ANDREW CHESTER

Messiah and Exaltation

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Andrew Chester

Messiah and Exaltation

Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology

Mohr Siebeck

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For Susan

Preface

The suggestion and stimulus for this book came originally from Martin Hengel. He encouraged me to bring together my earlier work in this area, and to supplement this with substantial new essays. And he not only provided me with the initial stimulus; he has also given me constant help and encouragement at every stage. This is, indeed, simply the latest of his many kindnesses to me. It seems less than adequate simply to offer him my grateful thanks at this point; but I am deeply grateful, and the very least I can do is to say so. Martin Hengel has done an enormous amount over many years to promote contact between Britain and Germany in the field of New Testament (as well as promote the cause of New Testament study much more widely), and foster fruitful exchange at every level. I very much hope his efforts will be continued and sustained by many of us in both Britain and Germany.

Three of the essays in this volume started life as contributions to the Tübingen-Durham New Testament Research Symposiums that have been held every few years since the inaugural meeting in 1988. These too have benefited enormously from Martin Hengel's initiative and enthusiasm for the whole enterprise, and all those who have been involved have rich memories of them. Another important factor in encouraging this co-operative venture has been the willingness of Mohr Siebeck in Tübingen to publish the proceedings, thanks in no small measure to the warm and fruitful collaboration between Martin Hengel and Georg Siebeck over many years; and through his editorship of WUNT, Martin Hengel has helped promote New Testament scholarship, and Anglo-German links, much more widely as well. Hence it is a particular pleasure for me that the present volume appears in WUNT, even though Martin Hengel has relinquished the editorship. I am deeply grateful to Jörg Frey, the present Editor, for his generous encouragement and helpful advice. The staff at Mohr Siebeck have been helpful throughout: Dr Henning Ziebritzki, the Editorial Director for Theology and Jewish Studies, has facilitated the publication process with great kindness and efficiency, and Jana Trispel, of the Production Department, has been wonderfully patient and enormously and unfailingly helpful. Others at Mohr Siebeck, whose names I do not know, have also helped; my grateful thanks to them all.

A number of people in Britain have also given me much help and support, especially Chris Rowland and Justin Meggitt; and I have had helpful discussions as well with Rachel Muers and Josette Zammit-Mangion. I am extremely grateful to Graham Stanton and James Carleton Paget for their very kind help and initiative in facilitating funding for the task of indexing, and equally grateful to the Managers of the Hort Memorial Fund for a generous grant towards this. Deep gratitude is due especially to William Horbury, who has provided constant support, encouragement and stimulus; this indeed, despite the fact that I have had to differ from him on specific issues in the course of this book. He is, however, generously tolerant of my ideas, where I diverge from him (as similarly, indeed, is Martin Hengel!), and through the conversations we have had, my respect for his scholarship has been constantly enhanced yet further. Very special thanks go also to David Goode: he has constantly encouraged me to persevere with the process of formatting the text, despite knowing that this would give him more work to cope with, and he has shown extraordinary patience and resourcefulness, and solved innumerable problems, in helping me produce a camera-ready copy of the text. Certainly it could not have reached the present stage without him. I am also very grateful to several of my students at Selwyn College (Sarah Eatherton, Claire Ellis, Emily Shore and Olivia Wilkinson) for very kindly helping me with the tedious business of proofreading. It needs to be said, however (although it should go without saying), that none of those I have named here are in any way to blame for any of the defects in either the form or the content of this book. The responsibility for those is mine alone.

My two sons, David and Stephen, have also given me enormous practical help and support in the formatting process (as well as much pleasure and enjoyment otherwise). They have rescued me from a great many potential disasters that my incompetence with computers had threatened to bring on me. My wife, Susan, has sustained and supported me quite wonderfully all through the writing of this book, despite the rather indifferent health we have both had for much of the time. I dedicate the book to her in gratitude.

Cambridge, November 2006 Andrew Chester

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

1. Purpose of the Book 1
2. Outline of the Contents 2
3. Details of First Publication 10

Chapter 2: Christology and Transformation 13

1. Introduction 13
2. The Evolutionary Approach to Christology: Casey 14
3. Christ as Divine from the Beginning 17
   3.1 Bauckham: Divine Identity and Christological Monotheism 17
   3.2 Enthronement Christology: Eskola 27
   3.3 Christ as Divine from the Beginning: The Questions Raised 43
4. Intermediary Figures and Human Transformation 45
   4.1 Logos and Wisdom 45
   4.2 Angelic Figures 52
      4.2.1 Developed Angelology: Issues Arising 54
      4.2.2 Angelomorphic Humanity 58
   4.3 Exalted Human Figures 62
      4.3.1 Human Transformation 62
         a) 1 Enoch 37–71 63
            aa) 1 Enoch 39.14 63
            bb) 1 Enoch 51.1–5 63
            cc) 1 Enoch 62.15–16 63
            dd) 1 Enoch 71.11 64
         b) 1 Enoch 104.1–2 66
         c) 1 Enoch 108.11–14 66
         d) 2 Enoch 67
            aa) 2 Enoch 22.8–10 67
            bb) 2 Enoch 66.7 68
         e) 3 Enoch 68
         f) Qumran Texts 69
            aa) 4Q491 69

bb) Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4Q400–407) 70
g) Apocalypse of Zephaniah 8.2–4 (3.3–4) 70
h) Testament of Abraham 71
i) Apocalypse of Abraham 13.7–8, 14 73
j) 4 Ezra 7.97 74
k) 2 Baruch 51.3, 10–12 75
l) Prayer of Jacob 17–19 75
m) Further Texts 76
n) Human Transformation: Conclusions 79

5. New Testament Christology 80
5.1 The Transformation of Jesus 81
5.1.1 Paul 81
5.1.2 Visionary Tradition and Transformation 92
5.1.3 Jesus' Transformative Visions 93
5.1.4 Jesus' Visions of Himself Transformed 95
5.1.5 The 'Transfiguration' 96
5.1.6 Early Christianity as a Visionary Movement 99
5.1.7 Jesus Transformed 103
5.2 The Use of Scripture in Relation to Christ 105
5.3 The Worship of Christ in Context of Jewish Worship 107
5.4 Early Christology and Jewish Monotheism 115

6. Conclusion 119

Chapter 3: Resurrection, Transformation and Christology 123

1. Introduction 123

2. Texts from the Hebrew Bible 124
2.1 Ezekiel 37.1–14 124
2.2 Isaiah 26.19; 25.8 131
2.3 Hosea 6.1–3; 13.14 135
2.3.1 Hosea 6.1–3 135
2.3.2 Hosea 13.14 136
2.4 Daniel 12.1–3 137

3. Further Jewish Texts 144
3.1 1 Enoch 144
3.1.1 1 Enoch 21–27 145
3.1.2 1 Enoch 83–90 147
3.1.3 1 Enoch 91–105 149
3.2 Qumran Texts 151
3.2.1 4Q Second Ezekiel (4Q385–388) 151
3.2.2 4Q521 152

3.3 Shemoneh Esreh (18 Benedictions) 156

4. The Influence of Daniel 12 159
4.1 Daniel and the Beginnings of Resurrection Belief 159
4.2 Daniel 12: Resurrection and Transformation 165

5. New Testament Traditions and Developments 168
5.1 Revelation 168
5.1.1 Revelation 1.12–20 169
5.1.2 Revelation 11.3–13 171
5.1.3 Revelation 20.4–21.4 172
5.1.4 Revelation 7.9–17 174
5.2 Paul 179
5.2.1 Romans 6.3–5 179
5.2.2 1 Corinthians 15 180
5.2.3 Colossians 3.1–4; 1.15–20 182
5.2.4 2 Corinthians 3.18–4.6 184
5.2.5 Philippians 3.21 185
5.2.6 Romans 8.29 185
5.2.7 Paul and Transformation: Conclusions 186

6. Conclusion 188

Chapter 4: The Nature and Scope of Messianism 191

1. Introduction 191

2. Definition 193
2.1 ‘Minimalist’ Definition 193
2.2 ‘Messiah’ as an Extended Category 196
2.3 Messiah as an Agent of Final Deliverance 198
2.4 Messiah as Future Ruler 201

3. Messianism: Primary Evidence 205
3.1 Hebrew Bible 205
3.2 Qumran 230
3.2.1 4Q246 230
3.2.2 4Q270 Frag 2 II (with CD 2.11–13; 1QM 11.7–9) 233
3.2.3 4Q285 (/11Q14) 234
3.2.4 4Q287 236
3.2.5 4Q369 237
3.2.6 4Q375 and 4Q376 238
3.2.7 4Q377 239
3.2.8 4Q381 240
3.2.9 4Q458 241

3.2.10 4Q491c (4Q427, 4Q471b)........242
3.2.11 4Q504........250
3.2.12 4Q521........251
3.2.13 4Q534........254
3.2.14 4Q541........256
3.2.15 4Q558........258
3.2.16 11Q13 (11QMelch II)........259
3.2.17 1Q30........262
3.2.18 1QH 11.6–12........263
3.2.19 Qumran Texts: Conclusions........265
3.3 The Evidence for Messianism: Themes at Issue........276

4. Messianism, Temple and Torah........297
4.1 Messianism and Temple........297
4.2 Messianism and Torah........299

5. Messianism and the New Testament........301
5.1 Paul and Messianic Hope........301
5.2 Jesus: A Messianic Figure?........307

6. Conclusion........324

Chapter 5: Messianism, Mediators and Pauline Christology........329

1. Introduction........329

2. Jewish Messianic Expectations........329
2.1 Sirach........331
2.2 Qumran Literature........333
2.2.1 1QS 9.9–11........333
2.2.2 Damascus Document........334
2.2.3 1QSa........335
2.2.4 Further Qumran Texts........336
2.2.5 Qumran Texts: Conclusions........338
2.3 The Psalms of Solomon........340
2.4 1 Enoch 37–71........344
2.5 4 Ezra........345
2.6 2 (Syriac) Baruch........347
2.7 Sibylline Oracles........348
2.8 Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs........351
2.9 Septuagint........352
2.10 Targums........353
2.11 Conclusions........355

3. Jewish Mediatorial Figures........363

3.1 Philo....363
    3.1.1 Conf. 146; Her. 205....363
3.2 Wisdom....366
3.3 Apocalyptic and Related Material....368
    3.3.1 Apocalypse of Abraham....368
    3.3.2 Prayer of Joseph....369
    3.3.3 Apocalypse of Zephaniah....370
    3.3.4 Joseph and Aseneth....370
    3.3.5 11Q Melchizedek and other Qumran Texts....371
    3.3.6 Testament of Abraham....373
    3.3.7 Ezekiel the Tragedian....374
    3.3.8 1 Enoch and Enoch Traditions....374
    3.3.9 2 Enoch....376
    3.3.10 Testament of Moses....376
3.4 Conclusions....377
    3.4.1 Personified Concepts....377
    3.4.2 Exalted Human Figures....377
    3.4.3 Angelic Figures....378

4. Pauline Christology....382
4.1 Paul and Messianic Expectation....382
4.2 Paul and Mediator Concepts....388
    4.2.1 1 Corinthians 1.24, 30....388
    4.2.2 Romans 8.3–4 / Galatians 4.4....389
    4.2.3 Colossians 1.15–20....390
    4.2.4 Philippians 2.5–11....392
    4.2.5 1 Corinthians 15.45–49....392
4.3 Paul: Conclusions....394

Chapter 6: Eschatology and Messianic Hope....397

1. Introduction....397

2. Jewish Evidence....397
2.1 Sibylline Oracles....397
    2.1.1 Sibylline Oracles 5....398
        a) Sib. Or. 5.414–427....398
        b) Sib. Or. 5.256–259....399
        c) Sib. Or. 5.108–109, 155–161....401
    2.1.2 Sibylline Oracles 4....405
2.2 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch....407
    2.2.1 4 Ezra....407
    2.2.2 2 Baruch....409

2.3 Popular Jewish Hope 412
  2.3.1 Synagaogue Prayers 413
    a) The Shemoneh Esreh (18 Benedictions) 413
    b) The Kaddish 415
    c) The Shema 415
    d) Haftarah Benedictions 416
    e) Birkat ha-Mazon 416
  2.3.2 Popular Jewish Messianic Movements 418
  2.3.3 The Bar-Kochba Revolt 419
2.4 Josephus 420
2.5 Jewish Evidence: Conclusions 422

3. Christian Texts 423
3.1 Revelation and the Early Christian Millenarian Tradition 423
  3.1.1 Revelation 423
  3.1.2 Early Christian Millenarianism 424
    a) Papias 424
    b) Justin and Irenaeus 426
      aa) Irenaeus 426
      bb) Justin 428
  3.1.3 Non-Chiliastic Christianity 430
3.2 Barnabas and the Didache 434
  3.2.1 The Epistle of Barnabas 434
  3.2.2 The Didache 440
3.3 The Shepherd of Hermas 452
3.4 1 & 2 Clement 455
  3.4.1 1 Clement 455
  3.4.2 2 Clement 459
3.5 Ignatius and Polycarp 463
  3.5.1 Polycarp 463
  3.5.2 Ignatius 464
3.6 The Epistle to Diognetus 466

4. Conclusion 466

Chapter 7: Messiah and Temple in the Sibylline Oracles 471

1. Introduction 471

2. Sibylline Oracles 3 and 5: Outline of Material 471
2.1 Sibylline Oracles 3: Outline 472
2.2 Sibylline Oracles 5: Outline 472

3. Comparison of Sibyllines 3 and 5 473

4. Sibylline Oracles 5: The Temple Built by the Messiah 479
5. The Temple and the Tower of Babel 486
6. Jerusalem, Temple and Centre of the Earth 488
7. Sibyllines 3 and 5 in relation to Sibylline 4 491
8. Conclusion 496

Chapter 8: Messiah and Torah 497
1. Introduction 497
2. Matthew, James and the Didache 501
  2.1 Matthew 501
  2.2 James 507
  2.3 Didache 509
3. Hebrews and Barnabas 510
  3.1 Hebrews 511
  3.2 Barnabas 512
4. Paul 513
5. Johannine Literature 516
6. Justin and Irenaeus 521
  6.1 Justin 521
  6.2 Irenaeus 523
7. Jewish Texts 524
  7.1 Rabbinic Evidence 524
  7.2 Qumran Texts 525
    7.2.1 1QS 525
    7.2.2 11QT 525
    7.2.3 CD, 4Q174, 4Q252, 4Q491c, 4Q541 526
    7.2.4 4Q521, 11QMelch (11Q13) 528
  7.3 Psalms of Solomon 17–18 529
  7.4 Messianic Movements and Revolts 529
  7.5 Jubilees 530
  7.6 Targumic Evidence 531
  7.7 Prayer Texts 532
8. Conclusion 533
  8.1 Intensification of Torah 533
  8.2 Fulfilment of Torah 534
  8.3 New Torah 534
  8.4 Rejection of Torah 535

8.5 Implications 535

Chapter 9: The ‘Law of Christ’ and the ‘Law of the Spirit’ 537

1. Divergent Interpretations 537
1.1 Torah and the Messianic Age 537
1.1.1 Messianic Torah 538
1.1.2 Messianic Age without Torah 539
1.1.3 Messianic Torah: The Arguments Assessed 540
1.2 Torah from Zion 545
1.3 The Law of Christ as a New Christian Law 547
1.3.1 Jesus’ Teaching as a New Torah 548
1.3.2 The Law of Christ: Jesus’ Teaching and Example 550
1.4 The Law of Christ and the Law of Love 552
1.5 The Law of Christ as a Principle or Norm 554
1.6 The Law of Christ as Deriving from Paul’s Opponents 559
1.7 The Law of Christ as the Mosaic Torah 562

2. The Law of Christ: Themes at Issue 569
2.1 Assessment of Approaches 570
2.1.1 Points of Common Emphasis 570
2.1.2 Incompatible Approaches 577
2.2 The Law in Paul: Continuity and Discontinuity 579

3. The Law of Christ in Pauline Context 582
3.1 Romans 8.2 582
3.1.1 Romans 8.2: The Meaning of *Nomos* 583
3.1.2 Romans 8.2: The Law Transformed by the Spirit 587
3.2 Romans 3.27 589
3.3 1 Corinthians 9.21: The Law of Christ and the Law of God 590

4. The Law of Christ and the Law of Moses 592

5. The Law of the Final Age 594

6. The Law Transformed through Christ and the Spirit 597

Bibliography 603

Index of References 647

Index of Authors 683

Index of Subjects 692

Abbreviations

Abbreviations used throughout the book for both Ancient Texts and also Periodicals, Reference Works and Serials are almost entirely according to those given in P. H. Alexander *et al* (eds), *The SBL Handbook of Style: for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody: Hendrikson, 1999). The few exceptions to this will be self-explanatory.

The following additional abbreviations have also been used:

BHM	Bet ha-Midrasch (see under Jellinek in Bibliography)
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testaments
JBTh	Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie
KAV	Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern
SemBibEsp	Semana Biblica Española
WdF	Wege der Forschung

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Purpose of the Book

This book has eight main chapters. These do not, however, form a single, sustained argument. Each of the eight chapters can stand alone, independently of the others, and several indeed did in their earlier published form. Hence the point of this Introduction is to show why and how they belong together and represent a coherent book overall. It is worth emphasizing here that chapters 2 and 4 (the two longest chapters in the book), along with chapter 9, have been written especially for this collection. In addition, chapter 3 represents a substantially revised and extended version of an essay first published in 2001, while chapter 8 presents a previously published essay in significantly expanded form. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 appear in very much the form in which they were published originally (although I have, for example, omitted the Discussion and Response that were appended to chapter 5 in its originally published form). Thus nearly two-thirds of this book consists of entirely new material. Details of original publication will be found at the end of this Introduction.

The main focus of the book is on central issues within Jewish messianism and traditions of exalted figures, and within early Christology. That is, it is concerned above all with major themes in Jewish messianic hope, intermediary figures, and visionary traditions of human transformation, especially in the Second Temple period; and the significance of all of these for the origin and development of New Testament Christology.

All these main themes, in fact, are central to the earliest of the essays in this collection (that is, chapter 5). Or at least, all of them are central except for the focus on visionary traditions of human transformation; that is present but not central there. This essay began, in a shorter form, as a contribution to the first of the Tübingen-Durham Research Symposiums, held in Tübingen in 1988; it was then published in 1991. In this, I discussed the main evidence for Jewish traditions of both messianic hope and intermediary figures, and developed a distinctive argument in each case. I also considered, briefly, the implications of these for Pauline Christology. The argument here was designed to provoke debate and discussion. Along with that, a number of important issues had to be discussed very briefly (one of those being Pauline

Christology!). And in the fifteen years since that essay appeared there has indeed, for a variety of reasons, been very vigorous and extensive debate in all these areas. Hence, inevitably, in view of all this, there is much from this original essay that I want and need to take up and develop further.

