷ Cf. Ibid., 62-64.

³⁸ Maurice CASEY, Monotheism, “Worship and Christological Development in the Pauline Churches” in: Carey C. NEWMAN et al (ed.), The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism, 214.

Adela remarks that “Hurtado recognized the personified divine attributes, exalted patriarchs and principal angels were portrayed in various texts from the Second Temple Period, respectively, as the chief agent of God and thus sharing in the divinity of God.”³⁹ To explain this better, Hurtado finally argues that, “the more complex picture of ancient Jewish monotheism in the first century may assist us in understanding that early Jewish Christians could think of themselves as holding to belief in ‘one God’ while also viewing the risen Jesus in the most exalted of categories.”⁴⁰ With this, one begins to picture the attitude of the early Jewish Christians towards the strong monotheistic belief in one God and at the same time, the attitude towards the risen Jesus. What is clearly understood here is that “hundreds of years before the time of Paul, the Jewish people distinguished their god, Yahweh (YHWH), from all other reality and other gods.”⁴¹ And again, by the first-century, the evidence shows that exclusive monotheism was the dominant worldview of the Jews. Joshua Tanis observes that before the time of apostle Paul, the Jewish people have started to differentiate Yahweh (YHWH) from other neighboring gods and with this differentiation, there were little or no tendency that writers like apostle Paul could have worshiped other gods, not even figures like angels or exalted prophets. For Tanis, Paul must have seen Jesus as divine and not as another god because by the time of the first century, the endorsement and recognition of Monotheism has become

³⁹ Yarbrow C. ADELA, “The Worship of Jesus and the Imperial Cult”, in: Carey C. NEWMAN et al (ed.), *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism*, 236.

⁴⁰ Larry W. HURTADO, *One God, One Lord. Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (2d ed.) Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998, 8.

⁴¹ Baruch HALPERN, “Monotheism,” in: Bruce M. METZGER and Michael D. COOGAN (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, 526. See also, Joshua TANIS, *The divinity of Jesus in early Christian thought*, 59.

prominent among the Jewish people and this actually set them apart from their neighbors who were unable to recognize this one true God as acclaimed in Judaism. Again, the fact that apostle Paul is a Jewish thinker and more also a Pharisee together with his revolutionary religious experience which he had on his way to Damascus, which radically changed his way of life and his understanding and interpretation of the Jewish scriptures, there is less possibility that Paul left Jewish monotheism. Tanis is finally of the view that Paul must have used his Jewish scriptures and understanding to better his understanding of the person of Jesus.⁴² So with this, one can say that this exclusive monotheism can also be said of apostle Paul.

1.4 THE IDEA OF CHRISTOLOGY

In his work, “The Foundation of New Testament Christology”, Reginald Fuller understands Christology as “the doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ.”⁴³ For him, Christology is mainly a confessional response by a person or group of persons in a particular period of history and Christology is also a confession of faith by people in what God accomplished in the person of Jesus. Fuller further observes that since Christology is considered as man’s response to Jesus, then it should not be considered as part of the original revelation or action of God in Jesus. That is to say, a full Christology

⁴² Joshua TANIS, The divinity of Jesus in early Christian thought, 59-60.

⁴³ Reginald H. FULLER, The Foundations of the New Testament Christology. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1965, 15.

was not handed over to the followers of Jesus by their Master, but what we consider as Christology was the Church's response to its total encounter with Jesus.⁴⁴ From this position, we see that Christology is not a particular teaching of Jesus to his followers, but rather a kind of response and confession of what one believes in the person of Jesus. Another scholar Leander Keck maintains that "'Christology' is a comprehensive term for the statement of the identity and significance of Jesus."⁴⁵ That is to say, whenever Jesus' identity is expressed, Christological statement is also implied. Again, while writing on the task and description of Christology especially as an attempt by the Church to provide a coherent answer to the person of Christ, and to show why Jesus is indeed worthy of the status ascribes to him by the Church, Spence Alen understands Christology as an effort of the Church to offer a logical and reasonable explanations about the person of Jesus in line with the testimonies from the Scriptures as evident to one's faith. Christology in this sense becomes a discipline that strives to offer reasonable ground for the position and status assigned to the person of Jesus, mainly to convince the Agnostics that Jesus is the promised Messiah. That is to say, Christology remains a theological undertaken of the Church; a reflection on the Church's comprehension and perception of the person of Jesus. Spence also associates Christology with a discipline that has its goal in the explanation of the person of Jesus in the context of the redeeming work of God over the fallen humanity.⁴⁶ Here, we see that the mystery of the salvation of the fallen human race will have no meaning if one should detach the discussion of the person

⁴⁴ Cf. Ibid.

⁴⁵ Leander E. KECK, *Why Christ Matters. Toward a New Testament Christology*, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2015, 2.

⁴⁶ Cf. Alan J. SPENCE, *Christology. A Guide for the Perplexed*, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2008, 6-7.

of Jesus. For Oscar Cullmann however, Christology is a science because “if theo-logy is that science whose object is God, Θεός, then Christology is that science whose object is Christ, his person and his work.”⁴⁷ Having identify Christology as a science, he went further to identify the Christological problem in the New Testament. For him, “the later so-called Christological controversies refer almost exclusively to the person or nature of Christ. They refer on the one hand to the relation between his nature and that of God; on the other hand, to the relation which exists in Christ himself between his divine and his human nature.”⁴⁸ This Christological problem is even traceable from the time of Jesus. Scholars like Oscar Cullmann understands the incidence that happened at Caesarea Philippi as a classical formulation of this very problem. The Gospel of Mark 8, 27-29 recorded the different answers the disciples gave when Jesus demanded to know what people think about him.⁴⁹ To the direct question, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." From this then, Osacar points out that this question already existed among the very disciples of Jesus and among his followers and people of his time. This Christological question emerges and poses itself as a problem even during the time of Jesus. And as a way of response, the first Christians had certain understanding which were already present in Judaism and more especially, these concepts were of Jewish eschatology and also an attempt to explain their understanding of the person of Jesus. Again, these answers that came in form of familiar titles represent each a particular description of a function and a work to be fulfilled by Jesus. Finally,

⁴⁷ Oscar CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament*. Trans. Shirley C. GUTHRIE and Charles A. HALL, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963, 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁹ See also Matt 16:13-16 and Lk 9:18-20.

Oscar points out that these titles also indicate an effort to explain the person of Jesus in his uniqueness and not just on human category.⁵⁰ Furthermore, to this fundamental question Thomas Rausch remarks that:

from the first days of the Christian community there have been various answers to this question. The earliest Christians used various titles, most of them drawn from the Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures, to express their faith in Jesus. They called him prophet, teacher, Messiah, Son of David, Son of Man, Lord, Son of God, Word of God, and occasionally even God. The New Testament offers a rich variety of Christologies.⁵¹

Therefore, these different titles from Peter and the other disciples are ascribed to him to express who he is and worthy to note is that no one of these titles can capture or comprehend all the aspects of his person and work.

So, from this brief understanding of the idea of Christology, we realize that Christological question has once become one of the great challenges of Christian theology. This challenge then has become also the task of modern theologians. In the words of Walter Kasper, “Christology, in which identity and relevance, existence and meaning, are revealed in a unique and complete manner, is the task of theology today.”⁵² Concerning this task of theologians today in the explanation of the person of Jesus, Alen Spence suggests that “Christology can be described as the faltering attempt of the Church to provide a coherent conceptual and theological explanation of Jesus’ person, in harmony with the scriptural testimony, which is able to account for his role in its worship

⁵⁰ Oscar CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 4-5.

⁵¹ Thomas P. RAUSCH, *Who is Jesus. An Introduction to Christology*, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003, 1.

⁵² Walter KASPER, *Jesus the Christ. New Edition*, New York: T&T Clark International, 2011, 5.

and faith.”⁵³ This very statement that describes Christology could also be said of apostle Paul for immediately after his Damascus experience, we witness his coherent efforts in using his understanding and knowledge of Jewish Scriptures to explain the person of Jesus. As a great Theologian, the key to his theology is his personal encounter with the glorified Christ. So, one can say here that his theology is Christocentric. Pauline impact on Christology comes from his letters, which are the most dominant books of the New Testament alongside with the Gospels. His epistles have also enormous influence on Christian Theology especially, as they provide insights into the beliefs and understanding of the person of Jesus in relation to his death, resurrection and glorification.

CONCLUSION

The life of apostle Paul and his call to discipleship have been of great importance to the history of Christianity. With his call to discipleship, Paul became one of the greatest Christian theologians. His theology is so important today that for many scholars, Paul can be regarded as the first and greatest Christian theologian. His powerful pastoral insights and arguments have fascinated even modern readers and biblical scholars. From this then, one can rightly call the Apostle Paul the first Christian theologian whose theology is worthy of studying. His theology had also great influence in the different periods of history of Christianity. Recently, scholars have started to question his understanding of the person of Jesus Christ. Whether he actually understand Christ as

⁵³ Alan J. SPENCE, *Christology. A Guide for the Perplexed*, 6.

divine and worthy of worship. This question narrows us to his Christology, which has to do with his response to the encounter of the person of Jesus and his understanding of who Jesus was/is. In this case then, a brief understanding of Jewish idea of monotheism became very essential if we are to investigate early Christian devotion to Jesus. From the time of Second Temple Jewish Monotheism, we see the recognition of monotheism as a boundary marker for Jewish community and at the same time, the functions of a number of intermediary figures which are of great importance in any consideration of Christological development in Jewish monotheism. Here, many scholars look to these intermediary figures or heavenly figures as a stepping stone in the Jewish Scriptures, suggesting that Jesus was originally given that type of status before the eventual recognition of full divinity. Furthermore, we realize again that the strong monotheism of the Jewish people became a strong element that theologians like Paul did not think of worshipping other gods because of the already strong establishment of the idea of monotheism in Judaism at his time. Paul must have rather used his understanding of Jewish monotheism to favor his insights about the person of Jesus. We understand also that Christological question has once become one of the great challenges of Christian theology and from the first days of the Christian community, there have been various answers to this question. Even the apostles and the early followers of Jesus used various titles and names to express their faith in Jesus. The answer to this question remains then an undertaken of individual persons and the Church to provide a coherent theological explanation of the person of Jesus. Paul as a leading theologian offers us strong impact in his epistles a better way of understanding the person of Jesus in the consideration of his person in relation to his death, resurrection and glorification.

CHAPTER TWO: SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP AND APPROACH

INTRODUCTION

We stated earlier in the introduction that the idea of the divinity or the deification of Jesus and its location among Jesus' followers has been of great debate among recent scholars, especially among New Testament scholars. Richard Bauckham offers us a definition of divine Christology as one that places Christ, "on the divine side of the line which monotheism must draw between God and creatures."⁵⁴ From this we see the idea that divine Christology deals with the understanding of Jesus as divine. A number of New Testament scholars have made comments for or against the divinity of Jesus and its location, however, only few offer some detailed discussion of the topic. The question is that of when and how did a divine Christology emerge? On the one side, some scholars argue that the idea of the divinity or deification of Jesus is traceable right from the early circles of the followers of Jesus. On the other side, others maintain that this idea could only be found among the later followers of Jesus.

Recently, the question has been whether statements about Jesus' divine character are to be found only in later layers of the New Testament or are they already there in the very earliest witnesses, as, for example in the time of the apostle Paul. Simply put, did the early Christians regard Jesus as divine? And since Paul is considered as the earliest

⁵⁴ Richard J. BAUCKHAM, "The Worship of Jesus in Apocalyptic Christianity," NTS 27: 1981, 335. See also, TILLING Chris, Paul Divine Christology, 2.

Christian writer, what is his understanding of monotheism? Did Paul identify Jesus as divine and worthy of worship? Crispin Fletcher-Louis articulates the questions better when he says that:

The question has been whether the earliest Christians regarded Jesus as divine. The efforts have been to render a satisfactory explanation of the origins of the belief in Jesus as divine. And how did the earliest Christians come to believe that there was a second figure alongside Yahweh who was worthy of such devotion and worship? Again, “In particular, there has been a long-running debate about the phenomenon that scholars traditionally call a “high Christology” (the belief that Jesus was somehow divine and was treated as such by his followers).⁵⁵

A number of New Testament scholars and especially Pauline scholars have in various ways raised the same question. While writing about this question on the relationship between Jesus and Paul, Deltter Häusser remarks that „Die Frage nach dem Verhältnis von Jesus und Paulus hält seit über 150 Jahren die Wissenschaft in Atem und zielt in das Zentrum der neutestamentlichen Theologie, ja der Theologie insgesamt. Es geht bei dieser Frage nicht nur um die Einheit des Neuen Testaments, sondern auch um den Ursprung und die Grundlage des Christentums.“⁵⁶ From this citation, two major things become clearer to us: the efforts over the years to understand the position of apostle Paul on the person of Jesus and again the importance of understanding this Pauline position as a foundation of Christianity. In reference to Olaf Moe, Deltler argues further that one

⁵⁵ Crispin FLETCHER-LOUIS, *Jesus Monotheism. Christological Origins, The Emerging Consensus and Beyond*, Vol. 1: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015, 3.

⁵⁶ Deltler HÄUSSER, *Christusbekenntnis und Jesusüberlieferung bei Paulus. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 210*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2006, 1. Vgl. Paul FEINE, *Der Apostel Paulus. Das Ringen um das geschichtliche Verständnis des Paulus*, Verlag: Bertelsmann, Gütersloh, 1927, 400.

of the major reasons for understanding this relationship is that it decides, „inwieweit der christliche Glaube an geschichtliche Tatsachen gebunden ist.“⁵⁷ With this understanding, the attempt to align historical facts with belief stands a better chance. This question of the position of apostle Paul on the person of Jesus continues especially among Pauline scholars. Concretely here, the question becomes whether one can rightly call Paul's Christology as 'divine'. Furthermore, and as a way of suggestion, Chris Tilling maintains that “on top of this, given that the (at least, undisputed) Pauline corpus is the earliest layer of NT literature, the question of whether Pauline Christology is divine is of great significance for one's understanding of the development of early Christology generally, and thus the history of early Christianity.”⁵⁸ The suggestion of Pauline corpus which is believed to have been the earliest layer of New Testament literature here is of great significance in the sense that it is also among the earliest primary sources for information about early Christianity and also earliest layer of the New Testament literature.

To the very question whether Paul's Christology is divine, many New Testament scholars like James Dunn and Maurice Casey have answered in the negative maintaining that Paul did not regard Jesus as divine and that this understanding was a later development among Christians. In this way, Proponents of this view suggest a low Christology for apostle Paul. Other scholars like Larry Hurtado and Richard Bauckham have their answers in the positive. For them, the earliest followers of Jesus, including

⁵⁷ Olaf MOE, *Paulus und die Evangelische Geschichte*. Verlag: Leipzig, Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf., 1912, 3. Vgl. Deltler HÄUSSER, *Christusbekenntnis und Jesusüberlieferung bei Paulus*, 1.