The two main substantial areas of focus in this earlier essay were Jewish traditions, first of messianic hope and secondly of mediatorial figures. These two sets of traditions are potentially interrelated (although that relationship needs to be handled very carefully), and both are also potentially important for New Testament Christology. It is, then, these two main themes that are taken up in this present book, and developed further and in more depth. I have still not, of course, explored them exhaustively, but I hope that I have succeeded in showing something more of their significance in themselves, and their significance also for New Testament Christology.

2. Outline of the Contents

First, then, I take up the whole question of intermediary figures, not least in light of recent debate, and introduce the further important dimension of visionary traditions of transformation, especially human transformation. I assess the significance of these, both in themselves and also for early Christology. This is the focus of chapters 2 and 3. Then, secondly, in the following chapters (4–9), I set the main focus on messianic themes and traditions, explore further dimensions of these, and again to some extent at least assess their significance for New Testament Christology.

It is in chapters 2 and 3 that I focus, in a more extensive way than anywhere else in the book, on very early Christology. This is no coincidence; indeed, one main thrust of my argument here (in chapter 2 particularly) is that it is Jewish mediatorial and visionary traditions that are above all important for helping us understand the origin and development of earliest Christology. Thus indeed my starting-point in chapter 2 is to focus on recent work on the origin and early stages of New Testament Christology, where a considerably different assessment (compared to mine) is given for Jewish mediatorial traditions and their potential significance for New Testament Christology in its formative stages. I enter into constructive as well as critical engagement with this work, as also indeed with recent studies of Jewish intermediary and related traditions in themselves.

This leads me on to examine a substantial number of Jewish texts, the vast majority of which I had not included in my earlier essay (chapter 5). These texts are almost all traditions of visionary experiences concerned with transformation, above all the transformation of human figures such that they take on extraordinarily exalted (angelic or otherwise suprahuman) form in the heavenly world. These traditions, I argue, help us understand the nature and significance of Paul's visionary experiences of Christ, and similar visionary experiences within the New Testament otherwise. And in helping us understand this, they also, I suggest, provide us with important insight into how and why the Christian movement came, at such an early stage, to perceive Christ as set alongside God in the heavenly world, and belonging very much on the same level with him otherwise.

Following this, in chapter 3, I focus again on the theme of transformation, this time specifically in relation to resurrection. Here I discuss Jewish resurrection traditions from the Hebrew Bible onwards. It is clear that physical, or bodily, resurrection is not unequivocally attested in the Hebrew Bible before Daniel 12 in the second century BCE. Belief in physical resurrection probably *is* attested before the time of Daniel in the Enoch tradition. That would, even so, potentially take this belief back only to the early third century. Nevertheless, I argue that even if bodily resurrection is thus not clearly attested until the third century (or later), the earlier biblical traditions are not therefore simply devoid of significance. On the contrary, metaphorical resurrection traditions, as much as physical, point powerfully to the *transformation* that God is seen as – potentially at least – bringing about. Thus, I argue, the Ezekiel 37 resurrection tradition has a significance even beyond that usually noted, in the way that it shows the creative, transformative mode of divine action that is envisaged here. The Jewish people and their fortunes are not simply restored, as is often claimed; as Ezekiel portrays it, they are utterly transformed, and the effect of this extraordinary passage and emphasis are seen in later traditions as well.

Daniel 12, with its unmistakable portrayal of physical resurrection, in context of dire persecution and martyrdom, introduces a radical and important new dimension into Jewish resurrection tradition, whether or not it is innovatory in itself in depicting bodily resurrection. But what is also important to realize about Daniel 12 is that physical resurrection here is integrally bound up with a powerful tradition of righteous humans being transformed to take on angelic form in the heavenly world. This theme then has a strong influence on subsequent Jewish tradition. Thus in a range of texts, the righteous, set in the heavenly sphere beyond death, are also portrayed as being transformed into angelic mode. From this, I proceed to discuss resurrection traditions in Revelation and Paul. In Revelation 1, 7, 11 and 20, the influence of Ezekiel and Daniel is variously evident, but the theme of transformation takes on remarkable new dimensions, individually, christologically and cosmically. In Paul, I focus on a series of texts where the theme of resurrection is set centrally, but where we also find strong emphasis on the transformation of Christ and of believers. Yet here the tradition of

Daniel 12 (or indeed Ezekiel) plays no obvious role: Paul seems to draw instead on his own visionary experience of Christ transformed.

From Chapter 4 onwards, the focus is on messianism, again with discussion of Christology at a number of points. In my first essay (chapter 5), I drew attention to the need for further discussion of the *definition* of messianism; subsequently I had emphasized repeatedly the importance of this question and of considering the issues tied up in it. Now, in chapter 4, I take up this issue of definition, and argue that in modern scholarship there are effectively four different working definitions. I argue against too restrictive a definition, especially that which insists on a text having the specific term ‘messiah’. The position that I argue for is that a messiah should be understood, in the most concise form of the definition, as ‘the agent of final divine deliverance’. The eschatological dimension of this definition should, I argue, be seen as an integral aspect of it, over against positions, and definitions, that lack this focus.

In fact, however, the question of definition is only one of the issues that I have needed, and wanted, to take up from the original essay. Thus along with the issue of definition, and bound up with it, there is the question of what evidence counts as relevant, and what is significant about it. This question has to be taken up, both in relation to the substantial amount of (potentially) significant evidence not considered in the original essay, especially that from the Hebrew Bible, and also in relation to newly available evidence. Thus since the first essay was written, a large number of newly published Qumran texts had become available. So, then, the study of messianism in this period had been, potentially, considerably enhanced, and in light of this new evidence and recent discussion of it, a whole set of new questions and issues of importance had been opened up.

The Qumran texts were indeed one main point of focus in the original essay (chapter 5). Since, then, however, the publication in the early 1990s of a substantial number of further Qumran texts (especially Cave 4 Fragments) contained several with apparent messianic reference. Hence in chapter 4, I set out and discuss this evidence, and assess its significance for Qumran and Jewish messianism as a whole. I argue that this new evidence opens up further, and in some cases quite remarkable, dimensions for the role and nature of messianic figures at Qumran. There is now enhanced evidence for a royal messianic tradition at Qumran (though less so for a priestly messiah, or a dual messiah tradition), but from the diversity of portrayals, it is not possible to trace a development of messianic belief, or a specific pattern of messianic identity at Qumran. Nevertheless, taking this new evidence with that considered previously, it is possible to understand all these messianic profiles as, variously, expressions of what I have termed ‘agents’ of final divine deliverance, and together exhibiting a rich variety of emphasis.

In my first essay (in chapter 5), limits of space and the fact that I was restricting the period to c. 200 BCE – 200 CE meant that I could not include discussion of the Hebrew Bible. It is, however, important to take account of this evidence, both for its own sake and also because of its influence on and importance for subsequent developments in Jewish tradition. But it has become all the more important to do so in view of the prominent place that messianic traditions in the Hebrew Bible have assumed in recent discussion. Hence I give a critical review of recent scholarship, and argue that this reveals quite contrasting positions. These I term ‘minimalist’ and ‘maximalist’: the former finds little or nothing of messianic hope in the Hebrew Bible, or indeed before the first century BCE. The latter finds a clear royal messianic tradition running right through from the eight century BCE to the second century CE (and indeed beyond). Both of these, I argue, beg too many questions. The issue here indeed is bound up with that of definition and of what counts as messianic evidence.

Hence I argue that it is necessary to move from considering this evidence to assessing how we can and should understand the nature and scope of messianism in Judaism in this period as a whole. Thus I think an important perspective is to see the messiah as the agent of final divine deliverance; but I argue that it is divine deliverance itself that is the more important and underlying point of focus for Jewish hope. That is, the figure of the messiah is potentially important, but it is not all-important. Hence we need to consider this hope and this phenomenon very much not in isolation or in absolute terms, but in relation to the underlying traditions that inform this hope, and the specific political and national context within which it arises. We need also, then, to consider it especially in relation to popular understanding, as far as that is possible, and raise the question (even if we cannot answer it) of why messianic hope and messianic movements appear at some times and not others. Once we investigate messianism in this way and in real depth, it appears as a richly fascinating and multifaceted phenomenon. It also becomes clear that it is a complex phenomenon, both in the variety of ways it manifests itself and also as we try to gain a clear understanding of it.

The New Testament evidence belongs to the overall phenomenon of Jewish messianism in this period. Hence I move finally in this chapter to consider two main aspects of this. First, I develop further the basic argument that I set out in the original essay (chapter 5) in relation to Paul. Here I take account of recent discussion, and respond to discussion of my original argument. The main focus for my discussion of the New Testament evidence, however, is set in relation to Jesus and the Synoptic Gospels. The question I am primarily concerned with here is whether Jesus would plausibly have been seen as a Jewish messiah within his lifetime, and whether indeed he would have seen himself as such. I did not touch at all on this in my original essay, but it is an issue that has been brought into prominence in recent discussion, and has in any case intrinsic interest and importance. I argue that a plausible case can indeed be made not only for a messianic identity being attributed to Jesus within his lifetime, but also that Jesus may have implied a messianic identity for himself. If so, however, he does so only indirectly. Equally, he may seem to suggest for himself more of a prophetic than a royal messianic profile, whereas the New Testament and early Christianity generally acclaim him as a Davidic messiah. Hence I argue for ways in which we can address that paradox, and show how it can take us more deeply into an understanding of Jesus' self-claim and of messianism more generally. Thus it can be argued that it is the role of agent of final divine deliverance that the early Christians see Jesus as fulfilling, however little he appears to fit any of the main categories or trajectories of Jewish messianism. Thus the New Testament evidence can help alert us again to the complex nature of messianism, but also to the importance for Jewish hope of the emphasis on divine deliverance.

Chapter 5, as I have said, is the earliest of the essays in this collection and in some ways programmatic for the rest. It will in fact be clear, from chapters 2 and 4 especially, that I have not simply developed themes from this earlier essay; I have also in places revised and changed the views I expressed there. Because of the wide-ranging nature of the title I was given for the paper from which chapter 5 developed, I could not discuss at least some points as fully as I would have wished. Hence, in part, the need and stimulus for the further essays in this book. Nevertheless, I explored Jewish traditions as far as possible within the scope of the essay. Thus I discussed Jewish messianic hope in some detail, and argued a case for recognizing the significance as well as the limits of the evidence, and not least for taking account of popular messianic hope. Along with this, I also discussed relevant evidence for Jewish intermediary figures, and argued for the importance of a number of these, especially for the extraordinarily elevated and exalted status and appearance that some of them take on, and the questions thus raised for Jewish monotheism. I pointed here not only to the genuine difficulties that they pose, but also to the fact that these figures could variously enhance the ways in which God could be conceived and understood. In this essay I could deal with Paul and Pauline Christology only very briefly. What I argued there was that Paul shows deep awareness of the significance of Jewish intermediary figures, and that it is this in part that helps him in attributing a very elevated status to Christ. Paul can also, I argued, potentially be seen to be strongly influenced by Jewish messianic hopes. Yet although he uses the term χριστός very frequently, he in fact moves Jesus and the messianic hopes attaching to him to a different level: removed, that is, from the present situation, and the possibility of the divine kingdom being established as a challenge to earthly authorities. Hence Paul's Christology can be seen to be 'elevated' in a powerful but ambivalent way.

Inevitably, as I have made clear already, this essay left further issues to be explored, as well as giving rise to some lively discussion. In the subsequent essays, I have taken up these issues, and also brought further relevant themes into consideration. The following chapter, Chapter 6, in fact represents an expanded version of my contribution to the next Tübingen-Durham Symposium (held in 1989, with the essays published in 1992). Here the focus is on eschatology and messianism in early Judaism and Christianity, specifically for the period 70 – 135 CE. Hence I discuss the relevant evidence from Sibylline Oracles 5, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, along with a number of Prayer Texts and other evidence that relates potentially to messianic hope at a common, popular level. I argue that there is a continuing vibrancy of messianic hope in this period, but that this is also the cause of considerable dispute and conflict within Judaism. For the Christian tradition, I argue for the importance of millenarian and chiliastic hope in this period, and for the significance of the Jewish tradition that it draws on. Here also, however, the emphasis especially on the realization of the kingdom of God on earth in the near future causes conflict and division within early Christianity. What becomes apparent as well is that the early Christian movement here uses Jewish eschatological and messianic traditions to establish its own self-identity. Hence along with the obvious continuity between Judaism and Christianity here, the focus on messianism and eschatological hope also serves to deepen the divisions between them.

Having considered, in chapters 5 and 6, the evidence for messianism in Sibylline Oracles 3 and 5, I focus in Chapter 7 on a more specific topic: that is, the importance of the Temple especially in context of the final age, and the role of the messiah in relation to this. Both Sibylline Oracles 3 and 5 have a very positive attitude to the temple, and specifically look forward to a new and glorious temple in the final age. One main difference between them, I argue, is that in Sibylline Oracles 3 this is, implicitly, the work of God himself. In Sibylline Oracles 5, however, the role of building this new temple is given to the messiah. In defiance of the historical reality of the early second century CE, it portrays this as a glorious temple, built by the messiah and set at the centre of the earth, and symbolizing both the divine glory and also Jewish supremacy over the Romans. The idea of the messiah building the (eschatological) temple is unusual not just in the Sibylline Oracles, but in Judaism more generally. Hence I discuss this briefly in relation to other potentially comparable traditions. I also consider both Sibylline Oracles 3 and 5 in relation to Sibylline Oracles 4, with its (apparently) strikingly negative attitude to the temple, and assess the implications of this for our understanding of early Judaism and Christianity more widely.

In Chapter 8, I consider messianism in relation to what has sometimes been termed, along with the Temple, the other ‘pillar’ of Judaism in this period: that is, the Torah. In the expanded version of this essay that appears in the present volume (where I have been able to include sections on Paul and the Johannine literature, as well as further material, that had to be omitted from the version as originally published), I discuss the variety of attitudes to Torah in the messianic or final age, as those are manifested in a wide range of early Jewish and Christian sources. I argue that this variety can be seen to have four main strands: first, in at least some Jewish traditions, and in Matthew and James (and Paul and the Didache to an extent), Torah is seen as continuing in force with *intensified* demands. Second, in Paul (on one reading of him at least) and Justin, as well as Hermas, the Kerygma Petrou and Irenaeus (reflecting Jewish tradition), Torah is seen as having its true *fulfilment* in Christ. Third, the understanding that Christ brings a *new law* is evident in Justin, Irenaeus and the Didascalia. It is possible to see Matthew as representing this position, and if it incorporates the idea that Christ brings the true, perfect and final Torah, then the Johannine letters, Fourth Gospel and Paul can all be included as well. Finally, we find the idea that Torah has been *rejected*, or at least superseded, completely. Despite what is sometimes claimed, this has no basis in Jewish tradition. It is, however, starkly portrayed by Barnabas and, almost as strongly, by Hebrews as well. The evidence of Paul, Justin and Irenaeus is more ambiguous on this point. Thus as the early Christians reflected on Torah (and whether or not it had any continuing validity) in light of their belief in Christ as the messiah, very different perceptions of it emerged. Some show genuine continuity with Judaism, but it is abundantly clear that deep tensions and divisions were opened up between Judaism and Christianity on this issue.

In the final chapter, chapter 9, which I have written specifically for this volume, I take this theme further, building on the discussion in chapter 8, but now focusing specifically on Paul’s striking phrase ‘the law of Christ’ in Gal. 6.2, and its implications. First I give an extensive review of discussion of this in modern scholarship, to show that this discussion is more varied and complex than is often perceived. Yet there is also striking overlap and affinity between these different positions, and several themes can be seen to be shared in common by positions that are otherwise diverse. Thus, especially, there is a strong emphasis from a number of vantage points on ‘the law of Christ’ being one means that Paul uses to depict the new way of life in Christ, enabled by the Spirit and characterized by self-giving love, in Galatians 5–6 as a whole. Yet there remain very real contrasts and irreconcilable differences in the recent interpretation of Gal. 6.2, not least on the issue of whether it can really be understood as ‘law’ at all. I argue that ‘the law of Christ’ should indeed be understood as ‘law’, and in genuine continuity with the Mosaic law. But it should at the same time be understood as a 'law' transformed, in the messianic age, through the Spirit to take on the character of Christ. It should also, therefore, be set in close conjunction with 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' that Paul speaks of in Rom. 8.2. Thus it is Christ and Spirit who definitively characterize the final, messianic age in Paul's understanding, and the law, now characterized and controlled by them, takes on a transformed mode and dimension in this messianic age.

The nine separate essays contained in this book, then, range widely over Jewish messianic and mediatorial traditions and themes in early Christianity, especially its nascent Christology. What is common to all of these is an emphasis on the importance of understanding all these themes and traditions both in their own right and also in relation to each other. It is fundamentally important here to stress that the various Jewish traditions are not to be seen simply as a backdrop to what can then be observed in early Christianity, or as subservient to and superseded by this. I have emphasized throughout that early Christian traditions, above all Christology, are deeply rooted in Jewish tradition, and cannot be adequately understood apart from this. Indeed, the point I would wish to make is that the more deeply we probe into Jewish traditions, the more potentially we can understand about Christian traditions and their distinctive facets.

Thus, for example, in chapters 2 and 3 the focus is especially on New Testament Christology, in relation to its Jewish context, and the specific theme of transformation. And transformation is indeed a theme that runs through much of the book, and links different chapters and themes together. It is important, however, to note that the argument here throughout is *not* that Christianity represents a transformation of Judaism, taking it to its true mode of understanding, and leaving behind what is inadequate. In fact the theme of transformation as I am concerned with it goes much deeper than this. Indeed, as I have shown in these chapters, my focus is on traditions of transformation in Judaism (and not least visionary texts) as well as in early Christianity. These represent a remarkable phenomenon in themselves, but they are also indispensable for understanding crucial developments within early Christianity.

In the case of Jewish messianism as well, the point that has emerged throughout the book (and which I wish to emphasize especially) is that this is a phenomenon very much worth exploring and understanding in its own right, in all its fascinating variety. At the same time it is self-evident that early Christianity and very early Christology are closely bound up with Jewish messianism; the latter is thus centrally important, indeed indispensable, for a proper understanding of what comes about in the early Christian movement. Thus it is vital for a proper perception of early Christianity and its Christology to see precisely where it differs from Jewish messianism, as well as where it shares obvious points in common.