⁵⁸ Chris TILLING, *Paul Divine Christology*, 1.

apostle Paul understood Jesus as divine and confessed him as such. With this understanding, these scholars suggest a high view of Pauline Christology. From these positions, it becomes clear that “there has been a long-running debate about the phenomenon that scholars traditionally call a ‘high Christology’ (the belief that Jesus was somehow divine and was treated as such by his followers).”⁵⁹ Recently however, Andrew Chester summarized the current state of scholarship on this debate and identified four positions:

(1) High Christology was foreign to the original Jewish context of Christianity and so was a later development under Gentile influence (represented by Bousset and Casey). (2) High Christology evolved gradually within Jewish Christian thought (represented by Dunn). (3) High Christology developed rapidly within Jewish Christian thought as evidenced by Paul’s writings (represented by Hurtado, Hengel, and Chester himself). (4) High Christology was inherent in Christianity from the start and thus was essentially Jewish in nature (represented by Bauckham and Boyarin).⁶⁰

From this summary from Chester, we see different proponents of high Christology but with different locations of origin.

In this section, we will start by considering Larry Hurtado and Richard Bauckham as among the scholars with the view that divinity of Jesus should be understood to have had its origin in the earliest years of Christian movement and was consistent with Jewish monotheism. On the other hand, we will consider scholars like Maurice Casey and James Dunn who did not associate the divinity of Jesus in connection

⁵⁹Crispin FLETCHER-LOUIS, *Jesus Monotheism*, 3 [emphasis is original].

⁶⁰ Andrew CHESTER, “High Christology—Whence, When and Why?”, in: Jörg FREY, et al (ed.), *Early Christianity, Theological Journal*, Vol. 2, 2011, 22-50. See also David K. BERNARD, *Monotheistic Discourse and Deification of Jesus in Early Christianity as Exemplified in 2 Corinthians 3: 16-4:6* (Unpublished. Dissertation at the University of South Africa) 2014, 22.

with apostle Paul, but as a later development, thus understanding Pauline Christology as a low Christology. Again, we will also consider another scholar, Chris Tilling who saw recently the need to revisit the great works of few leading proponents of both high and low views of Pauline Christology and at the same time, understood a new account of divine Christology in apostle Paul that has to do with Christ-relation.

2.1 LARRY HURTADO

Larry Hurtado, an American New Testament Scholar is known for his significant impact on the field of Christology. He was once appointed as Professor of New Testament Literature and Theology at the University of Edinburgh and his impact on Biblical Scholarship remains enormous and his publications were outstanding. With his earlier publication, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* in 1988, he tries to emphasize the early devotion to Jesus especially in earliest circles of the post-Easter Jesus-movement. The focus of this publication is the religious devotion to the figure of Jesus in the first-century Christianity. He tries to answer the question of how the devotion given to Jesus in the first-century Christianity manifest itself? Thus, “how did the early Jewish Christians accommodate the veneration of the exalted Jesus alongside God while continuing to see themselves as loyal to the fundamental emphasis of their ancestral tradition on one God?”⁶¹ In his investigation, he tries to show how early Jewish Christians combine the worship of God and at the same

⁶¹ Larry W. HURTADO, *One God, One Lord. Early Christian Devotion*, 2.

time, not distancing themselves from their idea of monotheism. Hurtado understands and strongly believes that the devotion of Christ has its roots even among Jewish and Aramaic-speaking Christians. He argues that in the Second Temple Period, the devout adherents to Jewish biblical tradition have already started to incorporate a second figure along with God in their cultic devotion. For him then, the Jewish cultic practice was modified to accommodate Jesus into their devotional pattern thus making him co-recipient of their devotion with God. Apart from tracing the cultic devotion to Jewish and Aramaic-speaking Christians, Hurtado also set out to point among others, the efforts of apostle Paul in trying to separate the Christian devotion from other devotions associated with the Greco-Roman world of his day, through which he rejected the plurality of deities doing his time. With this, he recognizes that Paul did not abandon the worship of one God but has strongly rejected the plurality of deities among his pagan contemporaries. Here, Hurtado argues again that Paul did not distance himself from the existing monotheism that was already in practice in Jewish culture. For him, the strict monotheism still stands even at the beginning of Jesus veneration within the Christian group. Hurtado also makes allusion to the undisputable letters of apostle Paul as sufficient evidence which permits us to be relatively precise and also points to the indication that the original setting of the veneration of Jesus is traceable within the Jewish Christians including the Aramaic-speaking groups in Palestine.⁶² Furthermore, for Hurtado, this cultic veneration of Jesus should be understood to have had its origin in the earliest years of Christian movement and especially, in the Pauline letters. He regretted that some religions researchers found it difficult to reconcile this idea and

⁶² Cf Ibid, xii-5.

wrongly attribute this cultic veneration of Jesus to a later stage of Christian movement thus associating the influence of pagan cults as the cause.⁶³

With his later publication, *How on Earth did Jesus become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus Christ*, Hurtado tries to understand when the belief about the divinity of Jesus started. While recognizing the enormous contributions of some previous scholars and their divergent views, Hurtado saw that none of these have actually provided an adequate explanation of the origin of this idea of the divinity of Jesus among his followers. He then saw the need for a fresh analysis of this understanding. He begins by exposing some evidence that tried to understand the devotion of Jesus to have developed within the time of the Second Temple Period. However, unable to link this very idea perfectly to the time of the Second Temple Period, Hurtado makes allusions and resorts to the undisputed letters of Paul as evidence that allows him to draw conclusions on the issue of the cultic veneration of Jesus in the earlier years of Christianity. Here, he sees some kinds of devotional practices like the invocation of the name of Jesus in Christian baptism, prayers to God through the name of Jesus, early Christian hymns and the regular practice of common meal among the early Christians as serious evidence that points to the veneration of Jesus among his early followers.⁶⁴ The understanding here is that this pattern of devotion while maintaining its monotheistic features, also has Jesus and God at the center of its worship. In other words, the reverence of Jesus is understood as obedience to the will of the only one God.

⁶³ Cf. Ibid., 125.

⁶⁴ Cf. Larry W. HURTADO, *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions About Earliest Devotion to Jesus*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005, 13- 28; cf. also Larry W. HURTADO, *One God, One Lord. Early Christian Devotion*, 100-114.

Again, Larry Hurtado sees a kind of reshaping of Jewish monotheism and “this reshaping of Jewish monotheistic devotion began among Jewish Christians of the first few years after Jesus' execution and cannot be attributed simply to some later stage of the Christian movement and to the influx of converts from a pagan background.”⁶⁵ That is to say, if one is to discover this kind of reshaping of Jewish monotheism, it should be found among the Jewish Christians of the first few years after the death of Jesus rather than the later stage of Christian movement.

Finally, with another of his publication, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, Hurtado tries to explain Jesus-devotion in which he uses the word ‘binitarian’ form of monotheism. With this idea he strives to explain the position of early Christian devotion to God in which the worship of Jesus became possible along side with the Jewish strict monotheism. In this Jesus-devotion as binitarian form of monotheism, Hurtado distinguishes two figures: God and Jesus, but in a relation to each other against the idea of ditheism of two gods. Here, Jesus is not revered or seen as another deity of any independent origin nor does it indicate a separate cultic reverence to a new second God. But the reverence that was given to him was in relation to the action of the one and only God. Jesus-devotion then involves a treatment of Jesus as recipient of worship in recognition of Jewish strict idea of monotheism.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Larry W. HURTADO, *One God, One Lord. Early Christian Devotion*, 100.

⁶⁶ Cf. Larry W. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003, 52-53.

2.2 RICHARD BAUCKHAM

Another New Testament scholarly giant is Richard Buckham. Richard Bauckham is undoubtedly one of the most significant contributors to the study of early Christianity and New Testament in our contemporary. His publications and articles are very impressive and thought provoking. Among the wide range of his scholarly thoughts is his reflections on the reverence of Jesus. Worthy to note is that among the major emphasis on the works of Richard Bauckham has to do with the significance of the worship of Jesus, and his later proposal that Jesus was included within a divine identity. He sees already in the earliest Christian texts an inclusion of Jesus in this divine identity. In his publication, *Jesus and God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology and Divine Identity*, he tries to understand the early Christology in the Jewish context by investigation the nature of Jewish Monotheism in the Second Temple Period which involves a unique and consistent way of distinguishing the one absolute God from all other reality. He finds a model for Christology especially in the belief of intermediary figures during this period. He distinguishes two categories of these intermediary figures as angels and exalted patriarchs and prophets. Concrete example here is very high-ranking angels like Michael, who ranks higher than others but he is not set as authority over them. This belief in the intermediary figures like the angels and other exalted beings found in the Second Temple Period becomes the basis of his argument. His argument is that there was no break with the Jewish Monotheism for the inclusion of Jesus within the unique identity of the one God of Israel because this idea is already taken for granted in the Second Temple Judaism. In the fourth chapter of his

publication, Bauckham examines the early worship of Jesus to include prayers, doxologies and hymns. He tries to show among the Biblical texts he used the connection between Philippians 2:6-11 and Isaiah 52 53; 45. He argues that various sections of this Deutero-Isaiah were employed in Philippians 2:6-11 to show the inclusion of Jesus in the identity of God. With these above convictions and from the numerous doxologies in the letters of apostle Paul and other various New Testament texts, he strongly maintains that the early Christians included Jesus unambiguously within this unique identity of God without interrupting the Jewish monotheism of that period. This implies then that the deification of Jesus occurred at the outset of Christianity and this high Christology was already consistent with Jewish monotheism and also that the New Testament writers did not relegate the idea of monotheism at the background in an effort to enthrone the deification of Jesus. With this, he understands the early Christology as the highest Christology; Christology of a divine identity, a fully divine Christology which understands Jesus as intrinsic to the unique identity of God.⁶⁷ With this position, Bauckham places the New Testament Christology in line with the context of Second Temple Judaism with its idea of strict monotheism. In addition, he contends that fully divine Christology is already in existence at the time of apostle Paul.

With this strong emphasis, Larry Hurtado remarks about Richard Bauckham that, “it is not an exaggeration to say that Bauckham’s emphasis on the significance of the worship of Jesus was perhaps the most influential factor that occasioned and framed the

⁶⁷ Cf. Richard BAUCKHAM, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. Ix-151.

focus of that St. Andrews conference in 1998.”⁶⁸ Bauckham’s significant contributions to the study of the New Testament Christology have undoubtedly great influence especially on scholars like Hurtado in respect to the earliest reverence for Jesus among his followers.

2.3 MAURICE CASEY

Maurice Casey, a British scholar of New Testament and early Christian Christology is well known for his great contributions on early Christology and his significant contributions in the field of the New Testament studies. He became at a point a lecturer in New Testament and Christian Origin at the University of Nottingham. Maurice Casey, in his work, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology*,⁶⁹ attempts to account for the development New Testament Christology in the Gospel of John. He began this by considering the very question on how the Prophet become incarnate God. In an effort to answer this question, Casey started by considering intertestamental figures, figures that existed between the period of the closing of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament like

⁶⁸ Larry W. HURTADO, review to: “Worship and Divine Identity: Richard Bauckham’s Christological Pilgrimage”, in: Daniel M. GURNER, et al (ed.), *The Fullness of Time: Essays on Christology, Creation, and Eschatology in Honor of Richard Bauckham*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, 82-96. We noted earlier that recently in 1998, The International Conference on the Origin of the Worship of Jesus, held at St. Mary’s College in the University of St. Andrews tries to evaluate Christianity praxis of Christ-devotions on the context of Jewish Monotheism.

⁶⁹ “*From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology*” is a revised version of Maurice Casey’s 1985 Cadbury Lectures delivered at the University of Birmingham.

Moses, Enoch and Maccabean martyrs, to identify places where there is indication of titles that could be used to designate messianic and intermediary figures. It is however, this examination that allowed Casey to conclude that Christological development should only be discovered in the Christian Testament. In the second stage of his investigation, he understands Paul's Christology as primarily functional. For him, Paul's Christology is a reflection on the crucified Jesus and his resurrection in connection with baptism, and eucharist to explain how God was at work in Jesus so as to bring Gentiles into the covenant relationship with God. In the third stage, which has to do with John's Gospel, Jesus is here identified unqualifiedly as divine and the way became open for a full identification of Jesus with God. Again, for Casey, the Christology which the Church inherited is nothing but Johannine Christology.⁷⁰

Here, we see at the first instance a great conviction that the first explicit of divine Christology is only noticeable in the Gospel of John. So, for him, the idea of divine Christology is only explicit in the later Gospel of John and not in the earliest writers like apostle Paul. His understanding here is that the prologue of the Gospel of John is convincing evidence of the belief in the divinity of Jesus. So, Casey associates here the origin of divine Christology with the opening verses of the Gospel of John. Again, Larry Hurtado while commenting on this idea of the origin of divine Christology in Johannine community maintains the view that Casey considers the Gospel of John as the first evidence of the full divinization of Jesus and that the idea of the worship of Jesus was

⁷⁰ Cf. Maurice CASEY, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God. The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991, 78-197. See also Harry MAIER, review to: Casey, Maurice. *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, 143-145.

due to the influence of pagan religious practices of some converted Gentile Christians who were yet to understand fully the uniqueness of God in Jewish tradition. That means, Paul's Christology cannot properly be called divine. With this view, he understands the emergence of divine Christology as a gradual process that happened within the Gentile Christian in the later decades of the first century.⁷¹ Hurtado further makes it clear when he says that "Casey contends that the full divinization of Jesus is really first evident in the Gospel of John which is usually thought to have been composed sometime in the 80s of the first century C.E."⁷² That is to say, that the divinization of Jesus is not attested until the time of the Gospel of John.

Worthy to note is that although Maurice Casey has contributed immensely in the field of the development of early Christology, his positions have also received great quantity of criticisms and objections. In the words of Nich Norelli:

In short, Casey's contribution to the inquiry into the origins of Christology is useful only in so far as it shows students/scholars/researchers how not to engage the evidence. One will certainly want to consult this work if they're interested in the history of scholarship on early Christology or if they're interested in radical views of its development, but in terms of compelling argument and reconstruction, they'll want to look elsewhere, such as in the works of Dunn, Hurtado, and Bauckham, who all offer inductive studies that draw conclusions (even if conflicting) based on responsible historical investigation and exegesis of the primary sources.⁷³

So, for Nich Norelli, Casey's contribution to the field of the origin of Christology is essential. However, his arguments lack convincing and persuasive forces. Another

⁷¹ Cf. Larry W. HURTADO, *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God?* 18.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Nick NORELLI, review to: Casey, Maurice. *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, 197.

scholar, Larry Hurtado points among others that what Casey failed to recognize is the fact that devotion to Jesus involves both beliefs and practices which were already evident in the earliest Christian sources like the epistle of apostle Paul. Hurtado further points out what appears contradictory in the position of Casey as he refers to that fact that Casey accepted the fact that monotheism existed in the few decades of Christian movement but he did not associate the historical origin of the worship of Jesus with this period.⁷⁴ From this, Hurtado concludes that “the fine distinction that Casey tries to make is dubious, and his efforts to limit the significance of early phenomena are not persuasive.”⁷⁵

2.4 JAMES DUNN

James Dunn, the Emeritus Lightfoot Professor of Divinity at Durham University, is one of the foremost scholars of the New Testament and whose contribution is enormous in different fields of Biblical Theology. James Dunn is one of the biggest names in the field of New Testament Christology also noted for his voluminous writings on Christological issues. Just like Casey, Dunn strongly claims that the first Christians did not understand Jesus as divine nor worship him as such. However, he claims that the worship of Jesus first emerged in the late first century C. E. Here we see another famous scholar of the New Testament, who claims just like Casey that the divine Christology

⁷⁴ Cf. Larry W. HURTADO, *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God?* 19.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

started in the late first century C.E. On the other hand, Dunn just like Casey, did not associate the divine worship of Jesus in connection with apostle Paul. In his publication, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, he denies the fact that Paul uses the title *Kyrios* in identification of Jesus with God. He rather points out that all that apostle Paul was doing with this title was to distinguish Jesus from God. Paul uses this title as Lordship which fulfils God's redeeming purpose over humanity and this title is a kind of status granted by God to Jesus in the sense of sharing his authority with Jesus but not to be equated with God. For Dunn, no matter how impressive this title is reflected in the writings of apostle Paul, these simply cannot be understood as a sense of reverence of a divine figure in Pauline epistles.⁷⁶

Furthermore, Dunn like Casey did not see from Pauline letters any manifestation of devotion to Jesus. So having rejected the understanding of the manifestation of devotion to Jesus as sometimes seen in Paul's letters as worship, Dunn set out to explain Pauline Christology in terms of Adam Christology and wisdom Christology. In these explanations, he understands and expresses Jesus as archetypal human and also embodiment and expression of God's wisdom respectively. Christ the archetype of Adam points out that Adam is a type of Christ. Here, Jesus is presented and related back to Adam, a new Adam and a representative figure through whom humanity is saved. The best example for Dunn in this understanding is in Romans 5,12-21, where Paul contrasted Adam and Christ as two corporate personalities or representatives, where Adam's disobedience meant sin and death for humanity and Christ's obedience on the

⁷⁶ Cf. James D. G. DUUN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 252-260.

other hand, brings righteousness and abundance of grace. Dunn further observes that Paul describes Jesus as the second Adam who has a living relationship to his followers and that Adam and his deed of original sin are of great interest to apostle Paul as they are related to Christ and his redemptive act of salvation. So, for Dunn, Adamic Christology is very crucial in understanding Pauline Christology. Worthy of note is that he did not associate the idea of the pre-existence of Christ with the apostle Paul. For him, it is the pre-existence of Wisdom that is now identified as Christ.⁷⁷ Furthermore, Dunn uses certain Pauline Wisdom passages like 1 Cor. 8.6 and Col. 1.15-17 to examine what this Wisdom mean for Paul in relation to the idea of preexistence of Christ. From these passages, Dunn understands Wisdom as a way of speaking of God's creating act. In a simpler way, he understands Wisdom as ways of speaking about God's presence and activity in the universe. So, from Dunn's understanding of Paul, Jesus could be identified as divine wisdom. In a similar way, "what Paul probably means is that Jesus is the one in whom the very power that is from God (indeed that is God reaching out to men) has been manifested; that Jesus is the one in whom and through whom this divine power of God himself still comes to those who are called."⁷⁸ So here Dunn identifies Jesus as divine wisdom. He understands some sort of preexistence and sees Wisdom as the image of God. That is, the invisible God has made himself visible through his wisdom. The understanding here is that Paul is associating Christ with the same role that was traditionally associated to divine wisdom. In another words, what we now understand as

⁷⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 267-292. Here Dunn uses the quotations from 1 Cor. 8.6 and Col. 1.15-17 to argue that Jesus could be identified as divine wisdom.

⁷⁸ James D. G. DUNN, *Christology in the Making, An Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (2nd ed.), London: SCM Press, 1989, 178.

Pauline language of preexistence is actually traditional Jewish language for Wisdom. In his words, Dunn argues that “Paul was attributing to Christ the role previously attributed to divine Wisdom. Indeed, it is entirely consistent with the evidence to conclude that Paul was tacitly identifying Christ with Wisdom, indeed, as Wisdom. In thinking of preexistent Wisdom Paul now thought of Christ.”⁷⁹

In another of his publication, *Christology in the Making: An Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of Incarnation*, Dunn sets out to explain more what or who this Wisdom with which or whom Paul identifies Jesus with. In the first stage, Dunn examines the meaning of Wisdom in the pre-Christian Judaism especially, in passages like Job 28, Proverbs 8, 22-31, Wisdom 6, 12-11.1 and Sirach 24. Although Dunn acknowledges that the answers are not coherent but drew conclusion that Wisdom is nothing more than a personification of divine attribute, a personification of cosmic order and Wisdom is a hypothesis, a certain attribute proper to God. James Dunn in the second stage moves to examine this understanding with what apostle Paul is doing in his writings like in I Corinthians 1-2, 1 Corinthians 8.6, 1 Corinthians 10.4 and Romans 10,6-8. He gives example of what Paul is doing when he says that “the Word of God is foolishness for those who do not believe” (1Corinthians 1;18), as in contrast to the concept of the Corinthians understanding of Wisdom. With this understanding of Paul as attributing to Christ the same role that was traditionally attributed to divine wisdom, Dunn did not associate the divine worship of Jesus in connection with apostle Paul.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ James D. G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 270.

⁸⁰ Cf. James D. G. DUNN, *Christology in the Making*, 168-200.

So, we can say here that for Casey and Dunn, while granting that the worship of Jesus is reflected in the later New Testament writings, questioned whether it is accurate that the worship of Jesus reflected in Paul's epistles. So, one can say here that while maintaining an early high Christology with all manner of qualifications, both scholars ultimately deny the kind of divine Christology affirmed by Hurtado, Bauckham and others.

2.5 CHRIS TILLING

Chris Tilling, a Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies of St. Mellitus College has recently entered the Pauline divine-Christology debate with a new Theological lens. In his publication, *Paul's Divine Christology*, which is a lightly revised version of his doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of Max Turner at the London school of Theology; Chris Tilling provides us with the aim of his work when he says that the "modern scholarship has arguably reached something of an impasse on the precise question to be tackled in this volume, namely Is Paul's Christology divine?"⁸¹ Chris Tilling while building on the works of Hurtado, Buckham and Fee, Chris Tilling enters the debate by offering a fresh way of approaching the question of Pauline Christology and while referring to his work in particular, he argues that "the present volume thus seeks to refocus the Pauline divine-Christology debate by reengaging the sweep of themes in Paul's letters, while avoiding the construction of an interpretative lens that is

⁸¹ Chris TILLING, *Paul Divine Christology*, 2.

uninformed by those same Pauline themes.”⁸² To create a smooth path for his fresh discussion, Tilling saw the need to revisit the great works of few leading proponents of both low and high views of Pauline Christology. The various positions from both the leading proponents of low and high views of Pauline Christology serve as stepping stones for his discussion. He started with a healthy criticism against the leading proponents of low and high view of Pauline Christology and in the second Chapter of his work, Tilling began with a concrete survey of previous scholarship. In this second chapter of his publication, one observes the very division of the periods of Pauline divine Christology: Pre-1970s scholarship and Pauline divine Christology and post-1970s scholarship and Pauline divine Christology. In the pre-1970s scholarship especially during the time of reformation, Tilling argues that the question whether Paul’s Christology is divine has not formed a matter of debate and also Christology has not been seen with such unique formulation within the New Testament as we can see it today. However, in the post-1970s the scholarly questions and historical scheme started to experience a process of significant change. Again, here we see the role of the principal advocates of high view of Pauline Christology like Larry Hurtado, and Richard Bauckham and also advocates of low view of Pauline Christology like Maurice Casey.⁸³ Furthermore, after highlighting the views and pointing out some of the flaws and problems from the previous scholars, Tilling observes that there is something significant that other scholars were not able to recognize. Here, Tilling sees something beyond Christ-devotion. He sees a new account of divine Christology in apostle Paul that has to do with Christ-relation. This new

⁸² Ibid., 5.

⁸³ Cf. Ibid., 11-17.

account of divine Christology thus distinguishes Tilling from other scholars of Pauline Christology and can serve in a way as representative of his entire thesis. One can say that it serves as the substance of his argument for a high Christology in apostle Paul. Tilling suggests that at the center of Jewish understanding of God, one sees a kind of language that speaks of a unique relationship between Israel and YHWH. So, in the same way, Paul uses the same pattern of language to describe the relationship between Jesus and his followers. Simply put, Paul adopted the language traditionally used to describe the relationship between Israel and YHWH and attributed it to Christians and Christ. Like in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, instead of speaking about the relationship between Christians and God over against idolatry, we see Paul speaking about the relationship between Christian and the risen Lord over against idolatry.⁸⁴ With this understanding in view, Tilling did not hesitate to conclude that, “the way Second Temple Judaism understood God as unique, through the God-relation pattern, was used, by Paul, to express the pattern of data concerning the Christ-relation.”⁸⁵ The conviction here is that apostle Paul adopted the understanding of God and its uniqueness that was found among the Second Temple Judaism and uses the same in relation to Christian and the risen Lord. That is to say that Paul is implicitly saying that Jesus is not merely an exalted being, but that Jesus is on the divine side and should be included in the unique divine identity.

Worthy of note is that despite the agreement and disagreement with some conclusions of great thinkers and scholars, and Chris Tilling’s convincing argument about a new account of divine Christology in apostle Paul that has to do with Christ-

⁸⁴ Cf. Ibid., 104-141.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 141.

relation, the work of Tilling and especially his idea of Christ-relation is not devoid of criticisms. Recently, in his review of the work, Chris Kugler points among others that though the work of Tilling is far-reaching and comprehensive with great historical and theological insights, the absence of any discussion on messiahship is questionable and the lack is conspicuous. Again, Kugler observes that the consideration and controversy of Adam and/or image Christology is also remarkably absent. Kugler wonders then whether Tilling avoided such important discussions in order to present a coherent thought or probably, he might have considered them irreconcilable with his proposal for Christ-relation. Here, Chris Kugler pointed to the omission of any discussion of messiahship and the omission of Adam image Christology as a great lacuna in the work of Tilling.⁸⁶

Again, some scholars like Nijay Gupta were surprise to see how Tilling compresses what should have been a great volume of work to fewer pages. He wondered that Tilling's immense contribution to the study of Christology with this publication is enormous, yet he ended up squeezing into 250 pages what should have turned to a 10-volume series of work. So, what would have been a great volume of detailed work, unfortunately ended up in few pages.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Cf. Chris KUGLER, review to: TILLING Chris, Paul Divine Christology, Foreword. CAMPBELL Douglas, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, xxiv – 322.

⁸⁷ Cf. Nijay K. GUPTA, review to: TILLING Chris, Paul Divine Christology, 1-250.

CONCLUSION

The heated discussion whether Paul's Christology could be considered as divine among the earliest witnesses, for example in the time of apostle Paul or only in the later layers of the New Testament has been debated for many years among scholars. Scholars like Larry Hurtado and Richard Bauckham have answered in affirmative and understood the cultic veneration of Jesus to have originated in the earliest years of Christian movement. They argue that Jesus was worshipped from the beginning of Palestinian Jewish Christianity as one understood in the identity of the One and only God of Israel. For such Scholars, the deification of Jesus then is traceable right from the outset of Christianity and as such, was consistent with Jewish monotheism.

On the other hand, scholars such as James Dunn and Maurice Casey believe that apostle Paul did not regard the figure of Jesus as divine and as such, they do not associate the divine worship of Jesus with apostle Paul. They rather associate the origin of divine Christology with later New Testament writings especially in the late first century C.E. For them, the reverence we found given to Jesus in the time of apostles Paul did not amount to "worship" in that sense because there is no evidence in Pauline writings for such veneration. They rather attributed the earliest evidence of devotion with the Gospel of John.

Recently, Chris Tilling came up with a fresh way of approaching this question of Pauline Christology. He sees a new account of Christology in apostle Paul which is simply beyond Christian devotion and this he calls "Christ-relation", through which he analyzes the relationship between the risen Lord and Christians with reference to Jewish

monotheism. With this understanding and conviction, Chris Tilling presents the Christology of apostle Paul as fully divine Christology.

With this demonstration of the reasons for or against Paul's Christology as divine, and having understood the seriousness of this debate among scholars, our aim in the next chapter is to consider concretely some Christological titles used by Paul and also a possible understanding of these titles in background of their Jewish and Hellenistic cultures. Such consideration and investigation can serve as another light for us in understanding more the position of apostle Paul.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CHRISTOLOGICAL THEMES IN PAUL

INTRODUCTION

Having considered the different positions of New Testament scholars concerning the question whether statements about Jesus' divine character are to be found only in later layers of the New Testament or are they already there in the very earliest witnesses as for example in the time of the apostle Paul, we shall begin in this chapter with the first great aspect of the theology of apostle Paul, his Christology. We will discuss some titles he used to express the person of Jesus: Christos, Kyrios and the Son of God. Worthy of mention here is that Christology considers Paul's discussions in two aspects: the Person of Christ and the Work of Christ. The question here is then whether Christology and Soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) is the same in Paul or can they be separated? Can

one comfortably speak of Pauline Christology as a separate doctrine from his Soteriology? Is Pauline Christology not the same as his Soteriology, in the sense that his major interest was in discovering what Jesus' death and resurrection brought about for humanity? In his publication, *Pauline Christology*, Gordon D. Fee tries to make distinction between Christology that refers exclusively to the person of Christ. That is, Pauline understanding of who Christ was/is in distinction from what Christ did to save us as a savior (Soteriology). However, he realizes that the fact that Paul himself did not make such distinction poses a great challenge to such a study. He recognizes however, that Pauline Christology and Soteriology are not separate doctrines but should be seen as one. While Christology deals with the study of the person of Christ, the Son of God who became man, Soteriology deals with the study of the same Christ as a Savior. It is through Christ that the understanding of salvation is made clear. It is through Christ that humankind receives salvation. The relationship lies to the fact that his Christology is the ground for his Soteriology.⁸⁸ So, the aim of Paul's Christology is the saving significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus (soteriology), which in turn is the basis of other elements of his theology. Nevertheless, our concern in this chapter will be to examine Paul's understanding and evaluation of the person of Jesus through his use of some significant titles found among his writings. However, we cannot fully understand Paul's usage of these Christological titles without first understanding the background and the historical circumstances that had influenced the very understanding of Paul. George Ladd, while recognizing apostle Paul as the greatest mind in the New Testament in the

⁸⁸ Cf. Gordon D. FEE, *Pauline Christology, An Exegetical Theological Study*, Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007, 1-2.

interpretation of the person of Jesus, believes that Paul's diverse background must have had great influence on his thought and that his call to discipleship does not empty his previous religious ideas to replace them with ready-made theology. For him then, "we must interpret Paul's ideas against a very diverse background if we are to understand the historical influences that molded Paul to be the first Christian theologian."⁸⁹

In the background of this study, we noted these diverse influences of apostle Paul which include: his birth, his dual citizenship (Hebrew Pharisee and Roman), his education under Gamaliel and raised in a strict Jewish environment with rabbinic influences. We also noted his linguist (Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic and probably Latin) and also his beliefs (orthodox Jew and later called to discipleship). So, with these influences in mind, "we shall be able to identify the principal characteristic of each title. Before we investigate its use in the New Testament, we shall speak of each title's significance in Judaism and (when the concept exists there) in the general history of religion, particularly in Hellenism."⁹⁰ The Hellenistic world which was believed to be created by Alexander the great at the end of the fourth century B.C., after the conquest of the near east must have had great influence with her Greek language, Philosophy and cultural on Judaism and early Christians. Notable among these influences is the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, a translation known as the Septuagint. This impact extends far beyond the Scriptures, as we will find out from the Christological titles.