It becomes clear throughout the book, therefore, that Jewish traditions of messianism and mediatorial figures are a significant phenomenon in themselves, and have an importance and integrity of their own, as well as for the understanding of early Christianity. It was indeed a point that I made in my earliest essay here (chapter 5), just as I had in my previous work, that Jewish documents and traditions are important in their own right, not significant simply for the light that they can shed on the New Testament and early Christianity. It was indeed precisely because I took seriously in their own right the points of reference in Jewish tradition that I left myself so little space to consider Pauline Christology. That emphasis, and that perspective, have remained central to my subsequent work and to the present book, even though I have now gone further with drawing out the potential significance of Jewish texts and traditions for the New Testament and early Christology. That is, these texts and traditions remain fundamentally important in themselves, as *Jewish* texts and traditions, however much they may also be indispensable for the understanding of early Christianity.

Hence it emerges from this book, and is central to it, that both early Judaism and early Christianity have powerful traditions about future and final hope. They both also, in a number of ways, have powerful visionary traditions about transformation. These traditions, as I have emphasized, can and should be understood in relation to each other. First, however, they must be understood in their own right, and evaluated for the specific and distinctive claims that they make. The purpose of this book is to contribute to that task.

3. Details of First Publication

Some or all of chapters 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 in the present book have been published previously; details are given below. In each case the bibliography included at the end of the original form of chapters 5, 6 and 8 has been incorporated into the overall Bibliography in the present book.

Chapter 3: ‘Resurrection, Transformation and Christology’. A shorter version of this chapter appeared as ‘Resurrection and Transformation’, in F. Avemarie and H. Lichtenberger (eds), *Auferstehung – Resurrection /* The Fourth Durham–Tübingen Research Symposium. Resurrection, Transfiguration and Exaltation in Old Testament, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity (Tübingen, September, 1999) (WUNT 135; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), pp. 47–77.

Chapter 5 : 'Messianism, Mediators and Pauline Christology' first appeared as 'Jewish Messianic Expectations, Mediatorial Figures and Pauline Christology' in M. Hengel and U. Heckel (eds), *Paulus und das antike Judentum /* Tübingen–Durham–Symposium im Gedenken an den 50. Todestag Adolf Schlatters († 19 Mai 1938) (WUNT 58; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), pp. 17–89. (In its original form, pp. 78–82 of this chapter contained a Discussion and Response, which I have omitted from the version printed here.)

Chapter 6: 'Eschatology and Messianic Hope 70–135 CE' first appeared as 'The Parting of the Ways : Eschatology and Messianic Hope' in J. D. G. Dunn (ed.), *Jews and Christians : The Parting of the Ways A. D. 70 to 135 /* The Second Durham–Tübingen Research Symposium (Durham, September, 1989) (WUNT 66; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), pp. 239–313.

Chapter 7: 'Messiah and Temple in the Sibylline Oracles' first appeared as 'The Sibyl and the Temple' in W. Horbury (ed.), *Templum Amicitiae : Essays on the Second Temple presented to Ernst Bammel* (JSNTSup 48; Sheffield : JSOT Press, 1991), pp. 37–69.

Chapter 8: 'Messiah and Torah'. A shorter version of this chapter first appeared as 'Messianism, Torah and Early Christian Tradition' in G. N. Stanton and G. G. Stroumsa (eds), *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge : CUP, 1998), pp. 318–341.

I wish to express my grateful thanks to the publishers mentioned here for kind permission to reproduce the original form of these essays in whole or in part. In the case of 'The Sibyl and the Temple' (reproduced as chapter 7 in the present book), I am grateful specifically to Continuum Press, who have taken over JSOT Press, the original publishers in this case.

Chapter 2

Christology and Transformation

1. Introduction

As far back as 1977, Moule depicted two contrasting tendencies in modern scholarship on Christology; these he labelled 'evolutionary' and 'developmental'[1]. This characterization seems to me helpful, although I would define these positions a little differently to the way that Moule did[2]. That is, I see the essential difference as whether very high or incarnational Christology is a phenomenon utterly alien and unacceptable to first-century Judaism, and needs a decisively non-Jewish context in order for this altogether different form to be able to emerge; or whether it represents a development that is intelligible within a Palestinian Jewish context, and is indeed possible only within that context, however much it represents something extraordinary and unique in relation to what we find in Judaism otherwise.

It is essentially a form of this latter 'developmental' approach that I argued for in my original essay (chapter 5, section 3), and the present chapter is intended at least partly to take further what I said there, in relation to intermediary figures and the issues involved in the discussion. The developmental position has been the predominant approach in New Testament scholarship in the last fifteen years or so[3], although these various ‘developmental’ accounts are by no means simply all the same as each other, as will become apparent later in this chapter. The ‘evolutionary’ position has also been represented, however, in an impressive recent work by Casey[4], and I will come to this first. But I also need to note at this stage that a further recent book, by Bauckham[5], has presented, in a brief but fascinating argument, an approach completely different from either the evolutionary or the developmental. Indeed, he deliberately eschews and sets himself against both. In view of the challenge it presents, especially to the prevalent ‘developmental’ approach, and the larger issues it raises, I think it important to consider this work at some length. The same applies to the recent book by Eskola[6], who also develops a quite distinctive approach to the question, and challenge to the majority view, although in a very different way to Bauckham. First, however, I take up Casey’s revival of the evolutionary approach.

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[1] C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 1–10.

[2] Moule, *Origin*, pp. 2–3, sees 'evolutionary' as meaning 'the genesis of successive new species by mutations and natural selection along the way', and 'developmental' as 'the growth, from immaturity to maturity, of a single specimen from within itself'; and he understands the latter specifically, in relation to Christology, as the tendency to explain all the various estimates of Jesus reflected in the New Testament as, in essence, 'only attempts to describe what was already there from the beginning. They are not successive additions of something new, but only the drawing out and articulating of what is there'. It has to be said that in some of the more recent discussion the delineation of 'evolutionary' and 'developmental' categories becomes rather blurred. Thus, for example, Hurtado (see note 3 below), who I would see as representing a 'developmental' approach, has often spoken of the move to a very high Christology as a 'mutation' within Judaism; while Eskola (see note 6 below) criticizes what I would categorize as 'developmental' approaches for searching for a 'missing link' in trying to explain Christ's exalted status, and ridicules them also for adopting a 'typological idealism based on implicit evolutionary presuppositions'. This kind of loose usage, however, should not be allowed to vitiate what is a potentially useful way of classifying these approaches.

2. The Evolutionary Approach to Christology: Casey

The title of Casey’s work summarizes his thesis succinctly. That is, for Casey, Jesus himself is a fully Jewish figure, completely at home and acceptable within Judaism. It is only subsequently, at the final stage of the way belief about him evolves within the New Testament, and within a completely non-Jewish setting, that he is seen as fully divine. Thus Casey argues that ‘it took 50 or 60 years to turn a Jewish prophet into a Gentile God’[7]. In order for this to happen, early Christianity had to evolve through stages: first, as fully Jewish, then with Gentiles entering the Christian community in significant numbers, without becoming Jewish, and thirdly and finally, where Christianity is identifiable as a Gentile religion. The later stages were dependent on the earlier, but there was overlap, and some Christians continued as fully Jewish, even when the third stage was under way.

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[3] For brief reference to and description of some (varied) representatives of this approach, cf. e.g. L. W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord. Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2nd edn, 1998), pp. vii–xxii; J. E. Fossum, ‘The New *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*: The Quest for Jewish Christology’, in E. Lovering (ed.), *SBLSP 1991* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1991), pp. 638–646. Cf. also J. D. G. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit* (2 vols; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans / Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), vol. 1 *Christology*, pp. 388–391; L. W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 1–26.

[4] M. Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology* (Cambridge: James Clarke / Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991).

[5] R. Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998).

[6] T. Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne* (WUNT 2.142; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

[7] Casey, *Prophet*, p. 97.

The first stage began with Jesus as a fully Jewish prophet and teacher, carrying out his divinely appointed role of bringing the Jewish people back to God[8]. Casey suggests eight identity factors for first-century Judaism[9], and in these terms both Jesus and his movement were thoroughly Jewish, and had completely Jewish identity. As Gentiles came in, especially through the impetus of the Pauline mission, the Christian movement entered its second stage. During this stage, there are quite remarkable christological developments; both in Pauline Christology and above all in non-Pauline pieces such as Phil. 2.6–11 and Col. 1.15–20; 2.9, Jesus is on the verge of deity[10]. Nevertheless, in none of these is Jesus fully divine, in the view of the original author; monotheism acted as a restraining influence. It was so significant an identity factor for the Jewish and early Christian communities that such an alteration could only be made quite deliberately. So also in Revelation (e.g. 5.13–14) and Hebrews (e.g. 1.5; 5.5), what is said comes very close to expressing the deity of Jesus, but monotheism is still the restraining factor that prevents this happening completely. Similarly in 1 Peter and the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus is portrayed as having the highest status, but not as fully divine[11].

Already in the Pauline communities, however, the non-observance of Jewish law meant that it could only be a matter of time before Judaism rejected Gentile Christianity, while in the case of Hebrews, for example, it would only take the post-70 situation (following the destruction of the temple) to remove the community completely from the Jewish people[12]. This was all it would need for the perception of the christological expressions to be altered, and for Jesus to be made fully God. This third stage was reached, first of all, specifically in the Johannine community. In the crisis that inevitably arose here, with the acute tensions caused by an increasing Gentile membership and a more and more elevated Christology, the Jews in the community were inevitably forced into a decision. Those Jews who chose to remain in the Jewish community could not recognize Jesus as God, since it would infringe their Jewish monotheism. Those Jews who chose to remain in the Johannine community, on the other hand, were now thrown out of the synagogue. From this point on, they no longer considered themselves as Jews, in contrast to those who had taken this action against them. They were thus now free to take the final step of confessing Jesus as God. Only at this stage, and only here within the New Testament, is incarnation in the full sense to be found. So, Casey concludes, Jesus had now become so elevated a figure that observant Jews such as Jesus of Nazareth and the first apostles could not have believed in him[13].

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[8] Casey, *Prophet*, pp. 57–77.

[9] Casey, *Prophet*, pp. 11–20. The eight factors are: ethnicity, scripture, monotheism, circumcision, sabbath observance, dietary laws, purity laws, major festivals.

[10] Casey, *Prophet*, pp. 97–140.

[11] Casey, *Prophet*, pp. 141–161.

[12] Casey, *Prophet*, pp. 136–138, 143–146.

Casey's book represents the same basic 'evolutionary' approach that is evident in Bousset's great work[14], but it differs considerably both in strategy and detail. In both cases, that is, the idea of Jesus as divine could only come about in a *Gentile* setting, unconstrained by Jewish monotheism, but Bousset saw this decisive stage as coming much earlier on, with the emergence of the 'Christ cult' that treated Jesus as a divine figure, above all in liturgical acts and settings. For Bousset, this goes back to the 'Hellenistic Gentile' communities, already in Antioch and then developed further in the Pauline communities[15]. It is certainly the case for Bousset that the understanding of Jesus as divine is developed further in the Johannine writings, but this is not the decisive point. By contrast, Casey certainly avoids some of Bousset's obvious weaknesses; he also includes a well-informed discussion of Jewish messianic and intermediary figures as an integral part of his thesis[16]. Yet he also begs questions of his own, and does not do full justice to the complexity of both Judaism and also the New Testament evidence for Christian belief and practice[17]. Nevertheless, at the very least he alerts us to issues that we should really not need reminding of: that Jesus was, whatever else, very much a first-century Palestinian Jew, and that what the New Testament affirms about Christ raises, in acute form, questions about its compatibility with Jewish monotheism.

The first of these themes has been strongly reinforced by Vermes in his latest book on Jesus, itself representing and developing further the main thrust of his earlier work in this area[18]. Thus he sets himself to uncover the real Jesus, who can still be detected in the Synoptic Gospels as an exceptional first-century Palestinian charismatic healer and exorcist, and a teacher and prophet proclaiming the kingdom of God, from beneath the overlay of secondary interpretation that culminates in the portrayal of an altogether divine Christ in John's Gospel. Whatever we make of this essentially evolutionary account of New Testament Christology, both overall and in detail, we should be grateful for the compelling portrait of the genuinely Jewish Jesus who is at the heart of the Gospel accounts, and never lose sight of this.

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[13] Casey, *Prophet*, pp. 36–37, 156–159.

[14] W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus* (trans. J. E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon, 1970). The German original, which first appeared in 1913, was one of the great works of the original Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, and is still the most substantial statement of an 'evolutionary' Christology.

[15] Bousset, *Kyrios*, pp. 119–210.

[16] Casey, *Prophet*, pp. 78–96.

[17] For further critical discussion, cf. e.g. Dunn, *Christ*, vol.1, *Christology*, pp. 388–404; Hurtado, *Lord*, pp. 17, 43–44.

[18] G. Vermes, *The Changing Faces of Jesus* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2000); cf. also *idem*, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (London: SCM, 2nd edn, 1983); *idem*, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (London: SCM, 1993); and cf. also *idem*, *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (London: SCM, 1983).

3. Christ as Divine from the Beginning

In this section I consider the arguments presented by both Bauckham and Eskola. Although these differ in important respects, they share common points of emphasis; they both also, in their different ways, represent a radical challenge to the prevailing approach to earliest Christology.

3.1 Bauckham: Divine Identity and Christological Monotheism

The very short book by Bauckham[19] has, I believe, an importance out of all proportion to its length. We are promised a full, two-volume version of Bauckham's argument, and I shall want to take account of that in due course, but the main outline of his position and the main thrust of his argument are clear enough already.

Bauckham concentrates his account of New Testament Christology on the issue of the *identity* of God, and the incorporation of Christ within this. This marks a deliberate shift from his earlier focus on the *worship* of Christ within the New Testament as the crucial differentiating criterion that serves to set Christ apart as unique, vis-à-vis other figures within first-century Judaism[20] (that is, the kind of intermediary figures I discussed in my essay in chapter 5). Now he moves to the criterion of Christ's incorporation within the divine identity as being absolutely differentiating. This is so not simply by virtue of that identity *per se*, but in relation to what that identity encapsulates: that is, above all, that God alone creates the world and exercises sovereignty over it. This is attributed to no other figure apart from God in first-century Judaism, but it is affirmed constantly and emphatically of Christ within the New Testament, and further serves to show that Christ does indeed belong fully within the divine identity. That is, Christ is included in God's sovereignty over all things, shares God's exaltation above all the angelic powers, is given the divine name, and (as the pre-existent Christ) participates in God's unique activity of creation[21].

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[19] Bauckham, *God* (see note 5, above). For discussion of Bauckham's work, see also W. Horbury, *Messianism among Jews and Christians: Twelve Biblical and Historical Studies* (London / New York: T & T Clark, 2003), pp. 13–19.

[20] He still sees worship as *one* criterion; cf. *God*, pp. 34–35. But cf. also pp. 13–16, where he shows why he moves from his earlier position that exclusive worship of the one God is *the* decisive factor for defining God as unique, to seeing it as a *secondary* factor; that is, a *recognition of and response to* God's unique identity. Correspondingly, worship of Christ no longer has sole or primary force.

Thus Bauckham deliberately argues for a radically different understanding of New Testament Christology in relation to first-century Jewish monotheism. This Judaism had unique ways of characterizing the unique identity of God, and the early Christians included Jesus precisely and unambiguously in this identity. They did so, however, not on the analogy of the kind of intermediary figures (angelic and human) that I discussed in my earlier essay (chapter 5, section 3). It was a strict monotheism, with an absolute boundary between the one God and all created reality[22]. Hence the so-called intermediary figures could not be understood as semi-divine or as straddling the boundary between God and creation: they either belonged fully within the divine identity or not at all. Most did not belong, and were seen as being unambiguously creatures. Wisdom and Logos (and Spirit), by contrast, are personifications or hypostatizations of God, are intrinsic to the unique divine identity, and again therefore do not compromise this in any way. Thus the distinction between belonging and not belonging within the divine identity is absolute, and it is simply not possible to move gradually into this divine identity through a series of stages (as is maintained or implied for the development of New Testament Christology on the analogy of intermediary figures). On the contrary, New Testament Christology is already a fully divine Christology, with Christ as intrinsic to the unique and eternal identity of God.

It is fundamental to Bauckham's argument that we should speak of the *identity* of God, and not (for example) the divine essence or nature. These latter categories certainly come to dominate the Patristic debate, but they are Greek metaphysical concepts, alien to the first-century Jewish understanding of God[23]. 'Identity', by contrast, encapsulates this Jewish understanding, where God has a name and character, acts, speaks, relates and can be addressed, and is in some sense analogous to the human person. 'Identity concerns who God is; nature concerns what God is or what divinity is[24].' This identity is manifest in God's gracious covenant relationship with Israel, as well as his unique relationship to all reality, as creator and sovereign ruler. It is to this divine identity that Christ fully belongs. Yet Christ also radically redefines this identity. Thus Bauckham argues that the early Christian interpretation of the humiliation, death and exaltation of the Servant of Deutero-Isaiah in terms of Christ, and his suffering and exaltation, is central to their understanding of the unique identity of God. Thus God is now revealed in radical self-giving and abject humiliation. He rules only as the one who serves. Thus this new narrative of God's decisive act now defines the divine identity. This appears to be an extraordinary development in Jewish terms, yet it is completely consistent with God's character as he has already revealed it, and as he is free and able to act[25].

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[21] Cf. Bauckham, *God*, pp. 25–42.

[22] Cf Bauckham, *God*, pp. 1–22.

[23] Bauckham, *God*, p. 8, notes that some Jewish writers in the later Second Temple period (e.g. Josephus) did consciously adopt some Greek metaphysical language, but even here their understanding of God is not a definition of divine nature, characterized metaphysically, but a notion of the divine identity. Presumably Bauckham would argue that the same holds for e.g. Philo.

[24] *God*, p. 8.

There are very obvious points in favour of Bauckham's position. Not least, through his emphasis on the *identity* of God, he raises acutely the question of how exactly God was understood in first-century Judaism, and correspondingly what categories were appropriate for the earliest Christology. Further, by his insistence that Christ belongs fully within that identity, he makes a strong case for the character of God thus being radically modified, and this indeed appears to be in at least some sense possible from other parts of the New Testament than those that Bauckham cites, where the suffering and exaltation of Christ are sharply juxtaposed[26]. Bauckham also raises important issues about methods of approach to the origins of New Testament Christology as a whole. As I have noted, his approach deliberately fits neither the 'evolutionary' not the 'developmental' position. Indeed, he emphatically rejects both[27]. The understanding of Christ as divine, on his argument, certainly belongs fully within a Jewish context and at a very early stage, but it in no sense represents a development. As we have seen, Bauckham sees Christ as belonging throughout fully within the divine identity, and argues that it could not be otherwise; that is, there is no way in which one can approach to this status in stages.