⁸⁹ George E. LADD, *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974, 399.

⁹⁰ Oscar CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 7.

3.1 CHRISTOS

The importance and significance of this Messianic title of Jesus in Christological studies and also in the Christian Church today is so great that most scholars believe that it is logical to start any Christological discussion with the Messianic title because for these scholars, it supersedes all other titles and it is the central way of designating the Christian understanding of Jesus. Also, this title is extremely relevant not only to the Christian religion but to Jewish religions as such. Again, for these scholars, the title is the most important of all the Christological concepts historically as well as theologically. Christian theology centers on the belief that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah and this belief serves as the heart of the Christian faith.⁹¹ For Oscar Cullmann, “the Greek *χριστός* (derived from *χρίω*, to anoint) is nothing more than a translation of the Hebrew *mashiach*, ‘anointed one.’”⁹² The idea here is that the Hebrew word *messiach* comes from the verb ‘to anoint’ and so the word *messiach* means ‘anointed one’. Again, the Greek equivalent of the word is *christos* or ‘Christ’. Thus, we see here that the title is traceable to the Septuagintal ‘Christos’ and its Greek rendering of the Hebrew *mashiah*. Here, one understands the idea of *Χριστός* or Messiah as an idea traceable to ancient Hebrew

⁹¹ Cf. Donald GUTHRIE, *New Testament Theology*. England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981, 236. See also Oscar CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 132. See also George E. LADD, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 133.

⁹² Oscar CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 112.

concept of anointing of a person with special mission like kings. Hebrew kings were therefore understood as ‘the Lord’s anointed’. This form of anointing is then carried out by a priest or prophet, who is believed to be a representative of God in the ceremony. With this anointing, the king is conceived as rightly installed. In the Jewish Background, Donald Guthrie offers us four main sources and indication about the idea of Messiah: The Old Testament and the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphical literature, the Qumran scrolls and the rabbinical writings. He argues that in the Old Testament, much was said about the coming of the Messiah but little was said about the Messiah. In the Qumran, expectation of two Messiahs one for Aaron and the other for Israel became predominant. Then in the Apocalypses of Ezra and Baruch, this idea was directly linked to the Son of David. One thing that is central to all these sources however, is the idea of the anointing of a person for a special mission which include Kings and priests, prophets and patriarchs. Guthrie further remarks that although the idea of the coming Messiah was widespread among the Jews, the Jewish background of the title of Messiah is not clear and the character was not clearly defined because each group associates a Messiah that would fit their own ideology.⁹³ An important idea that is noticeable from this explanation is that the messianic tradition is associated with monarchy in ancient Israelites. Thomas Raush maintains a similar view that “the messianic tradition has its roots in the Israelite monarchy, particularly in the person of David who remains the ideal Israelite king.”⁹⁴ Thomas Raush concretely relates the roots of the messianic tradition to the promise made to David by the prophet Nathan with the promise that God will raise up an heir after his

⁹³ Cf. Donald GUTHRIE, *New Testament Theology*, 236 -237.

⁹⁴ Thomas P. RAUSH, *Who is Jesus*, 42.

servant David and establish a royal throne for him forever (cf. 2 Sam 7: 11-14). However, after the reign of David, the Israelites entered into a long succession of prophets like Amos, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, and Malachi. God raised these prophets whose work has to do with teaching the people the law and at the same time, calling them to repentance. But the history of Israel did not continue only with the succession of prophets, Raush also argues that from the time of Hosea and Micah a strong prophecy was heard that God would remember what Isaiah calls "the remnant of Israel" (Isa 10:20-22). The idea here is that God's salvation would again be manifested to the people in the future. These prophets saw a time when the remnant of Israel shall return and shall turn to God who will continue to lead them as before. Progressively, from the time of Micah, he concretely describes the figure as one who will be born in Bethlehem of Judea and who would be the ruler and king over Israel. So, the reestablishment of the David dynasty by God through this figure who will come to bring back the lost glory of and reestablish the people became predominant among the prophets.⁹⁵ With the emergence of these prophecies, the expectation for a future king who will bring peace especially in the postexilic Judaism became so strong. With that the prophetic messages became interwoven with images associated with this messianic figure. The very confusion about the character of the Messiah created a lack of clarity which resulted to the fact that there were no clear and precise picture of the expected figure that is to come. However, some scholars like Richard Longenecker while recognizing this lack of clarity about the future Messiah at this period, observes that the

⁹⁵ Cf. Ibid., 42- 46 (Emphasis is original).

predominant idea among the many different forms was that of the throne of David. That is to say that the Messiah was to be a political agent, one who will rule from the throne of David. The idea here becomes that of a political Messiah; a political redemption in connection with the person of Messiah.⁹⁶ So, despite the apparent confusion about the expected Messiah however, what is clear is that God's covenant with Israel would now be fulfilled through the house and descendant of David. So, generation later, the remnants of David's empire awaited the fulfilment of this promise of God through Nathan (cf. 2 Samuel 7, 12-16) to David that his throne would be established forever. A promise of everlasting kingdom, a son of David who would rule forever and build a lasting house.

Furthermore, the next step is to find out the importance of this Messianic title among the early Jewish Christian. Did the early Jewish Christians understand Jesus as Messiah? Did even his closest followers recognize him as the Messiah? While writing on the Christology of early Jewish Christian, Richard Longenecker has a strong conviction that the messiahship of Jesus was central and basic in the earliest Jewish Christians. For he argues that "so basic and central, in fact, was the messiahship of Jesus in the consciousness of early believers that it was the Greek word for Messiah, Christos, and not another, which became uniquely associated with the person of Jesus."⁹⁷ With this, we see the conviction and consciousness of the early Jewish Christians in associating the person of Jesus with Χριστός. This implies that by the time the Gospel

⁹⁶ Cf. Richard N. LONGENECKER, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*. Studies in Biblical Theology, (2nd Series 17), Naperville, ILL: SCM Press Ltd, 1970, 63. See also Donald GUTHRIE, *New Testament Theology*, 237.

⁹⁷ Richard N. LONGENECKER, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*, 63.

writers were putting pen to paper, the early Jewish Christians had already established in their minds the fact that Jesus was/is the Messiah. This claim became evident also from the letters of apostle Paul which were believed to be among the earliest New Testament writings. Hence, Gerald O'Collins argues that "the oldest Christian document shows us Paul repeatedly calling Jesus 'Christ' in a way that suggests that within twenty years of Jesus' death and resurrection this comprehensive title for Jesus' identity and powers was simply taken for granted by Paul and his readers."⁹⁸ In the same way, Martin Hengel remarks that "Paul, the earliest Christian author, whose oldest extant letter to the churches in Thessalonica was composed some twenty years after the crucifixion of Jesus, gives this same Jesus the name *Χριστός* 270 times in his seven genuine letters; this is more than half of all occurrences in the New Testament."⁹⁹ What is clear for us here, is that the extent of the usage of the title *Χριστός* in the seven genuine letters of Paul serve as evidence that the apostle recognized the significance and importance of this title. Guthrie links the importance of the significance of this title even to his Damascus experience. He maintains the view that Paul must have had contact with the early Christians immediately after the Damascus event and must have heard about the claim that Jesus is the Messiah (cf. Acts 5:42) because, this must have been one of the most important teachings of the new faith and also of the major reasons for the oppositions this new faith encountered. Again, in relation to the gospels, Guthrie understands a vital significant difference between the epistles of apostle Paul and the way the gospels

⁹⁸ Gerald O'COLLINS, *Christology, A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, 2nd Edition, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009, 24.

⁹⁹ Martin HENGEL, *Studies in Early Christology*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark LTD, 1995, 1.

presented the person of Jesus. The suffering Messiah in the gospels through the resurrection now becomes the glorious Christ of the epistles.¹⁰⁰ What is clear here is that the resurrection event gives a new and more dignified understanding of the Messiah. That is to say that Paul understands the messianic role of Jesus from his work of salvation and his glorious resurrection. Hence:

Der Messias-Titel, der in der vorösterlichen Zeit eine durchaus untergeordnet Rolle gespielt hat, hat durch die österlichen Ereignisse eine so eindeutige Klärung und Festlegung im Sinne des religiösen und priesterlichen Messias und des leidenden Gottesknechtes (Is 53) erfahren, daß er – unter der Wolke alttestamentlicher Zeugnisse für die Judenchristen und für Die Heidenchristen ein ein überaus beliebter Würtitel Jesus werden konnte.¹⁰¹

So, Paul's understanding of the messiahship of Jesus from the point of view of his resurrection involves a transformation of traditional messianic categories from which we see a better clarification and understanding of an exalted Messiah after the resurrection. In another words, the work of salvation and the resurrection of Jesus become the supreme validation of his messiahship.

Form the preceding survey of the ascription to Jesus of the messianic title, we come with the conclusion that there exists this belief among the early Jewish Christians and especially in the writings of apostle Paul, that Jesus was the fulfilment of the long-awaited messiah.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Donald GUTHRIE, *New Testament Theology*, 248.

¹⁰¹ Alfred LÄPPLE, *Biblische Verkündigung in der Zeitenwende. Werkbuch zur Bibelkatechese*, 3 Band, *Jesus Christus - Messias und Kyrios*, München: Don Bosco Verlag, 1966, 87.

3.2 KURIOS

We will now consider *κύριος* as another important Christological title of Jesus used by apostle Paul. In a way to understand better this Greek word *κύριος* (Kyrios), Oscar Cullman refers to the fact that the Jews as a result of reverence did not address the name of God, YHWH. They rather preferred to replace it with the Hebrew word Adonai which was used in their place of worships. Adonai, which means “Lord” gradually became a substitute and also Jewish designation for God especially in the first century before and the first century after Christ. In other words, The Jews in the place of worships substitute Adonai for the sacred name, commonly called the Tetragrammaton. Here, Oscar will argue that the title Kyrios is the Greek translation of the tetragrammaton YHWH, the covenant name for God in the Old Testament.¹⁰² So, Kyrios becomes then the way the New Testament authors render the divine Name (YHWH) when alluding to Old Testament passages. The term becomes the Greek translation of the tetragrammaton YHWH, the covenant name for God in the Old Testament. For many scholars, *κύριος* is the most predominant designation for the person of Jesus not only in the epistles of apostle Paul but in Gentile Christianity. For them, it remains the significant way of speaking about the person of Jesus by apostle Paul. At the center of Pauline proclamation is the Lordship of Jesus and this title became so important that Paul summarizes his writings as the preaching of Jesus as Lord.¹⁰³ The position from these scholars makes it

¹⁰² Cf. Oscar CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 180-199.

¹⁰³ Cf. Vincent TAYLOR, *The Names of Jesus*. London: Macmillan and Co. Publisher, 1953, 45. Also see George E. LADD, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 455. Again, see James D. G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 244.

clear that the word *κύριος* which is translated as Lord is among the most frequent titles used by apostle Paul. However, this does not mean that the title originated from Paul. Edwin Freed is of the view that Paul was only using a title that was predominant among his contemporaries and also familiar to his readers to address Jesus. While making reference to the ancient inscriptions, Edwin Freed maintains that this title ‘Lord’ was used for Roman emperors even before the time of apostle Paul and that even the Egyptian Ptolemies (kings) were addressed as Lords. More also Herod the Great and Agrippa I and Agrippa II were also addressed with this same title.¹⁰⁴ From these ancient inscriptions, one sees that the Ptolemies, the Greek dynasty that ruled ancient Egypt adopted this title in respect to their kings and rulers to gain recognition and also to legitimize their rule. So, the Greek rulers of ancient Egypt were already given this title to designate their position and authority among their subjects. Furthermore, Donald Guthrie understands this title as word of respect in the world of the New Testament period use for courtesy and for addressing superiors. In extension, it was also used in addressing pagan deities like the Egyptian goddess of healing and magic, Isis. Again, for Guthrie, although this title has its usage among the Jewish people especially in the Septuagint rendering of the Hebrew Adonai, he added that it was widely used in the Gentile world.¹⁰⁵ Hurtado has similar view with Guthrie that in the Roman-era Greek, this title was given to someone of superior position like the slave masters and again the title is likened to the English term, sir. However, he further noted that this title was a familiar part of religious terms which was adopted to address Roman emperors, where

¹⁰⁴ Cf Edwin D. FREED, *The Apostle Paul and his Letters*. UK: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2005, 137-138.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Donald GUTHRIE, *New Testament Theology*, 291.

the title is used to indicate someone or a deity with authority, power or control over others or kingdom and gradually through the usage among the pagan communities, it became a wider linguistic term.¹⁰⁶ From this understanding, one notices the Idea of addressing a superior or a deity in the Gentile world and also the particular connotation among the Jewish people especially, in the Septuagint with the idea of the Hebrew Adonai. With this widely use of this title, many scholars have rejected the notion that the title was only adopted in the Gentile Christian communities but also associated the title to the original Jewish community. Thus:

Es läßt sich aus dem Neuen Testament erschließen, daß der Kyrios Titel um so häufiger verwendet wurde, je weiter das Christentum voranschritt. Es konnte daher die Meinung entstehen, dieser Würdetitel „Kyrios“ sei erst in den heidenchristlichen Gemeinden auf Christus übertragen worden. Diese Auffassung, daß der Kyrios-Titel der jüdischen Urgemeinde nicht bekannt war, sondern erst von den heidenchristlichen Gemeinden, die Griechisch sprachen, aufgeriffen wurde (etwa im Hinblick auf den Kaiserkult), kann nicht mehr aufrechterhalten werden.¹⁰⁷

Again, worthy of note is that both usage in the Hebrew and Aramaic and also in the Greek-speaking Jews does not limit the title only to the religious sense. We have seen earlier about the use of the title in the general sense of ‘master’ or ‘sir’. However, the basic notion of authority and superiority becomes here of great importance because “the idea is that Yahweh is the true king of Israel and that the earthly king exercises this divine function in his place.”¹⁰⁸ So, while it is true that Yahweh is the ultimate king of Israel

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Larry W. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 108.

¹⁰⁷ Alfred LÄPPLE, *Biblische Verkündigung in der Zeitenwende*, 93.

¹⁰⁸ Oscar CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 144.

and over all of creation, human kings were believed to serve as Yahweh's agents to rule the nation.

Another important aspect is to know how the same title became applicable to Jesus among the early Christians and in the writings of apostle Paul. One thing that is clear from our discussion is the fact that this title had already existed among the various communities. Furthermore, on this very question of the application of the title of lord to Jesus, many scholars were of the view that the Hellenistic Gentiles or the Greek-speaking Christians were the first to apply this title to Jesus. Their understanding here is that as a result of the influence of the surrounding pagan communities with their reverence of deities subordinate to higher gods, the Hellenistic Christian community started to apply this title to Jesus. And with this, the previous strict monotheism started to lose its strictness. So, in this case, Jesus is understood as a second range of divine being alongside with the supreme God. For some of these scholars, with the idea Psalm 110:1, a royal psalm and messianic psalm, the Hellenistic Jewish Christianity was able to link the exaltation of the Messiah with the title Lord. So, this influence gradually started moving from the Hellenistic community to the Palestine community.¹⁰⁹ From these scholarly views, one understands the influence by the surrounding pagan communities on the application of this title 'Lord' to Jesus. First, the Hellenistic community even before the time of apostle Paul has adopted this title and applied the same to Jesus. Here we see that the use of this Christological title did not originate directly from Paul nor in

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Carl J. DAVIS, *The Name and the Way of the Lord*. Old Testament Themes, New Testament Christology, Journal for the Study of New Testament Supplement Series 129, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996, 17-18. Also, Wilhelm BOUSSET, *Kyrios Christos*. Trans: John STEELY, New York: Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1970, 136-137.

the early Jewish-Christian community, but is already traceable within the Hellenistic community. As a result of these surrounding influences, many scholars have also argued that the attribution of lordship to Jesus by apostle Paul offers different meanings and should not be understood from a particular perspective. In the view of Nicholas Wright, the title carries two different connotations depending on how one wants to look at the person of apostle Paul and his surrounding influences: his Jewish upbringing or his Greco-Roman audience. If one considers this title from his Greco-Roman territories, where he had his primary audience, then this title refers to all kinds of people just like the English polite form of 'sir'. However, this polite use did not in any way removed the strict sense of the title in addressing social superiors. On the other hand, in his Jewish upbringing, Paul saw in the very heart of Jewish monotheism the person of Jesus as the revelation of the one God who has been enthroned as the Lord of the word. In this way, Paul is trying to align the person of Jesus with the word Kyrios, which is the Septuagint way of rendering the divine Name (YHWH), the not-to-be pronounced Name of God.¹¹⁰ In the same way, Donald Guthrie recognizes two major lines of evidences whenever Paul attributes lordship to Jesus. On one instance, Paul uses this title on many occasions where he is trying to echo traditional material which is linked to primitive thought. A good example here is the *marana tha* saying in 1 Corinthians 16:22, an Aramaic word that has been translated as 'Our Lord, come', irrespective of difficulties with the actual translation. On the other instance, Paul uses this title in consideration of his own

¹¹⁰ Cf. Nicholas T. WRIGHT, *What Saint Paul really said*, 56-72.

distinctive developments which have to do with his understanding of the person of Jesus in the lights of his resurrection and also that of his exaltation.¹¹¹

Another scholar, Hurtado recognizes three main contexts in apostle Paul in which Jesus is characteristically referred as Lord:

(1) In hortatory statements and passages Jesus is the Lord/Master whose teaching and example are authoritative for believers. (2) In references to eschatological expectations, Jesus is designated the Lord who will come again as agent of God. (3) In formulae and passages reflecting actions of the worship setting, Kyrios designates the unequaled status given to Jesus by God and is the characteristic title given to Jesus in the worship practices of early Christian circles.¹¹²

Hurtado understands here that these types of references of Jesus as 'lord' are reflected in the religious thought and life of the earlier Christians and as well as apostle Paul. Furthermore, in this view, he argues that the earlier believers were not so much interested on the precise distinctions of nuances of calling Jesus 'Lord' as the modern scholars. What is important for Hurtado is that we have to be careful while dealing with Christological title like that of the lordship of Jesus as used by apostle Paul because each context has its own connotation and uniqueness as used by apostle Paul.¹¹³ With this, we come to see that Jesus' lordship was central for Paul. In Addition, many scholars believed that the significance of the lordship of Jesus is seen clearly from his resurrection from the dead. Here, James Dunn understands that the decisive event especially for apostle

¹¹¹ Cf. Donald GUTHRIE, *New Testament Theology*, 295-296.

¹¹² Larry W. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 117. See also Calvin CLARENCE DU TOIT, *Biblical Spiritualities of the "City to Come": Narratives of meaning, Complexity, and Resistance* [unpublished. Master Thesis at the University of South Africa] 2015, 127-128.

¹¹³ Cf. Larry W. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 117-118.

Paul, for the lordship of Jesus is the resurrection. Dunn uses the most striking example of Phil. 2.6-11, usually regarded as a pre-Pauline hymn quoted by Paul to argue that the name that was bestowed as attested to this hymn is presumably “Lord”. And he further understands that even the confession that “Jesus is Lord” (Rom. 10,9), is already a public expression of the fact that God raised Jesus from the dead and by that virtue, Jesus is Lord.¹¹⁴ Therefore, the resurrection of Jesus serves as the supreme confirmation and endorsement for apostle Paul that Jesus is lord. Again, “the early Christians believed that the Father had placed Jesus, by virtue of his death and resurrection, at the apex of time and eternity-higher than any power or person in the universe.”¹¹⁵ With this, we come with the conclusion that the title of the lordship of Jesus was not foreign to apostle Paul and his own time. Paul actually designated the person of Jesus as Lord in his epistles.

3.3 SON OF GOD

Some New Testament Scholars understand the Christological phrase/title ‘the Son of God’ as the most important messianic phrase in the study of the self-disclosure of Jesus. The title ‘Son of God’ does not however, originate with the coming of Jesus nor with apostle Paul, but the phrase ‘Son of God’ as a title has been applied to different

¹¹⁴ Cf. James D. G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 245-246 (Emphasis is original).

¹¹⁵ Ann SPANGLER, *Praying the Names of God*. March 30, 2023, URL: <https://www.lightsource.com/devotionals/praying-the-names-of-god-with-ann-spangler/praying-the-names-of-god-march-29-11602043.html> [Accessed: May 14, 2023].

figures right from the period of antiquity. So, one of the importance of this phrase 'Son of God' lies to the fact that this phrase has different meanings in the religious history of the Greek and Romans, and also in religious literature of Judaism and also Christianity. In our discussion here, we will try to consider the meaning of this phrase in the Hellenistic culture, in Judaism and also in Christianity.

For a better understanding of this title 'Son of God' in the New Testament, many scholars have made allusion to the Hellenistic sources and maintained that the phrase 'Son of God' should be traced back to the ancient world and that the origin of this title should be sought in the Gentile-Hellenistic environment. Worthy of note is that the Greek and Roman religions have two major possible ways for human-divine transformation: as anthropomorphism, where the gods took human shape and interact with humans on earth or as apotheosis, whereby a human is elevated to the status of the gods, a kind of deification or divinization. Greek heroes and heroines were elevated to godhood through this process, apotheosis. Some of them as reward for a good act that was accomplished like that of Heracles, Asclepius and Aristaeus, others through marriage to a particular god or goddess like in the case of Tithonus and Psyche were elevated to such an esteem status. The Greeks and Romans and even the Oriental rulers, especially Egyptians conceived of their deities as anthropomorphic, that is, human in form and character. This important element gives the idea that these deities are subject to reproduction and birth although with superhuman powers like that of changing of shapes, flying and sometimes becoming invisible. Numerous human character and behaviors could be attributed to them however, the major proof of their divinity lies in their immortality. With this idea of deification and being subject to reproduction and birth, scholars who were of the view

that the title 'Son of God' originated in the Hellenistic culture believe that some of the legendary heroes of Greek and Roman myth were called sons of a particular god or goddess. For example, ancient Greek heroes like Theseus, Achilles and Odysseus and also ancient Roman heroes like Aeneas, Augustus and Gaius Marius were considered as sons of a particular god. Again, among the ancient oriental religions and rulers, especially Egyptian Ptolemies, they were also called sons of god in which above all, kings were thought to be begotten of gods. This belief was especially common in Egypt as these Pharaohs were all considered to be the sons of the sun god Re.¹¹⁶ The title was mainly used to justify heroes who were often considered as superhuman sons of a particular god such as Zeus, Apollo, Hermes, Poseidon and Ares. In the same way, with the deification of emperors and gradual understanding of kings as divine in the ancient Greek, 'Son of god' started to be understood as literary son of emperor, and thereby in extension to that of the Romans. The title was mainly used to justify political authority, rulers who were often considered as superhuman. For example, after the deification of Julius Caesar, his son Augustus was called 'Son of god'. Also, after the death of Augustus, he was deified and his adopted son, Tiberias was called 'Son of god'. Darby Nock explains this better when he says that “the Emperor was called θεοῦ υἱός, but in the particular sense of being son of his deified predecessor, as Augustus was of Julius by adoption, which in antiquity gave status more like that of a son of the body than we can easily imagine.”¹¹⁷ Furthermore, figures like Alexander the Great and Plato were also

¹¹⁶ Cf. James D. G. DUNN, *Christology in the Making*, 14. See also Oscar CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 270. Also, George E. LADD, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 161.

¹¹⁷ Arthur D. NOCK, *Early Gentile Christianity and Its Hellenistic Background*. New York: Harper and Row, 1964, 45.

considered to be sons of gods. What is clear here is that in the Hellenistic culture, the designation 'Son of god' was applied to anyone believed to be possessed by divine power. And in this Hellenistic culture, the concept is deeply rooted in polytheism and can hardly be separated from the polytheistic background of pagan antiquity. Another thing that is clear here is that there are references to human race as offspring and heirs of a particular high god or goddess in ancient Greek, Rome and Egyptian culture, and for some scholars, that may relate to the way apostle Paul and the early Christians try to attach special significance to Jesus as son of God.

The phrase 'Son of God' as a title was also found in the Hebrew Scriptures. So, "the phrase 'son of God' is used in the Hebrew Bible as another way to refer to humans who have special relationship with God."¹¹⁸ Gerald O'Collins also points out among others the idea that divine sonship was attributed to figures that were believed to have element of heavenly life of God in them. In the Palestine Judaism, the title denotes many figures like in the Book of Job 1:6, it applies to Angels; in the Book of Psalms 82:6, it applies to human ruler and in 2 Samuel 7:14, it applies to king of Israel like David. The title was also applicable to the whole nations of Israel. When God instructed Moses in Exodus 4:22-23 in preparation for him to speak before Pharaoh, God calls Israel his firstborn son. Also figures like angelic beings were seen as possessors of heavenly life of God and were referred to as 'sons of God'. However, besides these figures, Gerald also observes that certain individual persons were called 'sons of God' as a result of their righteousness before God. Appointment to an office by God's design, like that of David

¹¹⁸ "Son of God" in Wikipedia. 2002, URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God [Accessed: May 14, 2023].

whose royal title is the 'son of God' is seen as a good example. Kings of Israel were considered in some way to have special position via adoption by God at their enthronement. Furthermore, Gerald observes that the next idea of divine sonship which dominated the pre-Christian Judaism is the collective divine sonship which has to do with the whole people of Israel. Here Israel is seen as a chosen people with special adoption by God and with special privilege among other nations. Israel regarded itself as the son of God because it was the chosen race, a generation created in the image and likeness of God. A people God has made for Himself, a handiwork of Yahweh.¹¹⁹ Alfred Läßle affirms this idea of collective divine sonship that dominated the Jewish culture when he says that „Die Bezeichnung „Sohn Gottes“ bzw. Söhne Gottes hatte für das jüdische Volk noch eine weite und allgemeine Bedeutung, insofern alle Menschen Kinder bzw. Söhne Gottes sind.“¹²⁰

Another important aspect of this title in Judaism has to do with the association of this title with the expected Messiah. Some scholars maintain the view that the title 'Son of God' was derived from Jewish Davidic Messianology. This idea of the messianic Son of God goes back to the promise to David with reference to his heir who should succeed him on the throne of Israel. Speaking about this heir, God says, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (2 Sam. 7:14). These scholars observe that significance of this phrase 'Son of God' is clearly seen in Psalm 2. In this book of Psalms, we see a provocative instance where God speaks of his anointed servant and also whom he calls 'my son' and here, the coming heir is called the anointed of the Lord, the king, and God's Son: "You

¹¹⁹ Cf. Gerald O'COLLINS, *Christology, A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, 122-123.

¹²⁰ Alfred LÄPPEL, *Biblische Verkündigung in der Zeitenwende*, 89.

are my son, today I have begotten you" (Ps. 2:7). This anointed one is to receive from the Lord God of Israel the nation for his inheritance. Originally, this referred to the Davidic king, but later Jewish tradition started to understand this as referring to the Messiah, God's anointed.¹²¹ The very understanding here is that the expected Messiah would be called son of God.

Many New Testament scholars like Larry Hurtado observe that though there are only fifteen references to Jesus as Son of God in the seven undisputed letters of apostle Paul, the idea of seeing Jesus' divine sonship is very significant for apostle Paul. Hurtado did not attach so much importance to this Pauline special significance of Jesus as son of God to the ancient references to the elevation of heroes and heroines to godhead or the considerations of special figures as sons of a god or goddess as we already found in the polytheistic background. He did not however dispute the fact that the divine sonship was part of the understanding of the pagan religious environment of the Greek-Roman era, and that they referred to certain special individuals as sons of gods and treated them as divine. However, for Hurtado, a careful analysis of this title as used in Pauline writings, will definitely indicate that his attribution of divine sonship to Jesus is greatly influenced from the biblical and Jewish traditions. This fact becomes clear for Hurtado from Pauline references of Jesus as son of God in Romans and Galatians, the two epistles in which Paul makes the most detailed presentation of his message in connection with the Old Testament and Jewish traditions.¹²² Again for Hurtado, the concentration of references

¹²¹ Cf. Reginald H. FULLER, *The Foundations of the New Testament Christology*, 187. See also George E. LADD, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 160-161.