Inevitably, there are also questions that have to be raised about Bauckham's argument. One issue that needs to be considered is the emphasis on the *identity* of God. No doubt Bauckham will make the conceptual framework for this clearer in the full version of his argument, when that appears. Here he indicates briefly that he is drawing on the work of Hans Frei (and others who take a similar line)[28]. Ultimately, then, Bauckham is taking up a main position developed in twentieth-century theology above all by Barth, whose work underlies that of Frei and those others whom Bauckham refers to. Thus Barth, at the very start of the *Church Dogmatics*, deliberately draws a sharp antithesis between his own position and that of the whole ontological tradition emanating from Aquinas (and, ultimately, Aristotle), with its emphasis on the nature and essence of God[29]. He rejects the God of Aquinas's natural theology, because it represents something created by human reason, a philosophical construct, and not the God of the Christian faith. The God of the Christian faith, by contrast, is the God who reveals himself in the bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He can be known only by the way – indeed, the *fact* – that he reveals himself, and reveals himself specifically as a God who *acts* in the way he does in scripture. God's self-revelation is self-authenticating, and it is the action of God in self-revelation that represents the sole and sufficient basis of theology.

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[25] Cf. Bauckham, *God*, pp. 45–77. Thus he says, 'This could not have been expected, but nor is it uncharacteristic. It is novel but appropriate to the identity of the God of Israel' (p. 74; cf. pp. 71–73).

[26] The same basic case could also be argued, for example, for Hebrews and perhaps 1 Peter (especially 2.18–25).

[27] Bauckham, *God*, pp. 2–5. Instead of 'developmental', Bauckham prefers the label 'revisionist' for some representatives of this approach (in which he includes my earlier essay – chapter 5, below), since he sees it as denying the strictly monotheistic character of Judaism. He in any case sees the focus on intermediary figures as a distortion of the picture, since they are not at all characteristic of Second Temple Jewish literature. The same basic complaint about intermediary figures being unrepresentative of the evidence is also found in P. Rainbow, 'Jewish Monotheism as the Matrix for New Testament Christology: A Review Article', *NovT* 33 (1991), pp. 78–91.

To return, then, to Bauckham: he constantly stresses the importance of the *identity* of God, and along with this he also emphasizes very strongly that this unique personal divine identity stands in complete contrast to that of divine essence or nature. Thus again, as he puts it: 'Identity concerns who God is; nature concerns what God is, or what divinity is.'[30] Jewish understanding and Jewish tradition have as their focus the unique identity of the God of Israel, in contrast to the merely philosophical abstraction that contemporary Greek thought aspired to. This comes close to Barth's basic approach: that is, that it is not possible to know what God is in essence, or what his metaphysical attributes are. God reveals himself in scripture and in his acts, and we can know God not through human reason, but only as he discloses himself. Barth (like Kirkegaard) sees God as 'wholly other', as the one who it is impossible to come to know through human reason. Hence it is that Barth argues for an absolute difference between Christianity and all (other) religions. The divide Bauckham draws between Jewish and Greek thought seems basically another form of this. The contrast between Jewish (or biblical) understanding as 'good' (showing God as he truly is) and Greek thought as 'bad' is found variously in neo-Barthianism, and corresponds to the sharp (or absolute) contrast between reason and revelation as possible ways of knowing and understanding God.

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[28] H. W. Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); *idem*, *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays* (G. Hunsinger and W. C. Platcher, eds; New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 45–93. For other related work that Bauckham is drawing on, cf. *God*, p. 7, note 5.

[29] K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics:* vol. I.1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (ed. G. W. Bromiley & T. F. Torrance; trans. G .W. Bromiley; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2nd edn, 1975), pp. 1–44 (cf. also pp. 47–87, 295–304).

[30] Bauckham, *God*, p. 8; cf. above, and note 24. He accepts that 'identity' is also a term not found in the biblical tradition, but argues that it corresponds fully to what is central to the God who reveals himself there.

There is much to be said for the whole emphasis on the identity of God and of Jesus. It makes absolutely central what is *distinctive* about the Christian understanding of God (and Jesus), and the ways in which God and Christ are revealed to us in scripture. It makes no claim to lay hold of God by means of human reason or describe his attributes in Aristotelian philosophical or metaphysical terms. Yet it is also not without problems. The whole of Barth's project, and the tradition deriving from him, for all their strengths, are of course caught up with very complex philosophical and theological issues; these I cannot pursue further here. It can, however, be said that Barth has frequently been criticized for making the internal perspective of faith utterly dominant, and failing to give any adequate place to the external perspective of reason and the world as it exists outside the sphere of Christian faith. This contrast is not set in absolute terms, but the Barthian position can certainly appear to be in danger of making absolute claims. It might perhaps correspondingly be asked of Bauckham's argument whether it does not achieve a level of internally consistent christological claim and coherence at the expense of considering how this would actually make sense to those confronted by it, and whether it does not have to assume an absolute contrast between Jewish and Greek categories, that is not sustainable on the basis of what we know otherwise[31]. In fact Bauckham, like Barth, does not want to make an absolute contrast, but again there is the danger that in spite of this he may appear to be making absolute claims in relation to what the New Testament asserts christologically. And as far as Bauckham and Barth do *not* make absolute contrasts and absolute claims, further questions are inevitably begged, not least about the ultimate coherence of their position. It is also the case that the emphasis (in both Barth and Bauckham) on God's character and identity being revealed in the narratives of his activity implicitly privileges one genre of writing (and one part of the Hebrew Bible) as distinct from others. Hence it would also need to be asked what understanding of the 'identity' of God (and therefore the identity to which Christ belongs) might emerge if a wider range of texts were considered.

Bauckham, as I have noted, differs radically in his understanding of New Testament Christology from both main approaches, the 'evolutionary' and the 'developmental'. This is one of the fascinating aspects of his argument, but it again raises questions. Thus it is evident on both the evolutionary and developmental views how and why it came about that Christ was understood as divine already within the New Testament period. In Bauckham's argument, however, we are simply presented with the fact that Jesus belongs fully within the divine identity. But when did this happen, or when (and why) at least was it perceived to be the case? Was the resurrection the main factor (Bauckham says in fact very little about the resurrection), or was it already before this?[32] Do all the New Testament writings reflect the same view of the matter, and does each of them have an internally consistent understanding of Christ sharing in the divine identity? Bauckham may well deal with these points in his fuller treatment when it is published, but for the moment we are left to wonder.

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[31] Cf. e.g. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism. Studies in their Encounter in Palestine in the Early Hellenistic Period* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1974); *idem*, *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1989).

Further, if the absolute contrast between Greek and Jewish categories is problematic, so also are the absolute contrasts Bauckham makes concerning intermediary figures. These are really of two kinds: first, that angelic and exalted human figures are utterly different from Christ and do not in any sense at all belong in the divine identity, and secondly that Word, Wisdom and Spirit stand in absolute contrast to these, since they do belong fully within the divine identity as personifications of God. Bauckham's argument throughout works in these neat, watertight and absolute categories, but it has to be asked whether the picture is really that simple and clear-cut. The discussion in my original essay (chapter 5, section 3.3) showed that the distinction between at least some of these figures and God could appear very blurred, and the portrayal of the heavenly world could make it extremely difficult to distinguish divine from non-divine (or semi-divine) categories. So, for example, Bauckham attempts to dispose of the apparent significance of the extraordinary way that Moses is portrayed on the divine throne in heaven in the Exagoge of Ezekiel[33]. But if his argument, that this is simply a metaphor for Moses' earthly role as king and prophet of Israel, is not found convincing (and I am not alone in being unpersuaded), then this text is certainly problematic for the absolute distinctions Bauckham wants, and needs, to draw. In any case, however, Bauckham admits that the Son of Man in 1 Enoch 37–71 participates in the unique divine sovereignty, since he both sits on the divine throne and receives worship[34]. He tries to play this down, as the sole exception to the rule, and argues that the Son of Man's inclusion in the divine identity is equivocal, since it is not until the future day of judgment that he plays any part in the work of creation or in the divine sovereignty. Yet to have even one such exception is potentially deeply damaging for the absolute distinction Bauckham wants to draw. That is quite apart from the question of whether this really is the sole exception.

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[32] It would seem that a fully logically consistent case here would need to include pre-existence on a level that Bauckham does not suggest. This would at least produce an internally consistent argument, even if it were problematic in other ways.

[33] Bauckham, *God*, p. 20, note 34. Cf. also R. Bauckham, 'The Throne of God and the Worship of Jesus', in C. C. Newman, J. R. Davila and G. S. Lewis (eds), *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism* (JSJSup 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 43–69. Bauckham's argument here is rejected by e.g. Hurtado, *Lord*, p. 47.

[34] Bauckham, *God*, pp. 19–20; *idem*, 'Throne', pp. 57–60.

The understanding of these angelic and exalted human figures, and their relation to and difference from Christ, are issues to which I will return shortly. As far as the further, related question is concerned – that of the absolute contrast between these angelic and exalted human figures on the one hand, and Wisdom and Logos (and Spirit) on the other – it has to be said that this argument also is not unproblematic. Thus, for example, Philo speaks of the Logos as the 'archangel' and 'chief of the angels'. There is, certainly, a lack of agreement on what exactly he might mean by this[35], and Philo may in any case be held to be atypical of Judaism and Jewish thought in this period. I shall take up this issue further in Section 4.1 below. Yet it can be said at this point that at the very least it was clearly possible for one Jew, in the first century CE, to identify 'Logos' and 'archangel' with each other; this thus implies that Logos and angels could be seen as very much overlapping categories more generally, and that it is therefore not possible to maintain an absolute distinction between them. It is also the case that Bauckham's use of terms such as 'personification' and 'hypostatization' is potentially problematic[36].

As far as Wisdom is concerned, simply the well-known passages in Proverbs (1.20–33; 8.22–31 – indeed the whole of chapter 8; 9.1–6) portray her in extraordinarily vivid terms. It needs, then, to be asked what impression these passages might give to ordinary Jews who heard or read them. It is not clear that they would simply conclude that Wisdom personifies God and belongs within the divine identity: there would appear to be at least some scope for confusion. Certainly Bauckham links Wisdom, Logos and Spirit together, seeing them variously as personifications and belonging within the divine identity. But whereas the Hebrew Bible generally speaks of the Spirit *of God*, that is precisely *not* how Wisdom is designated. Even if Bauckham's argument could be sustained here, it is certainly not clear what would be meant by saying that Wisdom belongs within the 'identity' of God, since it is specifically said that she is created by God. The potential confusion inherent in the way that Wisdom is portrayed would be enhanced by subsequent developments of this tradition, as for example in Sirach 24–25 and Wisdom of Solomon 7–9, where again Wisdom is portrayed, or portrays herself, in quite remarkably vivid terms.

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[35] For discussion of the relevant passage in Philo, cf. below, section 4.1.

[36] He sees Wisdom and Word, for example, as sometimes literary personification and sometimes real hypostatization. On the issues involved, cf. e.g. A. Chester, *Divine Revelation and Divine Titles in the Pentateuchal Targumim* (TSAJ 14; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), pp. 295–296. It is these problems that lead S. M. Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him. Exegesis and the Naming of Angels in Ancient Judaism* (TSAJ 36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), pp. 88–91, to conclude that it is best to avoid the terms altogether and speak instead of 'special figurative treatment'. I think it possible to retain 'hypostatization' usefully, but discussion of it needs to be very carefully handled. Cf. also C. A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (AGJU 42; Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 36–45.

It is by no means evident what exactly the writers of these various works meant by speaking of Wisdom in the way they do. But in any case, it is quite another question – as I have implied already – what the popular perception of these portrayals would be. It may not in any case appear to be at all the most obvious reading of these texts to see them as representing Wisdom as simply and fully part of the divine identity. It could seem still less so to ordinary people encountering these traditions of a female figure moving easily between heaven and earth, having a throne in heaven, being created before all else, and assisting in creation. There would be real scope for confusion about the nature of the heavenly world and the various figures who operate within it. Essentially the same issue arises in relation to the usage of Shekinah and Kabod, or Yeqara, in Rabbinic and Targumic texts, and Memra in the Targums alone. I have argued that these terms are ways of describing aspects of divine activity, and are designed at least partly to offset any suspicions of anthropomorphism[37]. But I have often been given pause for thought, as I have reflected further on them, as to what exactly ordinary Jewish people would have made of them, as they heard them portrayed in vivid terms during the Torah and Haftarah readings in the synagogue.

It is of course clear that Bauckham very much *needs* Wisdom (and Logos) to be part of the 'divine identity', since the developed traditions about them so obviously emphasize their activity in the creation and sustaining of the world: that is, precisely what Bauckham sets as the supreme and exclusive characteristics of God himself. The argument here is indeed, as I have noted, in danger of being circular; that is, Wisdom and Word/Logos, even if they may in fact be hypostatizations with existence apart from God, belong within the divine identity precisely because their activities are those that belong to God alone. Yet that is simply to beg the question. It is equally clear that, for his argument, Bauckham needs Wisdom and Logos on the one hand, and angelic and exalted human figures on the other, to belong in neatly compartmentalized and absolutely differentiated categories. Yet it is by no means obvious that it would all have simply been perceived like this. Philo, as we have seen, confuses the two categories completely; or to be more precise, he brings them together, apparently unproblematically. So also Philo can speak of the Logos as a 'second God' (δεύτερος θεός : Quaest. in Gen. II.

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[37] Chester, *Revelation*, pp. 265–324. I am especially hostile to what I see as simplistic and tendentious arguments for making Targumic evidence connect directly with varous parts of the New Testament, as represented for example by D. Muñoz Leon, *Dios-Palabra. Memrá en los Targumim del Pentateuco* (Granada: Institucíon San Jerónimo, 1974).

62). It is of course important not to over-interpret particular passages from Philo’s voluminous works, and it needs to be borne in mind that he also makes the Logos subordinate to God. Yet in what he thus variously says about the Logos, he does not appear essentially different from the Fourth Gospel. And if angels can appear in human form on earth, be confused, potentially, with God, and be set alongside God in the heavenly world, and if Wisdom can be portrayed so vividly as a woman on earth, yet also as belonging alongside God in heaven, then as I have argued, it would not be surprising if the confusion of these categories were in fact more widespread. Indeed, it would hardly be surprising if, at least at a popular level, Wisdom, Logos and angels were to be seen as basically similar figures, existing in an essentially similar relationship to God, rather than being perceived as belonging in absolutely different, and opposed, categories.

It may be that a properly reflective appraisal of Judaism in the first century would in fact conclude that God was to be seen as utterly unique, with his identity not to be infringed upon, and Wisdom, Logos and Spirit as belonging fully within this ‘identity’. Yet even if this were the properly logical and theological way in which Judaism should be understood, we again have to reckon with the fact that in practice it might not have seemed at all as clear. The situation in the heavenly world, with various figures set around and alongside God, and acting on his behalf, is potentially confusing. Bauckham focuses especially on the creation of the world and control of it, and sees only Wisdom, Logos and Spirit as being associated with these. But other activities, for example sitting in final judgment, can also be seen as properly a purely divine prerogative; yet judgment, at least, is attributed to angels and exalted humans (as, for example, Enoch). Again, it is difficult to draw an absolute line of demarcation or differentiation with any conviction. Thus the rich and diverse Jewish portrayal of angelic and exalted human figures, along with Wisdom and Logos, remains important in its own right, and its richness and complexity must be respected. It also remains potentially important, however, for the understanding of New Testament Christology.

Thus Bauckham argues that ‘high Christology was possible within a Jewish monotheistic context, not by applying to Jesus a Jewish category of semi-divine intermediary status, but by identifying Jesus directly with the one God of Israel’[38], and that it was not possible to straddle the line between divine and human, or approach to divine status by stages. Yet this really misses the point of what Bauckham labels the ‘revisionist’ approach – or some of it, at least. Thus I would want to argue (and indeed thought I had argued!) that the point is not that the New Testament writers fit Christ into an existing category of ‘semi-divine intermediary figures’, but that the way that some of these figures are portrayed in Jewish tradition, as set within the heavenly world, helps these early Christian authors towards expressing and articulating what they want to say about Christ. That is, the New Testament writers find themselves struggling to find the least inadequate way possible to capture the extraordinary nature of their experience of Christ and their dawning realization of (something of) his true significance. Thus whereas Moule, as we have seen, distinguishes two main models for the way in which 'high Christology' comes about – the evolutionary and the developmental – in some of these discussions, 'developmental' scarcely seems adequate to describe what is being presented. It might then be better to speak of an 'explosive' Christology, since it has such an impact and presents so extraordinarily an elevated view of Christ within an amazingly short period of time[39]. The emphasis in these works is not on a gradual approach and approximation to divine status, or a placing of Christ within an existing semi-divine category. The emphasis instead is – as it should be – on the altogether amazing, indeed unique, portrayal, of a human figure of recent experience and known to have suffered a shameful death, as so quickly taking on divine status or something very close to it. This is utterly unprecedented, and needs to be seen and stressed as such, however it might be explained. Yet it is also the case that, for Paul at least, the starting-point (and indeed turning-point) for his whole reflection on Christ is seeing the exalted Christ set alongside God in the heavenly world. In this respect, at least, Paul's visionary experience is comparable to the experience of other (Jewish) visionaries, and to the portrayals of figures set alongside God and apparently having divine attributes. And these visionary traditions can, then, provide Paul with at least some means of expressing the nature and significance of what he has seen and is struggling to understand, even if there are decisive differences in other respects. The same, *mutatis mutandis*, may be true of other New Testament writers. I shall take up this theme of visionary traditions and their significance later in the chapter[40].

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[38] Bauckham, *God*, p. 4.

There is indeed a further dimension to this discussion. Bauckham argues that Christ belongs fully within the divine identity from the very beginning, and does not and cannot approach to this status by stages. Yet most of the New Testament texts, along with the very striking – indeed extraordinary – ways in which they speak of Christ, also portray him in very human and limited terms. That would, of course, seem to be intrinsic to an incarnational faith. Yet the issue here is that these portrayals are not held in a profound and creative christological tension (as they are, for example, in Philippians 2), but sit uncomfortably alongside the more exalted expressions. To this extent at least, it would then seem that there is a more gradual move and tendency towards capturing and expressing the full significance of Christ[41]. These, then, are a number of the issues raised by Bauckham's work. Again, I shall return to some of them later in this chapter,and discuss them further there.