¹²² Cf. Larry W. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 101-104.

in Romans and Galatians shows how Paul understood the significance of this title in terms of Jewish and biblical traditions. Hurtado further points out that this divine sonship was an important category in the biblical and Jewish tradition that had actually shaped the religious vocabulary of early Christians and also that of apostle Paul. He further observes that Paul's references to Jesus as Son of God does not function as a way of expressing his divinity or of justifying his worship, but go a long way to express Jesus' unique intimate favor with God and also shows the direct involvement of God in the redemptive work. This unique standing favor with God is evident in Pauline consistent use of the Greek definite article in reference to Jesus as divine Son, thus connoting the unique status of Jesus as "the" Son. This very use of the Greek definite article distinguishes Jesus from other pagan understanding and usage of this same title. Hurtado finally suggests that Pauline understanding of Jesus' divine sonship is very crucial in understanding his thought after his call to discipleship. Before his call to discipleship, Paul had regarded Jesus as a miserable false teacher, a man who was accused and suffered a miserable death, but with his usage of this title, we see something totally opposite, a radical change of view, a new understanding of Jesus as one sent by God and having a unique relationship with God.¹²³

Another scholar Walter Kasper is of the view that the title Son of God represents the core of the Christian tradition irrespective of the fact that many were of the objection that the title or the phrase son of God offers us with a remnant of an ununiformed mythological understanding through which it becomes easier to move from human to

¹²³ Cf. Ibid., 104-108 (Emphasis is original).

divine and such a mingling of divine and human was absolutely foreign to the biblical idea of strict monotheism. People with such objection make allusion to the Old Testament where such title was used without a kind of demythologization of that title. The Old Testament usage of the title for people like kings and other special figures did not in any way based on the polytheistic and mythological background or on the pantheistic background of Stoic philosophy. The reason for the objection here is that the title Son of God has to be understood from the Old Testament background of election-faith and the theocratic ideas that is associated with it. This understanding in the light of the Old Testament is very important if any attempt is to be made in the new interpretation that would be offered to the title in the New Testament. Furthermore, Kasper points out that the fresh interpretation in the New Testament is not based on the abstract and speculative way but in a historical and concrete way, which has to do with the interpretation of this title on the basis of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. That is to say, the concrete and historical interpretation of Jesus' divine Sonship appears clearly in Pauline theology of the Cross, where the Cross together with the Resurrection is seen as symbolic for God's action.¹²⁴ In reference to the dating of this title among the followers of Jesus, Gerald O'Collins observes that with the oldest Christian document which calls Jesus Son of God (1 Thess. 1:10), it becomes clear that this title had already entered the Christian usage decades earlier. Here, he did not associate the title as a later development like in the Johannine literature, but observes that although Paul uses this title only seventeen times in his undisputed epistles, he did not make serious effort at any instance to prove the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and this goes further to point to the fact that

¹²⁴ Cf. Walter KASPER, *Jesus the Christ*, 151-154.

the understanding of this title is already common among the early Christians to whom Paul writes.¹²⁵

What is important for us nevertheless is that in the New Testament, the title son of God was used and applied to the person of Jesus Christ on many occasions and that the earliest writings of apostle Paul also bear such witness.

CONCLUSION

We noted a great influence of the Hellenistic culture on Jews and early Christians and especially as background and circumstances that influenced the understanding of apostle Paul. Although Paul grew up and shared with the religion of his people together with their religious instruction, their sacred writings, their method of interpretation, yet the influence of the Hellenistic culture on apostle Paul cannot be easily denied. His letters that were written in Greek immediately suggest such conclusion. We also noted that various Christological titles can be deduced from the old Jewish promises and usage as found in various Jewish literatures. Such designations and titles are being used for people who have been chosen by God and given a special mission. However, such designations and titles were also found in the Hellenistic world. So, it becomes clear that these titles, especially Christological titles have each a specific background which shows that they were not created out of nothing.

¹²⁵ Cf. Gerald O'COLLINS, *Christology, A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, 121-122.

As a result of the importance and its central way of designating the person of Jesus, we started with the Messianic title Christos. We found out that the title is traceable to ancient Hebrew concept of anointing of a person for special mission. Then we saw the very efforts of the early Christians in associating the person of Jesus with the same title and finally how Paul came to understand the Messiah from the point of view of Jesus' death and resurrection.

We considered the second most used title by Paul to refer to Jesus, Kyrios. We discovered that the title Kyrios is the Greek translation of the Tetragrammaton YHWH, the covenant name for God in the Old Testament. We discovered further the use of this title among the ancient Gentile world and how the title was used to designate superiors like Roman emperors, Egyptian Ptolemies, slave masters and even in the general English sense of the word sir. We discovered that many scholars associated the application of this title by apostle Paul as a result of the influence from the Hellenistic communities. Whatever the case may be, we understood that the title was central for apostle Paul especially, in connection with the resurrection of Jesus which serves as endorsement that Jesus is lord.

As a final step in the section, we moved to discover the most important phrase/title in the self-disclosure of Jesus, Son of God. We witnessed a serious division among scholars over the origin of this title Son of God. Those who favor the Hellenistic origin point to the fact that Greek, Roman and Oriental heroes and heroines were considered superhuman and elevated to the status of the son of god. Such scholars conclude that apostle Paul and early Christians may have adopted the same way of attribution. The second group of scholars associated this title with the Hebrew Scriptures,

where it was used to designate figures like angels, patriarchs and prophets and also the collective divine sonship of Israel as a nation. Also here, the title was narrowed down to Davidic Messianology, which has to do with the promise God made to king David. Towards the end of this section, we considered how apostle Paul came to use this title, Son of God and how he associated the title and its interpretation on the basis of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

With this consideration of some significant titles used by apostle Paul to express the person of Jesus and the principal characteristics of each title and connotation in the Hellenistic world, Judaism and early Christian period, our aim in the next chapter is to consider concretely with these Christological titles, how apostle Paul understands the person of Jesus; who is Jesus for apostle Paul? Is Pauline Christology actually divine?

CHAPTER FOUR: EVIDENCE OF PAULINE DIVINE CHRISTOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

With our considerations of the significant titles used by apostle Paul and the great influences of these titles which show that these titles were not created out of nothing, we shall begin in this final chapter by considering the actual meaning, intention and usage of these titles so as to understand the underlying Christological teachings of apostle Paul. And since we observed earlier in our introduction that Paul did not treat Christology as a separate category, nor did he give a comprehensive presentation of his Christological belief in any particular letter, we shall focus in this chapter with six Pauline passages, all taken from his undisputed letters: Romans 1:2-4, 1 Corinthians 10:9, Romans 9:5, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Philippians 2:6-11 and Galatians 4:4. We shall also adopt the use of tables in this section for a better understanding and clarification of the passages. The effort here is not to give a comprehensive exegetical analysis of these passages, but rather, to highlight certain Christological connotations and understandings within a specific passage. By examining the selected specific evidence from Paul's undisputed letters, we shall try to answer the basic question of our study; whether Pauline Christology is a divine Christology?

4.1 CHRISTOS

Romans 1:3-4.¹²⁶

Romans 1: 3-4	
3 περὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ, τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυεὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, 4 τοῦ ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ ἁγιωσύνης πνεῦμα ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἡμῶν τοῦ κυρίου,	3 concerning his Son, who was born a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared Son of God in power according to the Holy Spirit by the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gordon Fee uses the passage from Romans 1:3-4, to argue in favor of Jesus as Messiah and that his messiahship is also traceable to David. He understands three major emphases from his exegetical study of this passage. The first has to do with continuity and fulfillment of the old covenant about the royal extraction of David. The second

¹²⁶ Lexham Greek-English Interlinear New Testament. Hall HARRIS W., (ed.), Lexham Bible Reference Series, Lexham press, 2010.

emphasis is on the Christological significance of Jesus earthly ministry and glorification. Then the final emphasis is on the mission of apostle Paul to the Gentiles. The first and the second emphasis present Jesus as Son of God and the expected Messiah at the same time. The phrase *σπέρματος Δαβίδ* (seed of David) shows that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Jewish Messianic expectation. And this is immediately followed with the current exalted status of Jesus as the Son of God. The indication here is that this Son of God has his root in the Jewish Messianism. Furthermore, irrespective of the range of meanings about the phrase *κατὰ σάρκα* (according to flesh), Gordon Fee points out that this phrase clearly refers to the earthly life of Jesus, his incarnation as flesh and blood; fully human. Again, in contrast to this phrase *κατὰ σάρκα*, is another phrase *κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης* (according to the spirit of holiness). Here it appears that Jesus' human nature is in contrast to the divine nature, but Fee observes it to mean that Jesus is in line with the Spirit that gives holiness. Here, both natures of Jesus are mentioned and we see the establishment of Jesus as fully human and fully divine. The peak of this Christology is seen in v.4 *τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει* (who was declared Son of God in power), which informs us that as a result of his death and resurrection, Jesus is now celebrated as Son of God with power. So, the death and resurrection of Jesus does not only declare him as the Messiah, but also show him to be what he is already.¹²⁷

From this it becomes clear that the phrase seed of David as used by apostle Paul is not just a statement of physical genealogy, but a recognition of the Messianic title of Jesus and also the realization of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the long-

¹²⁷ Cf. Gordon D. FEE, *Pauline Christology*, 240-244.

awaited Savior. Again, by mentioning the two natures of Jesus at the same time, shows that the Messiah is more than the physical son of David. He is also divine.

1 Corinthians 10:9

1 Corinthians 10:9	
9 μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστοῦ, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπείρασαν, καὶ ἀπώλλυντο ὑπὸ τῶν ὄφεων.	9 nor put Christ to the test, as some of them tested him, and were destroyed by snakes.

Gordon Fee again uses the passage in 1 Corinthians 10:9 to show the preexistence of the Messiah. He refers to the very statement *μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν κύριον* (let us not put Christ to the test) as an allusion to what happened in Numbers 21:4-7, where as a result of the growing impatient of the people of Israel, they spoke against God and Moses which further resulted to the snake bites in the wilderness. And because the verb *ἐκπειράζω* (put to test) did not occur in this very passage, Fee refers to the same event as recorded in Psalm 78:18 that adopts the verb *ἐκπειράζω*. The implication here is that with this, Paul is trying to echo the passage in Deuteronomy 6:16, “you shall not put the Lord your God to the test as you tempted him in Massah.” So, Paul is here applying the same passage to refer to the preexistence of the Messiah before his incarnation. The major argument here is that the same person who is here called Christ, is called God in the Jewish literatures.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Cf. Ibid., 97-98.

At this point, we come to one of the difficult questions of our study: Is Paul trying to call the Messiah God? To understand this question more, we shall turn to the passage in Romans 9:5 which will help us to understand the position of apostle Paul better.

Romans 9:5	
5 ὧν οἱ πατέρες, καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὧν ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ πάντων εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.	5 to whom belong the patriarchs, and from whom is the Christ according to human descent, who is God over all, blessed forever amen.

Gordon Fee associates the passage with one of the difficult Christological texts in Pauline Corpus because in the doxology, it appears that Paul is affirming that the Messiah is God. The major challenge here is seen in the different ways of the use of comma in the text. The fact that this text is meant to be read in the manuscript without punctuations, gave rise to the inability of scholars and translators to reach to a consensus. In his effort to portray this problem of punctuation, Gordon Fee comes up with three translations with the use of comma at different parts of the same passage with their different understandings. However, at the end Fee realizes that despite the varied opinions among scholars, there is substantial evidence that Paul is associating the

Messiah with God in this passage.¹²⁹ Many scholars who understand the problem as that of the placement of punctuation mark believe that this question can only be examined by considering secondary evidence and interpretations because early manuscripts of the New Testament lack the basic punctuation marks. The fact that punctuation mark was not used until the 3rd century CE, poses the major challenge to this passage. Most grammatic arguments and translations like New International Version, prefers to have this punctuation after the word Messiah with that, affirming that Paul actually calls the Messiah, God. Thus, “Thiers are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised.” But for Douglas Moo, while affirming that favoring a comma after the word Messiah is among the first solution to this challenge, suggests that one of the best ways to handle this passage is to return to the context of this doxology since most Pauline doxologies are not independent of their context. The passage then is about the rejection of the Messiah by the Jews. Paul laments that the majority of the Jews have rejected Christ as the Messiah and the way to salvation. Earlier, Paul listed the privileges that the Israelites have enjoyed as God's chosen people: as adopted children, receiving of the Law of Moses, the worship in the Temple and also their Patriarchs. The argument here for Douglas Moo is that the rejection of the Messiah is actually the rejection of God himself.¹³⁰

Our next step is to consider whether the word Christ in Paul is used as a title or as a proper name. Most scholars observe that apostle Paul uses the word Christ all the

¹²⁹ Cf. Ibid., 272-277.

¹³⁰ Cf. Douglas J. MOO, *The Epistle to the Romans*, United Kingdom, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996, 567.

time, but it had become for him a proper name. The title has become so closely associated with Jesus that it is seen as almost like an alternative name for him. So, in the time of apostle Paul, the title has become more about the change from a title into a proper name. To this effect, the title lost its distinctive titular force and collapsed to the level of a proper name and the new implication of this is that the Messiahship of Jesus involves an utter modification of Pauline view of salvation history, which has to do with the radical departure from Judaism.¹³¹ Larry Hurtado also understands this from another separate dimension. He suggests that Paul uses the title Messiah in most instances in his writings, but in Romans 9:3 and again 9:5, Paul uses the definite article 'the Christ' (the Messiah) without further explanations which points to the fact that the Gentile readers must have recognized the Messiah he is referring to.¹³² Furthermore, another notable scholar, Martin Hengel offers us six reasons why the title Christ should be understood as a proper name while dealing with Pauline writings: First, he points out that the title is simply taken for granted in Pauline writings. Second, the Gentiles were people of less theological and historical relationship to this title and apostle Paul happens to be their apostle. Third, having known apostle Paul as a good interpreter of the Scriptures, it is likely Paul had already explained his readers the significance of the title in relation to the person of Jesus. Fourth, Since the name Jesus was a common name like ordinary Jewish name at that time, Christ serves to identify him in particular as Messiah. Fifth, as a result of the difficulty in the replacement of the title Lord in the Tetragrammaton, the

¹³¹ Cf. Larry W. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 99. Also see Reginald H. FULLER, *The Foundations of the New Testament Christology*, 230. Again, George E. LADD, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 407.

¹³² Cf. Larry W. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 100.

association of Jesus and Messiah presupposes that fact that Jesus Christ is the Lord. Sixth, the usage of the title Christ by Paul is an indication to the reality that Jesus went to the Cross is a historical fact.¹³³

Finally, we see different understanding of Christos for apostle Paul. He relates Christos to the awaiting Messiah, the presence of God and the means of salvation of mankind. The wonderful relationship drawn by apostle Paul is better understand in the words of Joseph Kreitzer when he suggests that, “In attempting to summarize Paul's formulation of this relationship, I would like to suggest that he stops short of actually asserting absolute equality between Jesus the Messiah and God. Yet at the same time, for Paul, Jesus' identification with God is such that he cannot be fully explained or comprehended via human categories alone.”¹³⁴

¹³³ Martin HENGEL, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity*. London: SCM Press, 1983, 71-76 also see Haley G. JACOB, *Conformed to the Image of his Son. Reconsidering Paul's Theology of Glory in Romans*, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2018, 177-178.

¹³⁴ Joseph L. KREITZER, *Jesus and God in Paul's Eschatology*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 19, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987, 16.

4.2 KURIOS

To understand this Christological title Lord, we shall begin with the analysis of the passage in 1 Corinthians 8:6.

1 Corinthians 8:6	
ὁ ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ.	6 yet to us there is one God, the father, from whom are all things, and we are for him, and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we are through him.

Before his intensive exegetical analysis of this passage, Gordon Fee started by pointing out among others that the very two essential characteristics of Pauline Christology are already contained in this passage: Jesus as son of God and Jesus as Lord, where the essential feature of the Lordship is more obvious and that of the Son of God is implied in the preceding Theos, the Father. Fee also observes that the uniqueness of this passage

also lies to the fact that here, both ideas of preexistence and mediatorial agent of creation are in multiple ways expressed.¹³⁵

Fee moves a step forward in his analysis by alluding to the passage in Deuteronomy 6:4 to show exactly what apostle Paul was doing. He uses the Septuagint translation of Deuteronomy 6:4 in his comparison.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (LXX)	
4 ἀκούε Ἰσραὴλ, κύριος ο θεός ἡμῶν κύριος εἰς ἐστίν.	4 listen Israel, the Lord our God the Lord one is.