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[39] Cf. also M. Hengel, *The Son of God. The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1976), pp. 1–2; *idem*, *Between Jesus and Paul. Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1983), pp. 30–47; M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer, *Paulus zwischen Damaskus und Antiochien. Die unbekannten Jahre des Apostels* (WUNT 108; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), pp. 423–433 [cf. M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch. The Unknown Years* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1997), pp. 279–286)]; Hurtado, *God*, pp. 1–2.

[40] Cf. below, sections 4.2, 4.3 and 5.1.

3.2 Enthronement Christology: Eskola

The further work, besides that of Bauckham, that I wish to focus on at some length is the recent book by Eskola[42]. This is again especially because of the issues it raises and the way that it forces us (sometimes in spite of itself!) to sharpen and reformulate our understanding of the primary sources and their implications. Thus Eskola sees Merkabah mysticism as centrally important for the understanding of New Testament Christology, but at the same time he sees this Christology itself as in need of a distinctively new approach[43]. He takes over Scholem's definition of Merkabah mysticism as 'above all throne mysticism', that is, with description of the heavenly palace and God sitting on the heavenly throne, and with the palace portrayed as a divine temple[44]. Most heavenly journeys undertaken by seers end in this temple, where the journey reaches its climax in meeting with God. This ascent structure is typical of several different writings, and is associated with the enthronement theme – that is, where exalted patriarchs or other heavenly figures are enthroned in heaven.

Eskola emphasizes, however, that it is important to recognize that these different figures belong to quite different categories. The usual New Testament method, with its focus on christological titles, and typological explanations of these related to the exaltation of angelic figures and patriarchs, is inadequate. Instead, he argues, we need to make use of methods from modern literary theory[45], with close attention also to intertextuality[46].

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[41] This is where at least part of the main force of the arguments by Casey, *Prophet*, and Vermes, *Faces*, lies; cf. section 2, above.

[42] Eskola, *Messiah* (see note 6, above).

[43] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 15–17, and throughout.

[44] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 1–6, and repeatedly (indeed repetitively!) throughout; thus e.g. pp. 65, 123, 125, 146, 156, 179, 210, 318, 342. For the view he draws on, see G. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 3rd edn, 1954), pp. 43–44.

[45] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 17–42. The methods he sees as especially relevant are structural semiotics, narratology and discourse analysis, and metaphor, along with the 'symbolic universe' derived from social theory.

[46] That is, analysing the influence of the same symbolic universe and metaphors in a new context, specifically here theological discourses, in the sense, that is, of the

From this perspective, the primary meaning of christological expressions depends on the discourses in which they occur. Hence it is not titles that are intrinsically important; instead we need to focus on the exploitation of common metaphors in different descriptions, both Jewish and Christian. The intertextual transformation of discourses is an extremely important factor when assessing the relation between Jewish mysticism and early Christology. Hence it is necessary to focus on the fruitful tension between the common symbolic universe, representing continuity, and the novel christological discourse, representing discontinuity, in Second Temple Jewish tradition[47].

So, then, Eskola sees Merkabah mysticism as potentially very influential both for early Christology and also for the symbolic universe of mainstream Second Temple Jewish theology[48]. This is so especially with its metaphors of God as king and his heavenly dwelling as a palace with a throne of Glory, which obviously had great significance for apocalyptic Jewish as well as Christian writings. In early Jewish mysticism (that is, the apocalypses) most stories of heavenly visions describe the journey of a chosen one, called to visit the heavens, with usually the climax of the journey as a meeting with God or vision of God on his glorious throne, where the seer is accompanied before the heavenly throne and God himself addresses him[49]. It is the promises or actual descriptions of heavenly enthronements, in some cases indeed, enthronement on the throne of Glory itself, that make these visions special. For Eskola, however, the ways that scholars have handled this material thus far have been oversimplified and inadequate.

Hence a new approach is needed. Thus the general pattern of Merkabah mysticism passages is important, with everything of significance taking place before the divine heavenly throne; *but* it is necessary to distinguish different discourses, for example cultic as well as enthronement. Merkabah mysticism also provides a clear model for the enthronement itself; heavenly beings and eschatological luminaries are usually understood as enthroned beings, with high status in heaven, and thus provide a perfect model for the Christian exaltation of Jesus. Angels residing in the heavenly Holy of Holies had

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application and adaptation of earlier written documents and 'echoes of culture'. Cf. Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 34–38.

[47] This new approach, Eskola argues, thus involves investigating the narrative structure of christological statements and the implied narratives that make even short christological confessions comprehensible. The images used here need to be seen merely as symbols that gain proper meaning only when placed within a narrative. This method makes it possible to distinguish between the symbolic world of Merkabah mysticism texts and the christological statements of the first Christians. So also the relationship between Merkabah mysticism and early Christology is intertextual, and christological statements are intertexts that exploit earlier elements for their own purpose. Cf. further Eskola, *Messiah*, e.g. pp. 336–337, 371–374, 384–385.

[48] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 124–157.

[49] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 71–72.

exceptionally high status, and were specifically called sons of God (as at Qumran), *but* were still set within a theocratic hierarchy, with their function being to worship God. Some heavenly figures even had a soteriological function, and there is also an example of the eschatological enthronement of the Davidic messiah, again at Qumran. Eskola notes that these various features are hardly ever found together, but although this presents a challenge for the interpretation of early Christology, he suggests that taken together they help us understand why the first Christians, in the post-Easter period, used the idea of heavenly enthronement to explain the meaning of Christ's resurrection.

In New Testament Christology, Eskola argues, the concepts of messiah and throne appear together in various contexts, and it is again important to distinguish different discourses with their different roles. The most interesting of these is the *enthronement* discourse, and especially the way it constantly exploits Psalm 110[50]. It is also notable that New Testament Christology uses the main aspects of Merkabah mysticism, and has the same symbolic world as Jewish apocalyptic: that is, portraying God as a theocratic king, with a heavenly court, and even temple, and a divine throne of Glory. The book of Acts, especially, provides very important evidence for this enthronement and exaltation discourse[51]. Above all, 2.22–36 portrays Jesus as a Davidic messiah, and uses the subtext of Psalm 110 in intertextual relationship with Psalms 16 and 132, to portray Christ as the enthroned Davidic messiah. Thus Psalms 16 and 132 provide scriptural proof and prophecy for the resurrection, and for *identifying* the resurrection with exaltation and enthronement. In particular, Psalm 132 alludes to 2 Samuel 7, where ἀνίστημι (ἀναστήσω) / קום (הקימותי) at 7.12 has the sense of 'raising up', and can thus be understood as denoting resurrection and (probably) enthronement.

This exaltation Christology does not describe Christ's heavenly journey, but simply identifies ascension with resurrection (Acts 2.36). Thus the early Christian intertextual strategy for combining texts shows the exalted one to be the messiah, and the resurrection to be the exaltation and enthronement of the Davidic messiah, so that resurrection day becomes enthronement day. Thus the resurrected Jesus is exalted as the Davidic messiah on the throne of Glory in heaven. There is a clear dependence on Merkabah mysticism, and this helps explain why enthronement on the heavenly throne of Glory, set centrally, was necessary for Jewish Christian Christology. Extraordinarily, however, the ascent and Merkabah speculation are here applied to a Davidic messiah and historical figure; the intertextual strategy is also exceptional, making enthronement take place at the resurrection. Here also in Acts 2, the messiah is given further royal titles, and, extraordinarily, Christ, set at the right hand of

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[50] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 158–160.

[51] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 160–182.

God, is the one who provides salvation. There is some evidence, in Jewish theology and mysticism, for the highest figures in the heavenly world being designated 'gods', and having a soteriological function, but there is no analogy at all for applying these to a historical figure. Further, exaltation would not in itself produce divine features; hence what this suggests is not an adoptionist concept, but that the enthroned one would have had deified status already. The same basic exaltation Christology is also found in Acts 5.30–31 and Acts 7. Thus the Lukan tradition uses the Merkabah mysticism concept of the throne vision, with resurrection as an act of enthronement, but Christ's unique status transcends that of other heavenly figures, and the usual constraints of a theocratic relationship.

Paul, in his Christology, relies heavily on enthronement discourse, frequently portraying the resurrected Christ as the enthroned messiah and making use of Merkabah mysticism[52]. Notable is his use of Psalm 110 at 1 Cor. 15.24–25 and especially Rom. 8.34, with Jesus' resurrection interpreted as an act of enthronement. In Col. 2.16–3.1, Paul uses Ps. 110.1 to oppose the Colossian Jewish mystics, who relied on visions, ascetic humility and joining with angels in worship, by instead emphasizing the throne of Glory as the sole centre of the heavenly temple, with Christ, as Lord of the Church, enthroned there. The way in which Paul is able to combat this tradition would make very good sense if he had himself been a Jewish mystic before his conversion; and this polarity would also explain why Paul saw Christ as the enthroned messiah, who is set at the right hand of God and reigns above the heavenly hierarchy. So also 2 Cor. 12.1–5 and Gal. 1.12–16 are most plausibly understood as Merkabah mystic visions of the exalted Christ on the throne of Glory (as also 2 Cor. 4.4–6), and very probably these experiences became crucial for his Christology.

Hebrews is to be seen as in many respects a perfect example of the use of enthronement Christology, and it has an especially prominent use of Psalm 110[53]. Thus 1.3–4 (or vv. 1–4) represents a familiar exaltation Christology, with Christ as the Davidic messiah, enthroned to power in his resurrection. The exaltation here resembles the heavenly journey that leads to the holy throne of Glory in the heavenly temple (and already the Davidic messiah is the priest-king who makes atonement)[54]. Hebrews uses several themes from Merkabah mysticism, especially the subordination of the angels, to aid the description of the extraordinary sonship of Christ, as God (through the interpretation of Psalm 45). In fact the whole letter relies on apocalyptic cosmology and enthronement discourse to develop an enthronement Christology, with Christ in his resurrection enthroned on the throne of Glory in heaven. It is important to note that it is not here a prototype figure that explains the christological descriptions, but rather it is the setting within which the christological transformation of the tradition takes place that makes the christological statements intelligible. The Christology of Hebrews has several further points of contact with Merkabah mysticism, especially the ascent pattern.

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[52] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 182–202.

[53] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 204–211.

[54] Cf. also Heb. 8.1; 10.12; 12.2.

Thus Acts 2, Paul and Hebrews all have the character of the Davidic messiah and the metaphor of the throne as essential elements of early Christian enthronement discourse (as also does Revelation, itself clearly connected to Merkabah mysticism, and again essentially a perfect example of the reception of early Christian enthronement Christology)[55]. Thus early Christology is based on the ascent structure, with the basic scene similar to that of Second Temple Jewish mysticism, and Christ's exaltation seen as the royal enthronement on the heavenly throne. This Christology uses Jewish enthronement discourse, but now the enthronement takes place in the resurrection, so that the two eschatological events fall into one. Psalm 110 is used as a proof-text for the idea of exaltation taking place in the resurrection, and the Christology thus transcends the limits of Merkabah mysticism. The common feature is the christologically motivated intertextual transformation of enthronement statements.

The second type is *resurrection* discourse. The sole passage that Eskola uses to try to demonstrate his case is Rom. 1.3–4[56]. The aspect of resurrection is dominant here, he argues, but enthronement belongs essentially to the Christology of the passage[57]. This can be seen clearly from the allusion to 2 Samuel 7, again with the implicit wordplay on resurrection and raising as enthronement. It belongs to a Merkabah mystic context just as much as Acts 2, with the motif of the enthronement of an earthly king functioning as a metaphor expressing the significance of the new status that Jesus has received. Unlike Acts 2, the throne is not mentioned, and there is no Psalm 110 or sitting at the right hand of God, but simply Christ as Son of God in power. Nevertheless, the 'mystical' nature of enthronement is identical in both; the enthronement takes place in the resurrection, setting the Davidic messiah on the heavenly throne – that is, either the throne of Glory or the messiah's own throne. In both, the exalted Christ is the Son of God, the Davidic messiah, the κύριος on the heavenly throne; Christology and Jewish messianology are thus linked together. Thus the κύριος statement in v. 4 is an essential part of the description, and may have been part of the original formula. So also, as in Acts 2, the ‘seed’ of David in his resurrection is χριστός.

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[55] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 211–216; thus e.g. Rev. 3.21; 4.1–9; 5.5–6.

[56] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 217–250.

[57] Eskola concedes that Rom. 1.3–4 could be classified as an enthronement discourse, but argues that the category of special 'resurrection discourse' is justified. He also offers a very different reconstruction and reading of 1.3–4 compared to the usual exegesis of the passage, so that there is now no antithesis between the two verses, but instead a reading of v. 3 in light of v. 4.

Hence both Acts 2 and Romans 1 make the eschatological events of enthronement and resurrection the same event, but Romans 1 also shows that the eschatological *general* resurrection has begun with Jesus’ resurrection. Hence Christ’s resurrection marks the crucial dividing-line in salvation history, bringing a new sphere of grace and a new Davidic covenant. Therefore the interpretation of Rom. 1.3–4 as a two-stage event (Jesus’ earthly mission, followed by his resurrection to the heavenly realm) misses the point: the sole focus is the single point of salvation-history, and the fulfilment of the eschatological enthronement of the Davidic messiah. Thus 1.3–4 is intelligible only as early Christology making use of Merkabah mysticism and ascent structure.

The third type, the *cultic* discourse, is found in Paul and above all Hebrews[58]. The Old Testament priestly religion is linked with Second Temple apocalyptic through the sacral mysticism attached to the temple cult. This mysticism transcends the concept of the throne, so that the relationship between heaven and earth, and between the heavenly shrine and the Jerusalem temple, is now central for the temple liturgy. In the Merkabah cultic discourse, the ascent tradition portrays the seer viewing, and sometimes joining, the heavenly worship in the heavenly temple. In the New Testament, the Merkabah influence is evident in the cultic interpretation of exaltation Christology. That is, Christ’s exaltation is seen as a heavenly journey, where the God-chosen king-priest is exalted to God’s throne in the heavenly temple. The New Testament, however, also has its own original interpretation. Thus it uses Psalm 110, so that the throne becomes the mercy-seat in the Holy of Holies, and the place of atonement, like the original in the Jerusalem temple; in this way, then, the exaltation christological interpretation of Psalm 110 combines sacrifice and enthronement, with the help of the idea of Christ’s high-priestly ministry. Thus Christ’s exaltation is presented as a cultic act: Christ himself is the High Priest, who in his resurrection is exalted to God’s heavenly shrine. As king-priest, he performs the sacrificial ritual in the Holy of Holies.

The discourse contains within it, therefore, both the Davidic messiah and the heavenly throne; *but* the latter is now portrayed as God’s ark in the Holy of Holies, and the former as the heavenly High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. So, then, the earthly temple and sacrifice are now reduced to mere metaphor. The unity of exaltation and atonement, and of royal enthronement and priestly ministry, have their rationale in the idea of the ark as actually God’s throne of Glory. Jewish texts see God’s heavenly palace as a temple, with a priestly ministry in heaven, and both Paul and Hebrews see the temple and sacrifice as heavenly, and the archetype of the earthly. Now, therefore, the crucified (and thus sacrificed) and resurrected Christ, in this ascent structure, ascends into the heavenly temple and enters the Holy of Holies alone, and takes the place of the High Priest. Thus Psalm 110 is used to help show that the Davidic figure is the new Melchizedek, and the exalted Christ is the new Davidic figure, enthroned on God's throne and reigning over the whole world, with angels subject to him.

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[58] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 252–269.

The *judicial* discourse is altogether distinctive[59]. Psalm 110 is not relevant here; instead, the enthroned Christ is now the heavenly judge who performs God's eschatological judgment. It uses the same central metaphor of the throne, but it uses it now in a completely different way – that is, as the divine judgment-seat. Resurrection also is not relevant here; instead Christ is portrayed as entering on the throne, as the inauguration of the eschatological climax. He does so, however, *not* simply in the manner of Merkabah figures who participate in the final judgment. So also, Christ as the eschatological heavenly judge must not be confused with enthronement statements and discourse; the judicial discourse is concerned only with Christ entering on the judgment-seat to perform the divine judgment[60].

Eskola criticizes most previous scholarship in this area for simply seeing a Jewish prototype as the key to the meaning and emergence of a christological statement and thus leaving no real room for the idea of transformation. The search in scholarship for a 'missing link' for the interpretation of Christ's exalted status on the heavenly throne is typological idealism, based on implicit evolutionary presuppositions[61]. Instead it is necessary to distinguish between the symbolic world that has been used and the discursive formation or discourse in terms of which the Christology has been expressed. It is in fact the theory of messianic enthronement that is best able to explicate the essential content of early Christian exaltation Christology. Thus the exceptional feature of early Christology, in comparison to Jewish mysticism, is the connecting of the messianological pattern and theme with the apocalyptic ascent structure. This combining of messianic tradition and Merkabah speculation is unique in Jewish theology. The emergence of early Christology depends on both the symbolic world of Second Temple Judaism and also on a unique belief in an exaltation taking place in resurrection. Thus New Testament Christology uses elements of Jewish mysticism, and also introduces the new theme of the heavenly enthronement of the resurrected Davidic messiah.

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[59] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 270–284.

[60] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 285–294, argues that, outside the New Testament itself, early Christian exaltation Christology had an extensive impact, and that the enthronement theme had significant influence on early Jewish Christian Pseudepigrapha; thus, for example, several of the Sibylline Oracles, the Apocalypse of Paul, and above all the Ascension of Isaiah, which represents a remarkable Christian reworking of Jewish tradition, with the vision of the heavenly journey having its climax in the enthronement of Christ, with a creative interpretation of the throne in the highest heaven and the enthronement there.

[61] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 323–337; cf. e.g. pp. 289, 338, 349–350, 354–355, 364–366, 383. Thus e.g. he criticizes Hurtado, *God*, for giving an undifferentiated account of divine agents and for neglect of Jewish and Christian messianic enthronement passages; he criticizes A. F. Segal, 'Heavenly Ascent in Hellenistic Judaism, Early Christianity and their Environment', *ANRW* II. 23.2, pp. 1333–1394, and (cf. Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 137–146) Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, for their understanding of Christ as an angelic figure; and he criticizes C. Rowland, 'A Man Clothed in Linen: Daniel 10.6ff. and Jewish Angelology', *JSNT* 24 (1985), pp. 99–110, and, again, Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, for their specifically angelomorphic modification of this. Thus (*Messiah*, pp. 326–327) he denigrates the use of 'angelomorphic' for being metaphorical, and based on a general comparison, with the result that Christ is now no longer an angelic figure, since he is not

The New Testament has four different christological narratives that express different modes of Christology in different discourses, and four different ascent stories, forming one 'Christian Merkabah tradition', with creative intertextual christological transformation and actualization of Jewish (especially Merkabah mystical) tradition[62]. Thus in the enthronement discourse, Jesus is identified as the Davidic messiah who will fulfil the promises of the past; *but* his resurrection is interpreted as the installation of a transcendent Davidic figure to heavenly power, and enthronement to the throne of Glory in God's heavenly palace. Hence the idea of exaltation and Lordship is transformed to an extent no longer acceptable to monotheistic Judaism. In the resurrection discourse, we see the unique transformational nature of exaltation Christology. The first Christians located the enthronement of the messiah in the eschatological event of the resurrection of the dead, and made exaltation, resurrection and enthronement identical. The narrative is the story of how death is defeated. Christ is the Davidic prince who dies, but who through eschatological renewal, and the appearance of the resurrection of the dead, is enthroned on the throne of Glory, and given dominion over the whole world. In the cultic discourse, resurrection again plays a significant role, but the christological narrative is now the story of the transcendent High Priest, the king-priest Melchizedek, who, through his death and resurrection, enters the Holy of Holies in the heavenly temple and with his own blood obtains eternal redemption. In the judicial discourse, the fourth narrative is the story of the eschatological entrée of the messianic judge. Christ is presented as an

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now identified as an angel! Since (as I pointed out in note 3 above) Eskola also denigrates these various views (which I have described as 'developmental', very much in the manner of Moule, note 1, above, as opposed to 'evolutionary') as 'missing link' theories resting on 'evolutionist presuppositions', we are confronted by further terminological confusion.

[62] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 339–374.

omnipotent judge; all are brought before his throne, and their destiny is sealed by his righteous judgment.

It is certainly hard to believe, Eskola argues, that Christians who saw Christ as sitting on God's throne of Glory and who confessed their faith in him as *kurios* would not have considered him to be divine[63]; and this confession is given specifically soteriological force. But he criticizes the focus on the issue of deification and adoptionist Christology in earlier studies[64], and the shift to a 'typological idealism', searching for divine prototypes for Christ's divinity on the heavenly throne, in modern discussion. What *explains* the emergence of belief in Jesus as the divine Son of God in power is *not* any concept of a divine prototype in Jewish theology, but Christian Merkabah speculation working on subtexts such as Psalm 110[65]. Thus it is simply the result of the original feature of early Christology, that is, the combining of the theme of the messiah's enthronement and the eschatological event of the resurrection of the dead[66]. The enthronement story based on the exaltation discourse as such implies the idea of the deity of Christ. The intertextual adaptation of Psalm 110, as subtext, is bold; it is a text of enthronement, granting the name of the Lord itself. In early Christology, it becomes a text of eschatological change, referring to the resurrection, so that the messianic enthronement is an event of cosmic climax, the realization of the resurrection of the dead. The Lordship of Christ becomes the principle according to which the whole temple cult, and thus also the idea of theocracy, is reinterpreted.

Hence the kingship of Yahweh is seen to be realized in the Lordship of Christ, who sits on the throne of Glory; in the New Testament, theocracy becomes Christocracy. Yet as traditional beliefs, including theocracy, are transformed, so also the concept of monotheism is transformed and given new meaning; it no longer needs images of theocratic subordination. This transformation is most clearly seen in conceptions of early Christian soteriology; thus New Testament exaltation Christology is simultaneously atonement Christology. Psalm 110 provides a complete scene for the priestly function and heavenly ministry of the exalted Davidide; so salvation through Christ is both real and present, and the new faith is the fulfilment of God's covenant. Thus confessing Christ as Lord realizes at the same time the core of Jewish devotion – that is, faith in and faithfulness to God as heavenly king. Again, this is a daring intertextual move vis-à-vis traditional Judaism. The status of God himself, however, is *not* changed; what is new is the unique status of Christ, now identified as the divine ruler on God's throne. This early Christology is a radical intertextual transformation, where the tradition is completely at the service of the new message.

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[63] That is, the intertext here is the christological idea of Christ's exaltation, and the subtext is traditional Jewish monotheism expressed in temple worship; hence it needs to be asked how monotheistic theocracy and the new Christian Merkabah tradition fit together, and how the idea of Christ at the right hand of God on the throne of Glory relates to that of God as Israel's enthroned king. Cf., on all these issues, Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 361–364.

[64] Cf. Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 295–321, 364, directed especially against history-of-religions scholarship from Bousset to Bultmann, which itself drew on the earlier work of Baur and Strauss.

[65] Cf. Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 366–371.

[66] Eskola, *Messiah*, pp. 367–368, points to this as an instance of a proper intertextual procedure, where a previous tradition is reinterpreted in a new situation.

The argument that Eskola presents is stimulating and provocative, and has much that is of positive value. The positive aspects of his argument would certainly include the strong emphasis on the importance of Merkabah mysticism for understanding New Testament Christology; this is a point I will return to later in the chapter, in relation to other recent discussions that have set this centrally. Also welcome is the stress on the fact that the one who is seen as exalted in the heavenly world, and set on the throne alongside God, is the same figure who is seen as the (Davidic) messiah. Again, it is helpful to have Psalm 110 given a prominent place, because of the significance it assumes for New Testament Christology in a number of places. There is also much to be said for bringing perspectives from literary theory to bear on the interpretation of the New Testament. Indeed, this is Eskola's most distinctive contribution, even though it is (as we shall see) double-edged. That is, what enables him to present an argument rather different from that which is usually encountered is the way he distinguishes the different types of narrative and discourse, and shows how intertextuality can add a new dimension to a reading of the texts.

Otherwise, in fact, none of his central themes are original to him. Thus, for example, the importance of Ps. 110.1 and Merkabah mysticism for New Testament Christology had already been emphasized by Martin Hengel, in a powerful, sustained argument for the development of an extraordinarily elevated 'exaltation Christology' at a remarkably early stage[67]. In Hengel's own extended treatment of the subject, he argues that a number of New Testament texts use Ps. 110.1 to portray Christ as sharing the throne of Glory (or divine throne, positioned above the Merkabah) with God himself. The Pauline use of Ps. 110.1 is sparse, but has importance out of all proportion to its usage; this is above all so with Rom. 8.34. In 1 Cor. 15.25, it is fused together with Ps. 8.7 (as also at Eph. 1.20–22; 1 Pet. 3.22) to emphasize both exaltation and subjugation of the powers. The fact that Paul can assume his allusions to a citation of Ps. 110.1 will be understood in both Corinth and Rome suggests that the underlying tradition goes back very early, probably to the Jerusalem community; this is also indicated by the fact that Acts (2.33–35; 5.31; 7.55–56) limits this motif to a Jerusalem setting, by the way the motif is used in conjunction with Dan. 7.13–14 at Mk 14.62, and parallels, and by the use of Ps. 110.1 at Mk 12.35–37. Ps. 110.1 takes on especial importance in Hebrews (1.3, 13; 8.1; 10. 12–13; 12.2), and is juxtaposed with Ps. 8.5–7. Revelation does not use Ps. 110.1, but probably reflects the same tradition, where (e.g. 3.21; 7.9–10, 17) Christ is set on the same throne as God.

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[67] M. Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (trans. R. Kearns *et al*; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), pp. 119–225; this is an English version of M. Hengel, '"Setze dich zu meiner Rechten!" Die Inthronisation Christi zur Rechten Gottes und Psalm 110,1', in M. Philonenko (ed.), *Le Trône de Dieu* (WUNT 69; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), pp. 108–194. In fact Hengel had already, as far back as 1976 (or indeed 1975, in the German edition!), in *Son*, pp. 80–90, argued not only for Ps. 110.1 to be seen as the most important proof passage from the Hebrew Bible for the development of New Testament Christology, but also for the significance of Hekhalot and Merkabah texts for early Christian Christology, and the pressing need for these to be integrated into New Testament scholarship. He also drew attention there to the two books by O. Hofius: *Katapausis* (WUNT 11; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1970), and *idem*, *Der Vorhang vor dem Thron Gottes* (WUNT 14; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1972), where this perspective already forms an integral part of the argument; he also pointed specifically to the potential importance of Scholem, *Major*, and the Qumran Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4QShirShabb / 4Q400–407) for New Testament Christology as well. For other studies of

There are also clear affinities in the Hebrew Bible between Ps. 110.1 and Dan. 7.9–14, and these are developed into a powerful combined tradition with clear influence on 1 Enoch 37–71 and Mk 14.62 and parallels, and Matt. 19.28; 25.31. This is also reflected in the much later tradition concerning Metatron, but it is notable that otherwise, despite striking traditions of enthronement (as for example Ezekiel the Tragedian and 4Q491), there is no specific sharing of the throne with God. This very probably reflects a negative reaction to the Christian appropriation of this tradition (as also perhaps Two Powers polemic). Nor do occasional traditions about the exaltation of martyrs to God's right hand provide an adequate basis or analogy for the distinctive New Testament use of Ps. 110.1 (and Daniel 7). The idea of Wisdom as the companion of God's throne (e.g. Wis. 9.4, 10) is, however, integrated into early Christology, and helps promote the idea of Christ's pre-existence.

What is utterly outstanding, then, is that a humiliated, crucified figure of the immediate past is acclaimed, at a very early stage, as the companion of God's throne, thus set in the supreme place in heaven, and ascribed the most intimate possible communion with God. This can be understood only on the basis of the manifestations of Christ as the resurrected one, the proclamation of him as the crucified and now resurrected messiah and as exalted to God,

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the importance of Ps. 110.1 for New Testament Christology, cf. e.g. M. Gourgues, *À la Droite de Dieu. Résurrection de Jésus et Actualisation du Psaume 110, 1 dans le Nouveau Testament* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1978); D. M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand. Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973); W. R. G. Loader, 'Christ at the Right Hand – Ps. CX in the New Testament', *NTS* 24 (1978), pp. 199–217; J. Dupont, '"Assise à la droite de Dieu". L'interpretation du Ps 110,1 dans le Nouveau Testament', in E. Dhanis (ed.), *Resurrexit. Actes du symposium international sur la résurrection de Jésus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1974), pp. 340–422.

and the inspired interpretation of Psalm 110 – along with (from Pentecost onwards) other Psalms and scriptural texts – in relation to him, and to point to the fact that his final revelation awaited God's subjugation of his enemies. It is, then, clear even from this brief summary that Eskola draws a great deal on Hengel's work.

The problem with Eskola's thesis is not simply that it largely lacks originality. It also has to be said that the distinctive thrust of his argument begs questions and has inherent problems; these concern the overall method and approach, but inevitably spill over into the detail and specificity of the argument as well. Thus Eskola does not discuss or define either messianism or Merkabah mysticism at all adequately. As far as messianism is concerned, he seems to take over Charlesworth's 'minimalist' approach, and that of Neusner and Green[68], yet at the same time simply assumes that Davidic messianic hope is a universal and appropriate category for and within the New Testament. In the case of Merkabah mysticism, he simply takes over Scholem's definition of this as 'throne mysticism', in a completely unqualified and unquestioning way. He fails, however, to engage at all with the very sharp and critical questions raised about Scholem and Merkabah mysticism as throne mysticism in recent scholarship[69]. It is in fact easier to make a case for an obvious and central focus on the throne in the case of the apocalypses than it is for the hekhalot writings, but here also Eskola fails to consider important issues that have been raised[70]. There is, certainly, a case that can be made for the importance of apocalyptic writings in relation to the Merkabah tradition, but again Eskola does not take up this discussion at all[71].

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[68] Cf. the discussion in chapter 4, sections 1 and 3.1, and chapter 5, section 2.11. For Eskola's limited and one-sided presentation of the issues, cf. e.g. *Messiah*, pp. 155, 348, 367, 378.

[69] Cf. especially P. Schäfer, *Hekhalot-Studien* (TSAJ 19; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), pp. 1–16, 277–295; *idem*, *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992). In fact Schäfer's work is concentrated above all on the hekhalot texts, whereas Eskola is in effect basing his argument on the apocalypses. That itself is problematic, however, both because Merkabah mysticism is primarily associated with the hekhalot literature, and also because it is (along with later kabbalistic tradition) the major focus for Scholem, and he refers to apocalyptic texts only very briefly; cf. e.g. Scholem, *Major*, pp. 40–79. For Eskola's problematic and simplistic assertions about merkabah mysticism (especially in relation to Scholem) and his exaggerated claims in relation to the New Testament, cf. e.g. *Messiah*, pp. 1–6, 65–66, 123, 156, 210–213, 246–248, 318, 342, 349, 384.

[70] Cf. e.g. M. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Eskola refers to her work a number of times, but does not deal at all adequately with her careful assessment of the evidence, or engage with the criticisms she makes of common assumptions in this area.

[71] A good example of this kind of argument is provided by the work of C. R. A. Morray-Jones, as for example in his discussion of the issue in 'Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition', *JJS* 43 (1992), pp. 1–31. Again,

Thus Eskola fails to consider the implications of any of the important discussion of these issues for his own thesis. Nor are these issues merely trivial for his argument. The idea that Merkabah mysticism is above all throne mysticism, and culminates in a vision of God on the throne of Glory, is vital and central to his whole argument, just as it is also crucial for him that in the New Testament it is the *Davidic messiah* who is enthroned on the throne of Glory.

A further crucial set of issues is raised by the way that Eskola sets his method of approach, drawn from the perspective of literary theory, in constant and diametric opposition to what he sees as the predominant way in which New Testament scholars discuss Christology in relation to Jewish evidence. There are certainly very real advantages to be gained from Eskola's concentration on discourse, narrative, intertextuality and so on. Above all, it alerts us to the potentially *different* kinds of narrative and discourse in the New Testament, with different points of reference, meaning and implication, their *intertextual* relation to Jewish tradition and traditions from the Hebrew Bible, and the *transformational* character of the earliest Christology in the New Testament.

All this, however, is not without problems. Sometimes Eskola's discussion seems to be set at the level simply of what the narrative or discourse portrays or describes; that is, it purports to tells us that this is how the New Testament evidence is properly to be understood, and that this is what is distinctive about it. It may also be that he sees his main (at least negative) achievement as being to show the inadequacies of the naïve and simplistic 'cause-and-effect' method of the 'typological' approach; correlatively, the main *positive* achievement of his work would be that he shows successfully *how* New Testament Christology has arrived at its portrayal of Christ, in a manner that does justice to what is truly distinctive about this Christology, precisely as the 'typological' method fails to. Hence his distinctive contribution would be to demonstrate *how* the earliest Christians, in formulating the Christology we find in the New Testament, did indeed use the world-view and main specific aspects of Jewish tradition (especially mystical tradition), *but* transformed these into something utterly different and distinctive. This thesis would then would work at the level of the *mechanics* of New Testament Christology, and of how it functions as it does. As such, it would certainly constitute a potentially interesting and worthwhile argument, even though it would still beg a considerable number of questions.

In fact, however, in other places Eskola clearly implies (and indeed says) that his approach *explains* and accounts for the *origins* and emergence of

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however, Eskola makes brief reference to this, but does not show awareness of the crucial points at issue.

Christology[72]. That is, it should in that case tell us *why* (as Eskola puts it) the earliest Christians *identify* the resurrection with the exaltation and enthronement of the messiah on the throne of Glory in the heavenly world. Yet what we are actually presented with is the constant *assertion* that resurrection is identical with exaltation and enthronement, along with the recurrent refrain that 'resurrection day is coronation day'[73], but only occasional indications of what might have given rise to all this, as we shall see in the following paragraph. Nor is this a trivial point: Eskola himself emphasizes how different and radical this christological position is vis-à-vis Judaism, yet seems simply to *assert*, and also to be content to assert, that this is what happened. But since there is, as Eskola constantly reminds us, no precedent or pattern within Judaism for resurrection, enthronement and a messianic figure to be associated with each other, we are very much left wanting to know *why* the early Christians made this extraordinary move. This is the central issue and basic question of Christology, and it may be impossible to answer. If so, however, then this difficulty has to be acknowledged and faced.

The fact that his method is altogether (or at least significantly) different from what he disparagingly refers to as 'typological idealism' and 'missing-link' theories does not in itself give it the explicative power that he claims these usual approaches lack. Narrative and discourse, implied or actual, and transformational intertextuality do not in and of themselves *explain* anything. They tell us what the narrative is, and they can tell us how that narrative came to have the distinctive form, content and meaning that it does. This can, certainly, point the narrative beyond itself, in the focus on intertextuality, and suggest how it makes creative use of existing tradition in order to construct its own distinctive portrayal or story; but that is not itself sufficient to provide an explanation.

It may of course be that the *why* is supposed to be the same as the *how*; it is also *possible* that the intertextual mode of interpretation, that is in this case taking Jewish texts and texts from the Hebrew Bible and giving them new meaning and significance in a new and changed context, can be held to have *explanatory* force[74]. That is, it is the creative intertextual genius and inspiration of the early Christians (or one of them, at least, as a minimum requirement!) who connected Psalm 110 with Psalms 16 and 132, and thus at least implicitly with 2 Samuel 7, which would itself be open to being understood as designating both resurrection and enthronement. If this really were the case, it might perhaps be thought strange that 2 Samuel 7 scarcely features within the New Testament! Leaving that aside, the argument would then need to be that the *resurrection* of Jesus (itself, presumably also via Jewish tradition, tied in with the *general* resurrection of the dead) opens up the realization that it is the resurrected Christ who is also and simultaneously enthroned on the heavenly divine throne of Glory.

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[72] Thus Eskola, *Messiah*, e.g. p. 322; he is quite clear that 'it is not easy to explain the relation between Jewish conceptions and distinctive features of Christology', but it is equally clear that he sees his method as indeed providing a fully adequate explanation.

[73] So Eskola, *Messiah*, e.g. pp. 170, 234, 245–246, 345, 351–352, 355–356, 372–373, 378–380, 384–389.