What is crucial here is the affirmation of the Jewish Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4), which has to do with the foundation of faith in Judaism. Here, Paul restated the Jewish Shema in a Christian way so as to show that the Christian faith has deep root in this theological confession of Judaism. In the assertion of only One God, Paul identifies the One Lord with the historical Jesus and at the same time, maintaining the Jewish Monotheism. Paul suggests that the understanding of the One God must now include Jesus as well.¹³⁶ Again, Paul uses the passage to embrace both Father and Son and at the

¹³⁵ Cf. Gordon D. FEE, *Pauline Christology*, 16-17.

¹³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 89-94.

same time, emphasizing that Jesus the Lord is/was already present with Israel to whom the Shema was originally given. Paul omits the phrase (hear Israel) in the passage and uses the word *εἷς* (one) from the second clause of the Shema. Here he applies to the Father and Jesus the titles *κύριος* and *θεός* and modifies them with the word *εἷς* which was already an idea in the Shema. Paul therefore identifies Jesus with Yahweh in that he applies to Jesus the title, *κύριος*. The passage mentions two Persons of the Godhead: God and Lord. Both God and Lord are divine names. With this, Paul goes further to distinguish between the Father and the Son. Again, with the assertion *δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα* (through him all things), Paul presupposes Jesus' preexistence as the Son of God.¹³⁷

From this passage, we see a high Christological formulation in early Christianity. This high Christology is founded within the foundation of Jewish Monotheism. In his excellent method of adaptation of the Shema (Deuteronomy 6.4), Paul attributes the Lordship of the One God to Jesus Christ. And yet his confession of God as one is still affirmed. The Shema was adopted rather to indicate that Jewish monotheistic faith could accommodate the idea of the Lordship of Jesus without compromising the Jewish strict monotheism. Larry Hurtado understands this passage as a starting point for his position that the devotion and reverence to Jesus must have actually started among the early followers of Jesus. Thus, "although their devotion to Jesus may have caused other Jews to regard them as having violated the uniqueness of God, early Jewish Christians, like Paul after his Damascus Road experience, apparently felt thoroughly justified in giving

¹³⁷ Cf. Ibid., 502-504.

Jesus reverence in terms of divinity and at the same time thought of themselves as worshipping one God.”¹³⁸

Philippians 2:6-11.

Philippians 2:6-11	
6 ὃς ὑπάρχων ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ οὐχ ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ ἀρπαγμὸν, 7 ἀλλὰ ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν λαβὼν μορφὴν δούλου, γενόμενος ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων· 8 καὶ εὑρεθεὶς στήματι ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, δὲ θανάτου σταυροῦ· 9 Διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ὑπερύψωσεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα ὑπὲρ πᾶν τὸ ὄνομα,	6 who existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God something to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself by taking the form of a slave, by becoming in the likeness of people, 8 And being found in appearance like a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, that is, death on a cross. 9 Therefore also God exalted him and graciously granted him the name above every name,

¹³⁸ Larry W. HURTADO, One God, One Lord. Early Christian Devotion, 2. See also, Carl J. DAVIS, The Name and the Way of the Lord, 142.

10 ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ, ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων, 11 καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσῃται ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Κύριος Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.	10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heavens and of those on earth and of those under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
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This very passage (Philippians 2:6-11) has attracted greater amounts of studies with different understanding and interpretations. The reason for this massive interest on this passage is the fact that this passage has been considered as the center of the theology of apostle Paul. The questions and debates have been on whether or not it contains a pre-Pauline hymn, and even more on the background of this passage. Whether apostle Paul has taken over an already existing hymn to Christ and has adapted it for his own

purpose.¹³⁹ Irrespective of the critical and risky enterprise associated with this passage, we will try to shed light on this passage by analyzing most important positions and suggestions regarding the passage. We will consider a brief understanding and association of this passage with Servant Christology, Adam Christology and Preexistence Christology.

Markus Bockmuehl observes that some scholars associate this Philippian hymn with servant Christology. The Servant Song of Isaiah especially chapter 53 with its idea of innocent suffering and death has been associated by some scholars with Philippians 2:7 and also 2:8. The understanding here is that the phrase *ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν* (he emptied himself) and *λαβὼν μορφὴν δούλου* (taking the form of slave) in addition with *μέχρι θανάτου* (the point of death) in 2:8, are merely reminiscent of Isaiah 53:12, where one observes how the servant gave himself unto death. Bockmuehl however further observes that the difficulties with this comparison with the LXX translation of Isaiah 53 is that the passage does not use the same term as was found in Philippians 2:7. While apostle Paul uses *δούλου* (of a slave), the passage uses the term *παῖς* (servant or son). Again, another difficulty is that the translation does not use the term *μορφῇ* (form) in reference to the servant.¹⁴⁰

Another group of Biblical scholars argue here that Paul is in no way describing any servant Christology nor describing pre-existent being, but an earthly Jesus. Most of these scholars understand Philippians 2, 6-11 as referring to a second Adam. For the

¹³⁹ Cf. Donald GUTHRIE, *New Testament Theology*, 344.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Markus N. BOCKMUEHL, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, London: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998, 135.

proponents of this, the earthly Jesus has no equality with God but unlike the Adam in the Book of Genesis, through his obedience to God by accepting death on the Cross, the status of Lordship was giving to him by God as a formal title of his vindication. Among the proponents of this Adam Christology is James Dunn. Dunn understands Philippians 2, 6-11 as a hymn strongly constructed with allusion to Adam. Using the idea of God's wrath against sinful humanity in Romans 1, 18-25, he suggests that Paul is consistent with the use of different allusions to Adam in his letters. While Adam stands for the fallen humanity, Jesus stands for the humanity risen from the dead. In Philippians 2, 6-11, Dunn identifies several points of contact that has to do with Adam tradition. In the first place, he suggests that the hymn uses as synonym the term *μορφῇ* (form) rather than the term image (eikon) as used in Genesis 1:27. The argument here is that the *μορφῇ θεοῦ* (form of God) is adopted here so as to make room for a clear contrast with the *μορφὴν δούλου* (form of a slave). In the second place, irrespective of the many opinions among scholars about the term *ἀρπαγμὸν* (something to be grasped), Dunn understands this as a clear echo of Genesis 3:5, where Adam in contrast with Jesus attempted to be like God. In the third place, Dunn understands further that the hymn is trying to showcase the failure of Adam and at the same time to portray the outcome of this failure. With the use of contrasting phrases like: the act of emptying is in contrast to grasping equality with God and taking the form of a slave is also in contrast to being in the form of God. so, in the same way, Dunn understands the incidence of becoming like humankind in Genesis as possibly an allusive contrast to the Serpent temptation that "you shall be like God" (Genesis 3:5). Finally, Dunn observes strongly that the later part of the Philippians hymn fits an Adam Christology. The very exaltation we see in Philippians 2, 9-11 when

considered with 1 Corinthians 15, 24-28 and also 1 Corinthians 15, 21-22, one understands a kind of Adam-Christ contrast. So, with this allusion and contrast with Adam in Philippians 2, 6-11, Dunn strongly associates the Philippians hymn as the fullness expression of Adam Christology in the New Testament.¹⁴¹

Furthermore, other Biblical scholars argue here for the Christology of preexistent divine being who had full equality with God right from eternity but chose to empty himself and taking the form of a slave and that his death and resurrection made clearer this his status. Among the scholars who rejected the servant Christology and Adam Christology in favor of preexistence Christology is Gordon Fee. Various options have been presented to explain what apostle Paul means with the word *μορφῇ* (form) in Philippians 2:6. Gordon Fee believes that Paul started with the prior existence of Christ. Paul begins by inserting that Jesus was *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ* (in the form of God). The use of *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ* (in the form of God) emphasis Christ preincarnate and divine existence. The word *μορφῇ* (form) is not to be understood in physical terms but in the ontological terms. It is not to say that Jesus resembles God externally or that Jesus is a mere representation of God. That Jesus was in the form points to the fact that his inmost nature was divine. Jesus did not merely possess divine characteristics; he was/is God. Among other reasons that Gordon Fee gives for the choice of his word *μορφῇ* (form) by apostle Paul, is because it is the most appropriate term to designate Christ's mode of pre-existence with God and to indicate also the utmost mode of his entering into human existence in *μορφῇ δούλου* (form of a slave). Again, Fee uses his understanding of the phrase *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ* (in the form of God), in his reservation on scholars who argue with

¹⁴¹ Cf. James D. G. DUUN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 281-286

passage in favor of Adam's Christology.¹⁴² Again, the word *ὑπάρχων* (existing) in Philippians 2:6 indicates that Christ was *ἐν μορφῇ* (in the form) from the beginning and this participle gives the idea of timeless which points to the idea of pre-existence which is also found in the Prologue to the Gospel of John 1:1 "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."¹⁴³

To explain the term *ἐκένωσεν* (emptied) in Philippians 2:7 is one of the most controversial parts of this passage. The controversy is on the understanding of what apostle Paul have in mind when he uses the word *ἐκένωσεν*. When apostle Paul writes that Jesus emptied himself, what did he mean? Some scholars did not accept the understanding of *ἐκένωσεν* to mean that Jesus gave up some of his divine attributes while he was on earth like omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence as a kind of voluntary self-limitation. These scholars however, understand *ἐκένωσεν* not as emptying of divine attributes, but rather as a life of sacrifice, and obedience to the will of the father. In this particular few, *ἐκένωσεν* is seen as self-renunciation. Not an emptying of oneself of deity, it is not a setting aside of heavenly glory nor did Jesus ceased to be God during his early existence, but the result of this emptying is that he took on the form of a *δοῦλον* (slave). Wayne Grudem captures this better when he says that:

we must first realize that no recognized teacher in the first 1,800 years of Church history, including those who were native speakers of Greek, thought that 'emptied Himself' in Phil.2:7 meant that the son of God gave up some of His divine attributes...the text does describe what Jesus did in this 'emptying'; he

¹⁴² Cf. Gordon D. FEE, *Pauline Christology*, 522-523.

¹⁴³ Cf. Oscar CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 306-310. Here, Cullmann uses the Prologue of John to argue for the designation of Jesus as God.

did not do it by given up any of his attributes, but rather by taking 'the form of a servant ' that is by coming to live as a man.¹⁴⁴

While writing about the fear of misleading translation of the word kenosis to mean giving up some divine attributes, Charles C. Ryrie argues that "kenosis cannot be understood to mean a subtraction of deity but an addition of humanity with its consequent limitations...choosing not to use His divine attributes is quite different from saying that He gave them up. Nonuse does not mean subtraction."¹⁴⁵ The greater focus has been on what Jesus gave up; but kenosis deals also with what Jesus took on. He was not wearing a human mask, but entering our humanity in all its fullness.

Oscar Cullman associates the divinity of Jesus with the word *ὑπερύψωσεν* (exalted) in Philippians 2:9. He observes that Jesus was *ἐν μορφῇ* (in the form) from beginning, but his equality with God is seen with exaltation. He furthermore links this to another passage in Romans 1:4, where Christ being the Son of God from the beginning is seen at his *ἀναστάσεως* (resurrection) as the *υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει* (Son of God in power).¹⁴⁶

Many scholars have also debated whether *ὄνομα ὑπὲρ πᾶν τὸ ὄνομα* (the name above every name) is Jesus or Lord? Those who argue in favor of name Jesus use the verse in Philippians 2:10 to support their arguments, "that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow", and those who argue in favor of Lord use the verse in Philippians 2:11 to support their arguments that "every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Donald

¹⁴⁴ Wayne GRUNDEM, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994, 550.

¹⁴⁵ Charles C. RYRIE, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, Chicago: Moody, 1972, 58-59.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Oscar CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 233-234.

Guthrie will say here in favor of the later argument that “the high point of the passage is reached with everyone confessing that ‘Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father’”.¹⁴⁷ Most scholars favor the argument for the name Lord on the ground that Paul uses Isaiah 45:23 here which was meant for Yahweh, who was also known as Lord. By this application, Paul is associating Jesus with Yahweh. He is placing Jesus on the same level as Yahweh and then the statement about Jesus is also the statement about God. In this regard, Carl David understands Philippians 2:10-11 as the early evidence that some Christians worked with a Christological redefinition of Monotheism. Carl Davis understands that apostle Paul is applying Isaiah 45:23, where God declares his uniqueness and asserts his sole right of worship and homage. So, Paul is saying here that the same universal homage to Jesus does not in any way diminish the glory of the Father because both share in this undivided glory which belongs to God alone. So, Paul applies this monotheistic passage to Jesus in order to define his view of one God without the exclusion of Jesus. With this, Carl Davis observes that the core idea here is that within the prohibition of the worship of other gods in Judaism, early Christians freely worshipped Jesus.¹⁴⁸

While examining this passage in Philippians 2:6-11, Nicholas Wright concludes that “this passage does indeed express a very early, very Jewish and very high Christology, in which Paul understands the human being Jesus to be identical with one who from all eternity was equal with the creator God, and who gave fresh expression to

¹⁴⁷ Donald GUTHRIE, *New Testament Theology*, 297.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Carl J. DAVIS, *The Name and the Way of the Lord*, 150-151.

what that equality meant by incarnation, humiliating suffering, and death.”¹⁴⁹ In this idea of associating of this passage with early high Christology, Hurtado emphasis that “the religious meaning and functions of the application of *kyrios* to Jesus in Pauline circles were shaped by this earlier practice of appealing to the risen Jesus as ‘Lord’ as a feature of the devotional life of Aramaic-speaking circles.”¹⁵⁰ Hurtado further observes that this title occurs in more than 200 places in the seven undisputed Pauline epistles and about 180 occurrences were applied to Jesus. With this, Hurtado understands that although Paul refers to God in some places with this title, the title Lord functions characteristically in Pauline epistles as a Christological term. Again, in some Pauline writings when placed side by side with some Old Testament literatures: Romans 10:13 (Joel 2:33), 1 Corinthians 1: 31 (Jeremiah 9:23-24), 2 Corinthians 10:17 (Jeremiah 9:23-24), we see Paul applying Old Testament passages to Jesus which were initially applied to God. Most remarkable is seen in Philippians 2:10-11, which is apt to Isaiah 45:23-25 that has to do with the universal loyalty to God. So here, Paul links Jesus with God as a lawful recipient of the universal reverence that is portrayed in Isaiah 45:23-25. For Hurtado, this application of Old Testament passages serves as indication that Paul is uniquely associating Jesus with God. Hurtado further observes that the fact that Philippians 2:6-11 is widely understood to be Pauline adaptation of an already existing Christological hymn means that apostle Paul is not by the virtue of this passage a Christological innovator, but the passage is clear evidence of the devotion to Jesus already familiar at that time. This application of Old Testament texts for Jesus is an indication that apostle

¹⁴⁹ Nicholas T. WRIGHT, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*. Minneapolis: First Fortress Press, 2005, 93.

¹⁵⁰ Larry W. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 111.