[74] Cf. Eskola, *Messiah*, e.g. p. 366: 'What, then, could explain the emergence of the belief in Jesus as the divine Son of God in power? …*The conception of Jesus as a divine Son of God is grounded on Christian merkabah speculation working on subtexts such as Psalm 110*' (italics original); cf. also p. 385. This appears very close to what Bauckham seems to suggest in relation to 'christological monotheism' and its use of Isaiah 45 and other texts, and what has been suggested by other scholars as well for Paul's creative use

On this basis, therefore, Christ would also be seen as a proper object of worship, the source of salvation, exercising the role of heavenly judge, and possessing the divine nature. Yet this would be, as Eskola emphasizes, an intertextual interpretation of such an extraordinary, unprecedented and deeply contentious nature that it seems perverse to posit it unless we can be clear what *compelled* it. For example, was the experience of Jesus' resurrection so momentous an event that its force could not be contained unless it incorporated enthronement, exaltation and deification?[75] If so, that needs to be said clearly; but if so, then the problems bound up with the resurrection traditions also need to be faced. And in any case, there does not seem to be any *intrinsic* reason why resurrection should give rise to this view, or indeed why it should be linked with 'Merkabah mysticism' specifically as such.

Is it then the case that those early Christians responsible for devising and developing this extraordinary intertextual move were themselves already versed in Merkabah mysticism? And did they indeed – like Paul – have visionary or Merkabah experiences? *But* if so, did these *in general* suffice to give rise to this interpretation (as apparently Eskola would hold)? That is, is it the case that Paul, on the basis of his visionary ascents and mystical

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of passages from the Hebrew Bible. That, however, seems precisely to beg the question: *why* should the first Christians undertake precisely *that* kind of intertextual endeavour and interpretation? And *why* should they make Psalm 110 (and other texts) refer to Jesus' resurrection as enthronement? The text and discourse are not simply self-generating; hence it is important to know where *this* precise formulation comes from and *why*. At *Messiah*, pp. 332–335, Eskola suggests that the theory of messianic enthronement is best able to explain the content of early Christian exaltation Christology. Even if that is accepted, however, it obviously tells us nothing of how and why the early Christians saw Christ in this way in the first place. The argument of Hengel (cf. note 67), by contrast, brings the inspired interpretation of Ps. 110.1 closely into conjunction with specific factors that can be seen as giving the Christian movement its impetus and driving force in the first place.

[75] Thus Eskola, *Messiah*, p. 335, says '.. the emergence of early Christology was dependent on the symbolic world of Second Temple Judaism on the one hand, and on the unique belief in an exaltation in the resurrection on the other'. Yet this still leaves us to wonder how and why this belief in resurrection as (heavenly) exaltation arose.

experience, could adapt and transform these to make *Christ* the one who he sees as enthroned? Or indeed, as Eskola also seems to hold, is it the case that Paul actually had a vision of *Christ* enthroned? These positions are not necessarily mutually incompatible, but clearly the latter position – that Paul actually *saw* Christ enthroned in his Damascus road 'conversion' experience (as well as there being something comparable subsequently) – would give a *different* basis for this tradition, and for the radical transformational and intertextual interpretation, as compared with the more *general* basis for the argument.

In any case, however, there are further questions that need to be raised. Thus it has to be asked how clear and solid a basis Eskola has otherwise for the argument that he tries to construct. So, for example, Rom. 1.3–4 effectively provides the *sole* basis for Eskola's so-called 'resurrection discourse'. Yet this seems extremely suspect, and very much an exercise in special pleading. The argument that it is a Merkabah or throne setting is very tenuous: it has to build a lot on virtually one word, and a specific interpretation of that word, since there is no mention of a throne, and exaltation of any kind is only indirectly referred to. Nor (as Eskola acknowledges) does Psalm 110 form any part of the sphere of reference here. The case depends as well on a reconstruction of the text very different from the usual understanding of it, not least in the abandoning of the parallelism and contrast between verses 3 and 4, but also in making v. 4 govern the interpretation of v. 3. The different aspects of his reconstruction of the original text and its consequent meaning are not in themselves impossible, but they all have to be right at the same time for Eskola's argument here to hold, and for it to have the central and controlling force it has to have for his thesis as a whole. This point has to be very much stressed, precisely because this really is the *sole* text not only for the 'resurrection discourse' as such, but specifically for *resurrection* to be seen as integrally and fundamentally bound up with *enthronement*. Hence if Eskola's analysis and interpretation of *this* text are not found convincing, then it has clear implications as far as his thesis as a whole is concerned.

Eskola is also not altogether fair to at least some of those he criticizes for working with 'typological' presuppositions[76]. Certainly much work on intermediary figures lacks a sophisticated methodology, and sometimes connections are made between Jewish and Christian thought rather too easily and at the wrong level. Yet some at least of those of us working with these categories do indeed recognize the radically different and disjunctive picture that some New Testament christological formulations express concerning Christ, vis-à-vis Jewish categories, and speak specifically of the

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[76] Cf. e.g. Hurtado's justified protest against some of the criticisms levelled against him (Hurtado, *Lord*, p. 29).

transformation of traditions and categories, not of the one simply flowing into the other. What has also been recognized – and demonstrated – is the sheer complexity and problematic nature of these various Jewish texts and traditions. All this stands in marked contrast to Eskola's rather undifferentiated and 'standardized' account of the Jewish tradition. Certainly this allows him to demonstrate how, as he sees it, New Testament Christology has used and transformed Jewish tradition; but he begs questions, both through what he says and also what he does not.

Hence Eskola too easily constructs a monochrome picture of the Jewish world-view, heavenly world, and emphasis on the divine throne. At the same time, he neglects the potential significance of Wisdom and Logos traditions, their importance for both Jewish tradition and also New Testament Christology, and not least their links to angelology and indeed to throne traditions, both implicitly and explicitly (as for example in Wisdom of Solomon 9). Scholars who take these traditions and their complexity seriously should not be too readily accused of a simplistic, naïve or one-dimensional approach. In fact for the most part, they are wrestling with very complex and difficult issues, and trying to make sense both of these and also of the distinctive emphases of New Testament Christology[77].

3.3 Christ as Divine from the Beginning: The Questions Raised

It is clear, then, that both Bauckham and Eskola have very different ways of explaining the distinctive nature of New Testament Christology. What is common to both, however, is that they call radically in question the kind of approach that has been prevalent in discussing New Testament Christology in relation to Jewish intermediaries. The essential point they both want to make, I think, is that the differences between what the earliest Christology of the New Testament affirms about Christ, and what Jewish texts portray in the case of intermediary figures, is not just a difference of degree. It is, and has to be, a difference of kind. And this is a point, it seems to me, which is very much worth reckoning with seriously, even though I do not find it to be as self-evident as they seem to assume it is.

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[77] In addition, Eskola does not deal with some central and extremely important christological passages in the New Testament – as, for example, 1 Cor. 8.6 and John 1.1–18, and indeed only very briefly with Col. 1.15–20, and not at all with 2.9. It is of course clear why he does not bring these into his discussion: they have little or nothing of enthronement as such, do not use Psalm 110, and do not have any direct link with resurrection tradition (or indeed, properly, judicial or cultic tradition either). One should not of course expect Eskola to provide a full Christology of the New Testament, but in view of the claims he makes for his approach, it would be helpful to know at least briefly how these important passages are to be seen in relation to this. Hengel, by contrast, integrates these texts into his overall argument; cf. *Studies*, pp. 108–117, 212–225.

Hence, I believe, we cannot simply acquiesce in the positions presented by either Bauckham or Eskola, or take over their arguments and conclusions unquestioningly. Both, in their different ways and for different reasons, are not in the end convincing. Both work with categories that are too neatly compartmentalized and demarcated, and do not do justice to the sheer complexity and confusing nature of the Jewish and Christian evidence. Yet they raise important questions, and in order to deepen our understanding of New Testament Christology, especially in its earliest formative period, we need to be constantly alert to their arguments and perspectives. As we have seen, they both pass decisive and trenchant judgments on a number of issues central to considering New Testament Christology vis-à-vis Jewish mediatorial figures. Hence they make us confront the question of whether these figures really are of importance, or whether concentration on them has led scholars astray.

Certainly, as I have indicated already, focus on angelic and exalted human figures has been crucial to the vast majority of scholarly works in this field in the past two decades and more, but Bauckham dismisses them virtually completely as far as relevance for New Testament Christology is concerned, while Eskola is altogether hostile to the 'typological' use of them and sets the main focus on the heavenly throne, not these various figures. Certainly we should not think (if indeed we ever did) that it is simple and unproblematic to set New Testament Christology in direct relation to Jewish angelological and exalted human traditions. But the way that both Bauckham and Eskola deal with these traditions begs a lot of questions, and rather than just set them aside it will be better to engage with other recent discussion of these traditions, and indeed with the texts themselves.

As far as the work of Bauckham and Eskola is concerned, I still wish to emphasize the importance of Jewish mediatorial figures (including Wisdom and Logos) for the understanding of New Testament Christology, while at the same time recognizing that they do not simply provide a ready-made model for the expression and development of it. Ideally I would wish to examine the whole range of evidence again for the *various* kinds of angelic and related figures, and of exalted human figures, in all their diversity. That would allow us to gain as full a perspective as possible, and assess, for example, whether they are utterly (indeed, absolutely!) different from Word, Logos and Spirit or not. Although this is not possible here, I wish to emphasize that I am open to these questions and sensitive to them.

It is important also to gain as nuanced an understanding as possible of the relation between Christ and angelic (and exalted human) figures – or, indeed (as Bauckham claims), of the absolute difference between them. We may then need to distinguish between what *comes* to be affirmed about Christ – that is, that he is utterly different, and unique altogether in his own being and in relation to God, and as ‘part’ of God – and how he would actually have been understood variously within the first century (and beyond). Bound up with this, we need to assess to what extent angelic and exalted human categories were seen as absolutely alien and inappropriate, or whether it was importantly – perhaps indeed, precisely – in these terms, and in relation to *these* kinds of figures (or *some* of them at least, since again they need to be differentiated) that an understanding of the true and extraordinary significance of Christ could begin to be articulated. It would be important to establish this point as clearly as possible, even if it then became necessary to go beyond it – and that, of course, would already be implied by the sheer difference between Christ as a specific and humiliated human figure of contemporary experience, in contrast to all the figures who come within the angelic and exalted human categories.

As far as Bauckham is concerned, obviously he would argue that it was the *absolute* difference between Christ and these figures that was expressed from the very start, and is vital to a true understanding of Christ as utterly unique. Indeed, both logically and theologically it can certainly be maintained that this should of course be the case. Yet it is precisely here that the heart of the issue lies: that is, how conscious the earliest Christians were of this absolute distinction, and to what extent they actually succeeded in expressing it in absolute terms, if that is indeed what they actually believed. Or whether they in fact demonstrably do not go that far, or at best beg the question, in some at least of what they say. In the case of Eskola, the question is whether these figures can be helpfully and legitimately set directly in relation to Christ, and, in a sense, whether they help at a primary or secondary stage of the discussion.

4. Intermediary Figures and Human Transformation

Here I take further the discussion in my original essay (chapter 5, section 3), and deal in turn with the main categories of Logos and Wisdom, angelic figures, and exalted human figures. But the major point of focus now has moved to the exalted human figures and their importance for Jewish tradition.

4.1 Logos and Wisdom

First, however, I take up issues relating to Logos and Wisdom. In relation to these, we have seen that Bauckham argues that they both belong fully within the divine identity, as personifications or hypostatizations of God, and stand in absolute contrast to angels and exalted human figures. As far as the Logos in Philo at least is concerned, there are in fact two separate points to be considered here; first, whether the Logos should be seen as having in effect an existence distinct from that of God, and second, whether it stands in absolute distinction to angels. It needs to be noted here that Bauckham himself holds the second, but not necessarily the first, of these views. That is, he describes Logos (as also Wisdom and Spirit) as a personification or hypostatization of an aspect of God, either as a mere literary device or else as potentially having some form of distinct existence in reality. This issue is for him secondary and unimportant; the crucial point is that Logos, as also Wisdom and Spirit, are unequivocally intrinsic to the unique divine identity[78].

It would seem, at first sight at least, that the two passages I cited in my first essay (Conf. 146; Her. 205) point clearly to both the distinct existence and angelic identity of the Logos. This in fact, however, is a disputed area, and goes beyond the specific aspects of Bauckham's argument. Thus there is one line of interpretation of Philo that holds that the Logos is completely inseparable from God. This can be supported from passages that suggest that the Logos is the divine reason, or mind of God, or part of God in some sense at least[79]. That is, they are ways of expressing his immanence, but no more than that. There may seem to be passages that say more or other than this, as for example describing the Logos as θεός or δεύτερος θεός or θεῖος,[80] but over against them, it can be pointed out that Philo clearly reserves the designation ὁ θεός for God alone, and even more distinctively (as in his interpretation of Ex. 3.14) ὁ ὤν and τὸ ὄν [81]. As far as Conf. 146 and Her. 205 are concerned, it is argued, for example, that the latter is simply a typical Philonic allegorical identification of the Logos with Moses, while the former is a way of speaking of God in his self-revelation; and that, indeed, 'God in his self-revelation'[82] is what the Logos passages in Philo taken as a whole point to.

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[78] See Bauckham, *God*, pp. 21–22; cf. also note 36, above.

[79] E.g. Opif. 16–25. Cf. e.g. H. A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (2 vols; Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1947), vol. 1, pp. 230–234; R. Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Philo* (Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World 200 BC to 200 AD, vol. 1, part 2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 104.

[80] Somn. 1. 227–230; Quaest. in Gen. 2.62; Somn. 1.62; cf. chapter 5, section 3.1.

[81] For ὅ ὤν, see e.g. Mut. 11; Deus 110; for τὸ ὄν, e.g. Mut. 27; Gig. 52; on Philo's interpretation of Ex. 3.14, cf. e.g. Williamson, *Philo*, pp. 38–42.

In the case of those passages where the Logos is described simply as ἄγγελος, not ἀρχάγγελος, we find it argued, on the basis of Somn. 1.238–240, that the Logos, as ἄγγελος, stands in relation to God as the parhelion does to the sun and the lunar halo to the moon; that is, it is the image (εἰκών) of God, but not God's very self, yet as such remains intrinsically bound up with God and is not a separate being[83].

There are certainly some valid points in this argument as a whole. Yet it would seem seriously to underplay the force and significance at least of Conf. 146 and Her. 205. The portrayal of the Logos in Her. 205 as the 'archangel' and 'chief elder', to whom God has given the special role of mediating between the divine and human spheres, and interceding for humanity (just as the Logos elsewhere is portrayed as High Priest), is quite remarkable, and simply to describe it as an allegory of Moses does not give an adequate account of what it says. Along with that, Conf. 146 is still more striking. Not only is the Logos here explicitly the supreme angel par excellence, but it would seem that he is also portrayed as the Angel of the Divine Name of Ex. 23.20–21[84]. The Logos is also defined here as 'the one who sees (God)'; Gen. 16.13, to which this alludes, has a rich interpretative tradition attaching to it, but the most apposite and revealing text in this context is the Prayer of Joseph, which also has several other extraordinarily close parallels to Philo here[85]. In the Prayer of Joseph, Jacob reveals that he is in fact Israel, meaning ‘a man seeing God’, and an angel of God and the archangel of the Power of the Lord, the first-born of every living thing, the chief Captain of the Sons of God, and the first minister before the face of God.

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[82] Thus J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making. An Enquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980), pp. 230, 294, note 36; P. R. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels. Angelology and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (SNTSMS 95; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 92–93. Cf. Hurtado, *God*, pp. 44–48; thus as part of his summarizing conclusion (p. 48): '…it is doubtful that Logos and other divine powers amount to anything more than ways of describing God and his activities'.

[83] Cf. Carrell, *Jesus*, pp. 93–94. Thus he also concludes (p. 94): '…the Logos is not a true intermediary being (in the sense of a being who is neither God nor part of humanity) but a means of communication between God and humanity'.

[84] This is apparent from the designation here 'the Name of God'; cf. Philo's specific identification of the Logos with this angel at Agr. 51; Mig. 174; Quaest. in Ex. 2.13. In addition, at Mig. 102–103, he not only portrays the Logos as the High Priest, but he appears also to identify it with the Divine Name, worn on the High Priest's turban; cf. further D. D. Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael Traditions and Angel Christology in Early Christianity* (WUNT 2.109; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), pp. 87–88. The Angel of the Divine Name of Ex. 23.20–21 is a theme that has been powerfully developed in a number of texts by the first century CE; cf. on this e.g. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, pp. 70–78; J. E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: The Origins of the Idea of Intermediation in Gnosticism* (WUNT 1.36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), pp. 192–238, 287–338.

[85] Cf. Hannah, *Michael*, pp. 89–90; for discussion of the Prayer of Joseph in itself, see my brief treatment of it in chapter 5, section 3.2.2; and cf. especially J. Z. Smith,

Here, then, we see that the portrayal of the Logos in Conf. 146 as the archangel, he that sees, Israel, and first-born, point to a very close correlation with the Prayer of Joseph and, in conjunction with the further epithets here, show that the Logos (at this point in Philo at any rate) belongs within a powerful and highly developed angelic tradition. This cannot, therefore, be explained away as simply a means of referring to God, or ‘God in his self-revelation’. That completely fails to grasp the significance of what we have here. At least some of the traditions that portray the Logos as an angel, not archangel, also need to be reckoned with seriously; thus, for example, Mut. 87 speaks of the Logos/angel as the ‘minister of God’ (again close to what is said of Jacob/Israel in the Prayer of Joseph), while at Cher. 35, the Logos is the armed angel who confronts Balaam. Some of the texts in Philo speak of λόγοι and ἄγγελοι in the plural. These do not diminish the significance of the Logos as an angel, or indeed archangel, but in fact enhance it[86], since it thus becomes clear that Philo thinks, *inter alia*, of the Logos as *the* (one, supreme) angel or archangel[87].

There are many other passages that would appear to enhance further our understanding of the Logos as an independent being in Philo; many of these I discussed, or least referred to, in my original essay (chapter 5, section 3.1); hence I will not give them again in detail here. It is not my intention here, however, simply to set into reverse the argument that I advanced there. That is, I do not now want to claim that Philo always and throughout thinks of the Logos as an angel and/or an independent being. Indeed, it is precisely that kind of simple and absolute claim that I think to be inappropriate in relation to Philo. In some passages, Philo does indeed seem to set the Logos in very close relation to God, and not easily allow them to be separated from each other in any clear way. What we have to accept, then, is that Philo is not fully consistent (both here and elsewhere), and that specifically he conceives of the Logos differently on different occasions.

‘The Prayer of Joseph’, in J. Neusner (ed.), *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (Supplements to Numen 18; Leiden: Brill, 1968), pp. 253–294.

[86] The attempt to see these λόγοι as the ‘thoughts’ should probably be seen as a counsel of despair.

[87] Cf. Hannah, *Michael*, p. 86, who notes the use of ‘*the* archangel’ (italics original; i.e., ὅ ἀρχάγγελος), and the fact that there is really no indication in Philo of several archangels, in contrast to what we find otherwise in Jewish tradition; for discussion of this plurality of archangels elsewhere in Judaism, cf. the discussion below.

This is indeed part of a larger ambiguity within Philo's ideas about God more generally; he simply does not resolve the contradictions inherent within his thought, and we have to resist the temptation to impose a clear and unambiguous position on him, and make him less inconsistent than he actually is[88]. Thus Philo cannot allow God to come into any direct contact with the world whatever; hence he uses the Logos as one of the many ways he has of expressing divine agency, and specifically activity, within the world, and portraying the active divine reason. Yet at the same time, the Logos is an intermediary figure and a person distinct from God; he moves between God and the human world, and is in some sense similar to both, yet is also distinct from both as well[89].

Hence it is hardly surprising if Philo portrays the Logos vividly as both an angel and archangel. It cannot be claimed for Philo that the Logos is simply an angel; yet it remains an important part of Philo's conception of the Logos (in connection with his understanding of God and his relation to the material, created world) that he is an angel, just as he is an intermediary being. That is the paradox Philo presents us with, and we need to be careful not to misrepresent it. Hence it is altogether inadequate and inappropriate to make claims such as : '*the Logos of God is God in his self-revelation*'; 'in the end of the day *the Logos seems to be nothing more for Philo than God himself in his approach to man, God himself insofar as he may be known by man*'; 'the Logos effectively functions as the aspect of God by which people know him'; 'the Logos is not a true intermediary being…but…a means of communication between God and humanity'; '…it is doubtful that Logos and other divine powers amount to anything more than ways of describing God and his activities'[90]. All of these express one part of Philo's understanding of the Logos. Any statement, however, that claims 'the Logos is nothing more than…' will almost certainly be not only reductionist but also altogether misleading as far as Philo as a whole is concerned, as the statements just cited certainly are.

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[88] Hannah, *Michael*, pp. 76–90, gives a more balanced and informed portrayal of Philo's depiction of the Logos overall than is usual in New Testament scholarship. For an extremely good, perceptive and nuanced account of Philo's thought here, and a very clear recognition of its inherent difficulties, cf. the discussion by J. Morris in E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135* (A New English Version revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black *et al.*; 3 vols; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973–87), vol. III.2, pp. 880–885. Cf. also E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (3 vols; Leipzig: Reisland), vol. III.2, pp. 413–429; Wolfson, *Philo*, vol. I, pp. 217–289.

[89] See especially Schürer, *History*, vol. III.2, pp. 881–885, and the passages from Philo cited there.

[90] Thus Dunn, *Christology*, pp. 228, 230; Casey, *Prophet*, p. 84; Carrell, *Jesus*, p. 94; Hurtado, *God*, p. 48. The citations from Dunn are italicized (and thus emphasized) by him, and represent the overall position he presents at pp. 220–230.

In fact, then, the preponderance of the passages that refer to the Logos would seem to portray it as having independent existence. It is also the case (as far as Bauckham's argument in particular is concerned) that in a number of passages Philo undoubtedly sees the Logos as a supreme angelic figure. Hence it is not possible to draw a clear line of demarcation, still less fix a gulf, between the Logos and the angelic world. This is not all that can, or should, be said about the Logos in Philo; but this much certainly needs to be said. In addition, it of course needs to be recognized clearly that Philo's conception of the Logos has been substantially influenced by Greek philosophical thought, just as his, and earlier, developed understanding of Wisdom has been similarly influenced[91]. Certainly Philo was, and remained, an observant Jew; equally clearly, his thought is permeated by Greek philosophical tradition, and this goes deeply into his whole mode of conception. Here also, therefore, as with the claim that the Logos belongs fully within the divine identity, Bauckham's absolute distinctions do not appear plausible.

In the case of Wisdom as well, there are clear angelological associations in a number of places. Thus in my earlier essay (chapter 5, section 3.2), I drew attention to the way Wis. 9.4, 9–10 portrays Wisdom as a companion of the throne of God, and as being sent forth from there by God, all of which very probably reflects angelological tradition. Wisdom is also specifically set along with the angels in developments of the Proverbs 8 tradition (thus in 1 Enoch 42; Sirach 24), while the cosmogenic role given to Wisdom in Proverbs 8 is also taken up and developed further (in Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, 2 Enoch). Further, in Wis. 10.6–9, actions are carried out by Wisdom that in the Hebrew Bible are attributed to the Angel of Yahweh. This phenomenon is also found in Philo (in addition to the clear overlap between Wisdom and Logos, and the identification in places of Wisdom with Logos)[92]. So also, in Wis. 9.1, Wisdom and Logos are effectively identified with each other. Further, in 18.15–16, the Logos appears to be the destroying angel of Exod. 12.23–29 and/or 1 Chron. 21.15–16; thus it descends from heaven, bearing a sword and bringing destruction. It has been argued that this is simply a poetic attempt to express God's activity in the world[93]. Certainly the Logos here is graphically portrayed, leaping from heaven and being of gigantic size. Yet it is clearly closely related to angelological traditions, and in coming down from heaven (even though it is not specifically depicted as being 'sent'), it has obvious affinity with Wisdom in 9.4, 9–10[94]. Here also, then, the Logos is certainly portrayed in angelological terms. Bauckham's absolute separation of categories here thus does not hold. Both Logos and Wisdom, it would seem, are on the side of the angels.

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[91] Cf. e.g. Hengel, *Judaism*, pp. 153–175.

[92] Thus e.g. Leg. 1.65; Somn. 2.242–245. Cf. chapter 5, section 3.1.

[93] So e.g. Dunn, *Christology*, pp. 217–220; Carrell, *Jesus*, pp. 91–92; cf. Schürer, *History*, vol. III.2, p. 884, note 60.

[94] Thus e.g. Hannah, *Michael*, pp. 91–92, who also sees close affinities here with traditions about Michael that portray him as a warrior and the defender of Israel. On the

It is relevant here to bring Glory (*Kabod*) briefly into the picture, even though this is not a term that Bauckham includes in his discussion. Thus we find an angelic or ‘angelomorphic’ understanding of Glory, deriving above all from the extraordinary throne-vision tradition of the Hebrew Bible, in Isaiah 6 but above all Ezek. 1.26–28 (along with 3.22; 8.2; 10.4)[95]. Thus at an early stage 1 Enoch 14 has a vision of the Great Glory on the throne in heaven; this can be understood as an unmediated vision of God, but the taking up of Ezekiel’s ‘Great Glory’ in this way could readily give rise to an understanding of this as an independent, angelomorphic figure. The Great Glory appears also in 1 En. 102.3 and in Testament of Levi 3 and 5, while 1 Enoch 37–71, in speaking of the throne of glory, also clearly reflects the same basic throne-vision tradition. ‘Glory’ is also used to designate the angelic beings who occupy heaven in Testament of Abraham 19, as similarly in 2 En. 22.7. Again, therefore, the boundary between angels on the one hand, and what may most obviously seem to be personifications or representations of God, on the other, appears to be fluid in places at least; so too does the boundary between heaven and earth, the divine realm and the human realm.

It is also appropriate here to refer briefly to the usage of *Yeqara* and *Kabod* in Targumic and Rabbinic texts. Certainly I have argued elsewhere that these are intended simply as ways of describing aspects of the divine activity, and function at least partly as anti-anthropomorphic devices (and in the Targums at least are a translation technique to effect this). In particular, I am opposed to simplistic and tendentious arguments that try to portray them as hypostatizations that provide essential background and parallel to the Logos of John’s Gospel[96]. Yet they could easily be understood as having an existence of their own; in addition, in the Targums, both *Yeqara* and *Shekinah*, and also the combination *Glory of the Shekinah*, are used at times in

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implicit identification of the Logos here with the (angelological) depiction of Wisdom/Sophia in Wis. 9.4, 10, 17 (as also 7.21, 23; 8.4), cf. also D. Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 43; New York: Doubleday, 1979), p. 317.

[95] Cf. e.g. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 78–120; Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, pp. 80–88; C. C. Newman, *Paul’s Glory Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric* (NovTSup 69; Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 79–104.

[96] Cf. section 2.1, and especially note 37, above. Cf. further Chester, *Revelation*, pp. 313–324; the kind of position I am opposed to here is represented especially by D. Muñoz León, *Dios-Palabra*; *idem*, *Gloria de la Shekina en los Targumim del Pentateuco* (Madrid: Consejo Superio de Investigaciones Científicas, 1977); *idem*, *Palabra y Gloria. Excursus en la Literatura Intertestamentaria* (Madrid: Consejo Superio de Investigaciones Científicas, 1983).

passages in the Hebrew Bible where divine activity is attributed to the Angel of Yahweh.

4.2 Angelic Figures

In moving from Logos, Wisdom and Glory to other intermediary categories, it is important to distinguish clearly between angelic figures on the one hand and exalted humans on the other, while recognizing the obvious overlap between them. As far as angels are concerned, the issues that Bauckham and Eskola point to are in one sense at least not altogether new. That is, the question has been raised quite sharply in recent debate (as indeed it had earlier) of whether angels and angelic categories are central or peripheral to the development and formulation of New Testament Christology. Is it adequate simply to note the 'paradox' of the prominence of angels in Jewish mediatorial concepts, yet their *lack* of importance for early Christology?[97] Or is it important to follow further the point I made in my original essay – that angelology is indeed very important for Jewish tradition, but that therefore the implication is that it is imperative to look more deeply into its influence on and importance for various strands of New Testament Christology?[98]

The strategy here has been basically twofold. First, there has been a move to develop, extend and refine the emphasis on *angelomorphic* rather than simply 'angelic' categories, both in relation to the Jewish evidence and especially for Christology. This has been done not least in order to exorcise the ghost of the overstated and simplistic Werner thesis, and the very influential rebuttal of it by Michaelis[99]. The point has also been to do more justice to the Jewish evidence itself, and to gain a more nuanced understanding of it. Second, work has been undertaken to show why and how various ways of portraying mediatorial figures and developing these categories are in fact very much built up out of (and belong centrally to) angelic and angelomorphic figures and categories themselves, both conceptually and terminologically. This applies also to the way that they are taken up in relation to the New Testament, and the ways that New Testament Christology is developed. In other words, the point is to show how angelological traditions and categories in fact permeate Jewish and New Testament texts, even when the actual or surface point of reference is Wisdom or Logos, or an exalted human figure. Hence it is very important to understand their underlying significance. This is so in relation to the Jewish conceptions of the heavenly world, how God is to be understood and how he and his activity are seen in relation to the world. It is also important for New Testament Christology and the way that sense can best be made of the extraordinary manner in which the human figure of Jesus takes on more than human (indeed, divine or quasi-divine) form and characteristics, belongs with God and is set alongside God in the heavenly world, and exercises divine roles and functions.

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[97] Thus e.g. Hengel, *Son*, pp. 85–87; Dunn, *Christology*, pp. 149–159.

[98] Cf. e.g. A. F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven. Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (SJLA 25; Leiden: Brill, 1977); Rowland, *Open*; *idem*, 'The Vision of the Risen Christ in Rev. 1. 13ff.: The Debt of an Early Christology to an Aspect of Jewish Angelology', *JTS* n.s. 31 (1980), pp. 1–11; *idem*, 'John 1.51, Jewish Apocalyptic and Targumic Tradition', *NTS* 30 (1984), pp. 498–507; *idem*, 'Man'; J. E. Fossum, *The Image of the Invisible God. Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (NTOA 30; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), especially pp. 13–69; *idem*, *Name*; Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*; Hannah, *Michael*.

[99] M. Werner, *The Formation of Christian Dogma: An Historical Study of its Problem* (trans. S. G. F. Brandon; London: A. & C. Black, 1957): the first edition of the original German appeared in 1941; W. Michaelis, *Zur Engelchristologie im Urchristentum: Abbau der Konstruktion Martin Werners* (Basel: Heinrich Majer, 1942). It was to an extent the legacy of this confrontation that underlay the kind of argument represented by the works cited in note 97, above, and similar discussions. As is sometimes noted, the fact that Michaelis was generally seen as having sounded the death-knell for any attempt to use angelology to interpret Jesus, the New Testament and early Christianity, meant that the book by J. Barbel, *Christos Angelos. Die Anschauung von Christos als Bote und Engel in der gelehrten und volkstümlichen Literatur der*

Obviously, as far as Christology is concerned, it is those *human* figures who take on a heavenly and suprahuman mode of being and sphere in which they belong and operate who would seem to provide the most obvious analogy and closest comparable category for what happens in New Testament traditions which move from the human figure of Jesus to the exalted and (quasi-)divine figure of Christ[100]. It *could* then, of course, be that the angelic categories evident in the New Testament, in relation to Christ's appearance, functions and so on, are merely the surface trappings (as could also be the case, comparably, with Wisdom and Logos), and not intrinsic or important to the distinctive category itself, and hence also, implicitly, in relation to Christ in the New Testament. Simply to *assume* this, however, would certainly be to beg questions, and it is precisely here that traditions and formulations need to

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christlichen Altertums (Bonn: Hanstein Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1941), published in the same year as Werner's work, received much less attention than it deserved. Indeed, its publication was overshadowed not only by the Werner-Michaelis debate, but also by the Second World War, which inevitably meant that scholarly discussion was curtailed, and also of course that books published in Germany had only limited circulation. Yet Barbel's book is a much more nuanced work than that of Werner, and still deserves serious consideration at the present. It also needs to be noted, however, that Barbel is concerned with the early Patristic period (second to fourth centuries), and not the New Testament as such.

[100] Cf. e.g. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, pp. 152–183; cf. also Himmelfarb, *Ascent*, especially pp. 47–71, for emphasis on the *very* different phenomenon involved in humans *ascending*, and attaining a place among the angels, compared with angels descending to earth.

be analysed carefully and examined perceptively and imaginatively, in order to see what exactly is being affirmed, and *why* it is being affirmed in the precise and distinctive way that it is.

4.2.1 Developed Angelology : Issues Arising

Indeed, in the plethora of scholarship in this area over the last decade, one point which has emerged even more clearly is the fluid nature of the line that separates these two groups of figures from each other[101]. As far as angelic figures are concerned, our understanding has been enhanced considerably of late[102]. One point which, in context of the present debate, has to be grasped very firmly is the ambivalent and potentially dangerous implications that angelic categories constantly carry with them. From as far back as we can see in the biblical material, there are problems and tensions involved in angelology. Thus they provide one main way for biblical writers to cope with the dangers of polytheism and allow God's presence and activity to be mediated. But it is precisely because of this that it can become very difficult to find clear differences between God and the angels.

There are two different conceptual backgrounds underlying the idea of angels in the Hebrew Bible, that of the heavenly council and that of the divine messenger. Both are potentially problematic for monotheism: the heavenly court concept derives from polytheistic traditions and can thus very easily cause ambiguity, while the messenger appears in human form and is even called 'man', yet at the same time is very close to God and (in various traditions) increasingly difficult to distinguish from him. This problem is exacerbated by the way that these two originally quite separate traditions are increasingly fused together already within the Hebrew Bible. The LXX takes this process still further, but it is only in post-biblical Jewish writings that this fusion is developed to its full and final form. Indeed, angelology as a whole is developed much further in these writings, so that angels stand nearer to both God and humans, and in some cases take on an altogether new status[103].

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[101] This is a point that I had made already in my earlier essay (chapter 5, section 3.4.3), and what follows here is therefore intended to be seen in conjunction with what I said there.

[102] See especially M. Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabbinischer Zeit* (TSAJ 34; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992). There is also important discussion in Schäfer, *Hekhalot-Studien*; *idem*, *Hidden*, along with (earlier) *idem*, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen. Untersuchungen zur rabbinischen Engelvorstellung* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1975). In addition, cf. Hannah, *Michael*; M. J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1–36, 77–108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (JSPSup 11; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992); Olyan, *Thousand*; Carrell, *Jesus*, pp. 24–76; C. E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae* (WUNT 2.77; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

It is clear that a major factor in the way that angels are named and portrayed in the whole developing tradition is the use of distinctive patterns of exegesis of the Hebrew Bible[104]. Thus they derive especially from difficulties within the Hebrew text, and many of these difficult texts are themselves found in theophanic or angelophanic contexts. Thus they may be based on the interpretation of difficult words in the Hebrew, or textual problems otherwise. They are also derived from texts that are theologically problematic (as for example Genesis 22; Ex. 14.17) or ambiguous (e.g. Ex. 24.1). In addition, other texts that are in themselves theophanic or angelophanic are used, as are texts that are traditionally interpreted in this way (e.g. Ps. 68.18). The same is true of descriptions of the divine council, and terms associated in the Hebrew Bible with the temple and cult. Along with these, divine attributes such as the Name, Face, Presence and Anger of God also present a focus for this developing angelic exegesis. Not surprisingly, a further extremely important source for angelic exegesis is provided by the traditions in Ezekiel relating to visions of the divine throne (Ezekiel 1; 8; 10). At least by the first century BCE, then, major interpretative patterns of exegesis had emerged. This is obviously an important phenomenon, but it would appear that its significance lies more in explaining *how* angelic names and groupings were arrived at, and thus took on greater importance, than *why* there should be this interest in the first place. Thus the increasing role assigned to angels is part of a wider interest in the heavenly sphere that is especially characteristic of apocalyptic and other visionary works. Hence the underlying question here is what generates this visionary mode, and wider interest, in such intense profusion in this period.

It is, then, above all in some of the apocalypses that the most far-reaching and extraordinary developments take place[105]. Here angels take on enormously important roles in both the heavenly and earthly spheres, and the developed angelology becomes an important part of the visionary expression that helps bring heaven and earth, the divine and human spheres, closer together. The apocalyptic visionary is frequently accompanied on his heavenly journey by an angel. He sees himself as in special proximity to the heavenly events, and indeed to God himself. Hence his future existence can be described as being with the angels, and this development ultimately leads to belief in the transformation of the righteous one into an angel. Thus, in anticipation of the eschaton, ‘communion with the angels’ can be believed to be already present.

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[103] Cf. Mach, *Entwichlungsstadien*, pp. 10–113.

[104] Cf. Olyan, *Thousand*, for detailed discussion of this practice and the techniques involved.

[105] Cf. Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*, pp. 114–300; cf. also Himmelfarb, *Ascent*; Davidson, *Angels*, pp. 18–129, 288–331.