Paul considers Jesus to be equal with God. So for Hurtado, when one combines the high Christology found in Philippians 2:6-11 with the way that Paul used Old Testament Yahweh texts for Jesus, it becomes clear that the earliest Christian Churches believed in the divinity of Jesus.¹⁵¹ Another scholar, Tanis Joshua while maintaining that the divine picture of Jesus within the structure of Jewish monotheism was evident even from the earliest Christians documents argues that “Paul, who seems to have no opposition in his view of Jesus from other Christians, presents Jesus as Lord while referring to the God of Israel, maintaining his monotheism, yet proclaiming something radically different from the beliefs of non-Christian Jews.”¹⁵²

4.3 SON OF GOD

Galatians 4:4

Galatians 4:4	
4 δὲ ὅτε τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου ἦλθεν, ὁ θεὸς ἐξάπεστειλεν αὐτοῦ τὸν υἱόν, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον,	But when the fullness of time came, God sent out his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

¹⁵¹ Cf. Ibid, 111-113.

¹⁵² Joshua TANIS, The divinity of Jesus in early Christian thought, 63.

Gordon Fee understands this passage in Galatians as that which offers the Christological-Soteriological basis for apostle Paul in this epistle. The argument here is that the Galatian Gentiles can now become adopted sons of God without the constraint from the law because they are now free from Torah observance. Furthermore, he understands the statement *δὲ ὅτε τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου ἦλθεν* (when the fullness of time came), to mean that God's time came with Christ especially, with his work of salvation on the cross. Again, by telling us that *ὁ θεὸς ἐξαπέστειλεν* (God sent out) his son, Paul is referring to the entering of this pre-existent Son of God in human history. In this case, two things became obvious: First, *γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός* (born of a woman). This presupposes the pre-existence of the Son prior to his entering into the history of humanity. Second, *γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον* (born under the law). With this, Paul points out that the Son of God is born within the context of Judaism, within the context of his own people.¹⁵³ The idea of the sonship of Jesus is here connected to the whole mission of Jesus. For in order to redeemed humanity, God has to send his pre-existent Son into the sphere of human domain. And for Donald Guthrie, "this gives some insight into the intimate nature of the relationship between Father and Son which serves as a pattern for his people."¹⁵⁴ In another instance, Guthrie argues further that "the title Son of God points at once to the relationship between Jesus and God, but also reveals vital information about the nature of Jesus. Although the title Son of God does not necessarily

¹⁵³ Cf. Gordon D. FEE, *Pauline Christology*, 211-215.

¹⁵⁴ Donald GUTHRIE, *New Testament Theology*, 319.

imply deity, the supporting NT evidence corroborates such an understanding of it. Especially is this so of the evidence which specially affirms Jesus as God.”¹⁵⁵ From these ideas of divine pre-existence and relationship, one sees a strong connotation of the deity of Jesus as Son of God, the second person of the triune Godhead. So, this Jesus is not just the Messiah the Jews were expecting, but also the Son of God for the salvation of all mankind. And this relationship is so much described in terms of why the son was sent, that is, for the salvation of humanity. Here again we see the two dimensions of Christology and soteriology. Hurtado has great conviction based on this idea of divine pre-existence and relationship indicated by Pauline writings that Jesus was treated as divine among the early Christian circles. He maintains the view that Pauline writings point to the fact that Jesus was distinctly revered among the early Christians as part of their worship of the same One God of Biblical tradition. Here, Jesus is not revered in form of the polytheistic pattern, nor is the idea that of ditheism. Jesus is not even revered as another second god, but was seen and revered among the early Christians as an extension of the worship of God. Hurtado refers here to the frequent Pauline references to the last supper (Christian sacred meal), prayers, hymns, baptism in Jesus’ name, and other several devotional expressions called doxologies which appear in Pauline undisputable letters as clearest evidence to devotional instance and understanding of Jesus as divine.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 343.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Larry W. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 135-152.

Finally, one sees here an understanding of Jesus as divine and reverence to him among the early Christians which was not controversial for Jews outside the Christian circle.

EVALUATIONS

Many benefits await any investigation on such enquiry like the Christology of apostle Paul. For such investigation offers wonderful opportunity to encounter the works of many renowned scholars especially, those specialized in the field of Christology.¹⁵⁷

The study offers me a sufficient opportunity to consider the person of apostle Paul and also to consider whether Pauline Christology could actually be understood as divine Christology. This question of the divinity of Jesus which has been of great controversy among scholars receives a greater light with this study. The exegetical study from Pauline undisputed letters: Romans 1:2-4, 1 Corinthians 10:9, Romans 9:5, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Philippians 2:6-11 and Galatians 4:4, holds up a mirror of complex surfaces and depths for anyone willing to understand the exegetical complex of the position of apostle Paul on the person of Jesus. The great benefit of this study is that I am now strongly convinced that Pauline Christology is a divine Christology. The Philippian hymn in our study is one of the strong arguments in the New Testament that

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Margaret DEMERS, *The Temptation-Clause of the Lord's Prayer* [unpublished. Master of Arts at the University of McMaster] 1993, 68. Here, Margaret uses this idea in the conclusion of her investigation.

provide evidence that Jesus is divine and also to see Jesus as a mere human is by no means sufficient to explain him. Again, the fact that the divinity of Jesus is an inherent quality in him is strongly pointed out by the use of the word *μορφῇ* (form) in Philippians 2:7. For Donald Guthrie, “The classical use of the word closely links it with *ousia* (essence), which then suggests that being in the form of God means possessing deity.”¹⁵⁸ Wilhelm Bousset while writing on the deity of Jesus observes that this understanding of the divinity of Jesus developed in the earliest Christianity. For him, the understanding of Jesus as judge of the world which was already present in the primitive community, leads to the assumption of the full deity of Jesus. While refereeing to the early century authors, Bousset uses the statement of Pliny about the power in the name use in baptism to argue for this understanding. Again, Bousset refers to some of the third century Christian writers like Little Labyrinth, Justine, Tatian, Clement and Irenaeus, who sought to understand and articulate in their teachings the relationship between Jesus and God, Thus, did not see any boundary between Jesus and God.¹⁵⁹ Here we see a similar understanding as Larry Hurtado concludes that “there is an implicit but astonishingly close association of Jesus with God, both in the attributes and functions they share in earliest Christian beliefs (e.g., Jesus as the agent of creation, dispenser of the Holy Spirit, and eschatological judge) and in the reverence accorded to both in early Christian devotional practice.”¹⁶⁰ From this study, the question concerning the recognition of the identity and divinity of Jesus among the early Christians and especially by apostle Paul

¹⁵⁸ Donald GUTHRIE, *New Testament Theology*, 345.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Wilhelm BOUSSET, *Kyrios Christos*, 317-320.

¹⁶⁰ Larry W. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 641.

is clearly answered. Therefore, Christology which constitutes the core of Christian theology and her mission to the whole world lies also at the heart of theology of apostle Paul. His own letters, the earliest literary access to Christianity, provide strong evidence that the veneration of Jesus is not at all late but extremely early. And at the same time, not a departure from the Jewish strict monotheism, but a kind of development within Jewish monotheistic tradition that allowed the reverence of Jesus within the worship of One God. So, Paul understands here the person of Jesus as a sharer of divine prerogatives with God the father. The reality of death, resurrection and exaltation demonstrate who Jesus is for him, and became paramount for Paul in his understanding of Jesus as Messiah, Lord and Son of God. In his efforts, he tries to present the three statuses of Jesus: the pre-incarnate Christ, the incarnate Christ and the exalted Lord. Every conscious reading of the epistle of apostle Paul gives testimony in what he said in one of his epistles which I adopted as my personal maxim in this study of Christology of apostle Paul: “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made comfortable unto his death” (Philippians 3:10).

The study then becomes an invitation for the proponents of Arianism, Adoptionism, Appollinarism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism and other Christological heresies to reconsider their positions and incorrect beliefs about the person of Jesus. It invites the reader to pay attention to the connotations of the idea of preexistence of the person of Jesus, his two natures and his unique relationship to God the father

Ultimately, I argue that Paul’s divine Christology has to do with our faith today. The understanding of this helps to reshape our understanding of the theology of Paul. It has also to do with our understanding of God and the persons of the Trinity. Furthermore,

it shapes our relationship with God and deepens our understanding of the nature and process of our salvation. My personal answer to the Christological question that took place at Caesarea Philippi and as we discussed in chapter one of our study which was also recorded in the Gospel of Mark 8, 27-27 is this: Jesus our Lord, is the Son of God sent by God to earth as the Messiah that brings salvation to the human kind.

Finally, my study of apostle Paul's Christology does not in any case demonstrate or indicate a low Christology for apostle Paul, but rather portrays a high Christology and one who strongly believes in the divinity of Jesus. And this understand of the divinity of Jesus which is the belief that Jesus is God is very important for Christian faith and salvation. For the divinity of Jesus is expressed in all of the creeds and is also for Catholics, a dogma of Faith.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The question whether Pauline Christology is a divine Christology is recently a serious debate among scholars especially, New Testament scholars. It is the question whether Paul understands the person of Jesus as a sharer of divine prerogatives with God the father. On one hand are proponents of high Christology for apostle Paul, those that maintain that apostle Paul understands the person of Jesus as divine and that the early Christian followers of Jesus understood Jesus as such. On another hand are proponents of low Christology for apostle Paul, those who did not associate him with the divinity of

Jesus. In order to illustrate this ranging debate and to have a better consideration of this question, we tried to organize the study into four chapters with each chapter discussing a unique and separate aspect.

We began in Chapter One to highlight the background of the study with a brief understanding of the person of apostle Paul. We considered briefly his birth, his citizenship, his education and his call to discipleship. We realized equally that Pauline Damascus experience laid the foundation of his understanding of the person of Jesus and his work. To investigate more on his response to the encounter of the person of Jesus and his understanding of this Jesus, we moved into a brief investigation of Jewish idea of monotheism, the idea of the worship of one God. Again, from the monotheistic practice in the Second Temple Judaism that has to do with the recognition of intermediary and heavenly figures like angels, we saw a link to the understanding of Christology, the investigation of the person of Jesus Christ. We then came to realize that this Christological question has become one of the greatest challenges of Christian theology right from the time of the apostles of Jesus.

In Chapter Two, we concentrated on the survey of previous scholarship and approach to this idea of the divinity of Jesus among his early followers especially, that of the understanding of apostle Paul. Here, we examined the positions of New Testament scholars like James Dunn and Maurice Casey that did not associate the divinity of Jesus with apostle Paul. We also examined scholars like Larry Hurtado, Richard Bauckham and Chris Tilling that believe that Pauline Christology is indeed a divine Christology. With the seriousness of this debate among scholars, it became necessary for us to examine and consider some Christological titles that were used by apostle Paul.

Our Chapter Three then examined three Christological titles used by apostle Paul: Christos, Kyrios and the Son of God. Thus, offering the contextual and detailed understanding of the background and the historical circumstances of these titles. Our detailed and contextual analysis of these titles indicated that the title Christos/Messiah is not of Gentile origin, but has an undisputable Jewish background. We discovered that the other two titles, Kyrios and the Son of God are traceable to both the Jewish and Hellenistic background where they were designated with different meanings and connotations. We moved further to understand how these titles became applicable among the early followers of Jesus and in the writings of apostle Paul.

Furthermore, in Chapter Four we started by considering these titles in a more concrete way as used by apostle Paul. And to achieve this aim, we selected six passages from Pauline undisputable letters: Romans 1:2-4, 1 Corinthians 10:9, Romans 9:5, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Philippians 2:6-11 and Galatians 4:4. With brief exegetical analysis of these passages, we were able to comprehend and highlight some Christological connotations within these passages: Jesus as the long awaited Messiah, the preexistence of the Messiah, the preexistence of the Son of God, the use of these titles by apostle Paul not in a titular form but as proper names, and finally, the understanding of Jesus as divine and revered among the early followers of Jesus.

Finally, from this study, the question concerning the recognition of the divinity of Jesus in the time of apostle Paul and early followers of Jesus was clearly answered. For in the reality of death, resurrection and exaltation, the person of Jesus became more manifest for apostle Paul as divine.

ABSTRACT

One of the recent most debated subjects among New Testament scholars is the Christology of apostle Paul. The controversy is on the question whether Paul teach that Jesus is divine? Did Paul and the early followers of Jesus understand Jesus as pre-existent divine being? If so, how should this be viewed in relation to Jewish and Christian idea of monotheism? The study then strives to understand the mind of apostle Paul through a thorough investigation of some of the Christological titles he used in his writings.

This study therefore, is a critical examination of Pauline Christology. It progresses through the understanding of the person of apostle Paul, his birth, his citizenship, his education and his call to discipleship. And by carefully considering the different positions of previous scholarship and approach to this question of Pauline Christology, the study moves forward to examine three basic Christological titles used by apostle Paul, offering a detail understanding of the background, meaning and historical circumstances of each title.

By focusing on the brief exegetical analysis of some undisputable letters of apostle Paul: Romans 1:2-4, 1 Corinthians 10:9, Romans 9:5, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Philippians 2:6-11 and Galatians 4:4, the study offers an answer to this controverted question among scholars. It attempts to offer a clear connotation of these titles as used by apostle Paul in these passages. And finally, it suggests the idea that Pauline Christology is a divine Christology.

ABSTRAKT AUF DEUTSCH

Eines der aktuell am meisten diskutierten Themen unter den Gelehrten des Neuen Testaments ist die Christologie des Apostels Paulus. Die Kontroverse dreht sich um die Frage, ob Paulus lehrt, dass Jesus göttlich ist? Haben Paulus und die frühen Nachfolger Jesu Jesus als präexistentes göttliches Wesen verstanden? Wenn ja, wie ist dies im Verhältnis zur jüdischen und christlichen Vorstellung vom Monotheismus zu sehen? Die Studie versucht dann, die Gedanken des Apostels Paulus durch eine gründliche Untersuchung einiger der christologischen Titel zu verstehen, die er in seinen Schriften verwendete.

Diese Untersuchung ist daher eine kritische Untersuchung der paulinischen Christologie. Sie entwickelt sich durch das Verständnis der Person des Apostels Paulus, seiner Geburt, seiner Staatsbürgerschaft, seiner Ausbildung und seiner Berufung zur Nachfolge. Und durch sorgfältige Betrachtung der unterschiedlichen Positionen früherer Wissenschaft und Herangehensweise an diese Frage der paulinischen Christologie geht die Studie weiter, um drei grundlegende christologische Titel zu untersuchen, die vom Apostel Paulus verwendet wurden, und bietet ein detailliertes Verständnis des Hintergrunds, der Bedeutung und der historischen Umstände jedes Titels.

Indem wir uns auf die kurze exegetische Analyse einiger unbestreitbarer Briefe des Apostels Paulus konzentrieren: Römer 1:2-4, 1. Korinther 10:9, Römer 9:5, 1. Korinther 8:6, Philipper 2:6-11 und Galater 4:4 bietet die Studie eine Antwort auf diese unter Wissenschaftlern umstrittene Frage. Es versucht, eine klare Konnotation dieser Titel anzubieten, wie sie der Apostel Paulus in diesen Passagen verwendet. Und

schließlich legt es die Idee nahe, dass die paulinische Christologie eine göttliche Christologie ist.

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