

The Theophany of the Resurrected Messiah

The “Jewish” Christology of Paul’s Speeches in Acts

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1. Paul’s Christology: How Jewish? How High?

In discussions of the apostle Paul’s relationship to Judaism, the question of Christology is never far from the surface. Among those recently seeking to locate “Paul within Judaism,”¹ Paula Fredriksen argues that while Paul makes “very high claims for Jesus,” he stops short of identifying Jesus *as* God.² In making this case, Fredriksen takes issue with what she calls the “Big Bang Christology” championed by other members of the “Early High Christology Club,”³ and warns against the danger of anachronistically reading Nicaea and Chalcedon back onto Paul.⁴ Her case, like that of her interlocutors, understandably focusses on Paul’s letters. My goal in this essay, however, is to advance this discussion of Paul and the origins of “Christological monotheism” by approaching it from a different angle – the Christology of Paul’s speeches in the book of Acts.⁵ In approaching the question from this angle, I make no attempt to assess the historical veracity of Acts’ portrait of Paul’s Christology, or to compare it

¹ For an introduction to the “Paul within Judaism” approach, see esp. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm, *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-century Context to the Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 1–30; Paula Fredriksen, “What Does It Mean to See Paul ‘within Judaism’?,” *JBL* 141:2 (2022): 359–80.

² Paula Fredriksen, “How High Can Early High Christology Be?,” in *Monotheism and Christology in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Matthew V. Novenson, NovTSup 180 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 293–320.

³ Fredriksen primarily engages David B. Capes, Richard J. Bauckham, Larry W. Hurtado, and Carey C. Newman, especially their essays in Novenson, *Monotheism and Christology*.

⁴ Fredriksen, “How High?,” 293–5.

⁵ For recent surveys and analysis of the debate see esp.: Jörg Frey, “Eine neue religionsgeschichtliche Perspektive: Larry W. Hurtados *Lord Jesus Christ* und die Herausbildung der frühen Christologie,” in *Reflections on the Early Christian History of Religion. Erwägungen zur frühchristlichen Religionsgeschichte*, ed. Cilliers Breytenbach and Jörg Frey, AJEC 81 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 117–69; Brandon D. Smith, “What Christ Does, God Does: Surveying Recent Scholarship on Christological Monotheism,” *CBR* 17:2 (2019): 184–208; David B. Capes, “New Testament Christology,” in *The State of New Testament Studies*, ed. Scot McKnight and Nijay K. Gupta (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 161–81; Larry W. Hurtado, “The New *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* at Thirty: Observations by a Participant,” in Novenson, *Monotheism and Christology*, 9–31.

systematically with Paul's letters.⁶ My limited goal is to assess the testimony of the book of Acts to Paul's Christology, with a view to answering the questions implied by my title: "how Jewish is it?" and "how high?"⁷

My broad thesis is that Paul's Christology in Acts is thoroughly Jewish, but also remarkably new: while all of his primary categories are drawn from the Scriptures of Israel, and many of his major affirmations find parallels in early Judaism, Paul's specific Christological configurations are shaped by the history of Jesus of Nazareth and, especially, by his theophanic visions of Jesus on the road to Damascus and in the Jerusalem temple. My primary contention is that, in the book of Acts, Paul proclaims Jesus not only as the crucified-and-risen Davidic Messiah, but as the one who embodies the very presence of Israel's God. In what follows, I examine each of Paul's major public speeches as he proclaims Jesus in increasingly exalted terms as the Saviour of Israel (13:16–41, 46–47), the Judge of the nations (17:22–31), the Lord of his church (20:17–35), and the very presence of God (22:1–21; 24:10–21; 26:2–29). The final section offers a synthesis and assessment.

2. The Saviour of Israel: The Christology of Paul's Synagogue Exhortation in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16–41, 46–47)

Paul's "word of encouragement" (13:15: λόγος παρακλήσεως) in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch (13:16–41, 46–47) is the book of Acts' most extended presentation of his preaching of Jesus among the Jews. This speech appears as a model of the Scriptural reasoning Paul regularly employed in his ministry to the Jews (cf. 14:1; 17:2–3; 18:5; 28:23),⁸ and primarily presents Jesus as the Saviour of Israel.

Three features of the speech locate Paul's proclamation firmly within Judaism. First, in the three vocative addresses which structure the speech, Paul identifies his audience in classic Jewish categories: he speaks to "Men of Israel" (13:16: ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται), "sons of the family of Abraham" (13:26: υἱοὶ γένους Ἀβραάμ), and "brothers" (13:26, 38: ἀδελφοί).⁹ Second, Paul employs a classic

⁶ For the issues here, see Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012–2015), 1:221–319; Isaac W. Oliver, "The 'Historical Paul' and the Paul of Acts," in *Paul the Jew: Rereading the Apostle as a Figure of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Carlos A. Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 51–80.

⁷ For the sake of simplicity, I refer to "Paul" rather than "the Lukan Paul" or "Luke's presentation of Paul," or "the testimony of Acts to Paul." These more cumbersome phrases should be assumed throughout.

⁸ Similarly, K. L. Anderson, "*But God Raised Him from the Dead*": *The Theology of Jesus' Resurrection in Luke-Acts*, PBM (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 235; Brandon D. Crowe, *The Hope of Israel: The Resurrection of Christ in the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 49.

⁹ Cf. Acts 13:16, 26: "God-fearers" (οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν). For a survey of structural

Third, and most significantly, Paul's characterization of Jesus – especially in the middle section of the speech (13:26–37) – is thoroughly Jewish. In broad terms, Paul draws on the language of the Psalms and Isaiah when he declares that in proclaiming Jesus, he is “bringing good news” to Israel (13:32: εὐαγγελιζόμεθα; cf. 14:15), “the word of salvation” (13:26: ὁ λόγος τῆς σωτηρίας).¹³ More specifically, Paul picks up his earlier proclamation of Jesus as “Christ” (ὁ χριστός), “Son of God” (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ), and “Lord” (ὁ κύριος) (9:20, 22, 28), and develops these categories, which are central to his preaching of Jesus throughout Acts.¹⁴ In particular, Paul characterizes Jesus as the Davidic Messiah when he declares that it is from David's “offspring” (σπέρμα) that “God has brought to Israel a Saviour [...] as he promised” (13:23: ὁ θεὸς [...] κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν ἤγαγεν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ σωτῆρα),¹⁵ and when he identifies Jesus as “the Son” prophe-

¹⁵ Note, especially, the language of “promise” (ἐπαγγελία) and “offspring” / “seed” (σπέρμα), which – connected with “David” (Acts 13:22–23) – evokes God’s promise to David (2 Sam 7:12: וְהָיָה אֶתְּרוֹךְ אַתְּרוּצָה / καὶ ἀναστήσω τὸ σπέρμα σου μετὰ σέ), and the biblical “seed”

sied in Psalm 2:7 (13:32–33). In these ways, Paul roots his proclamation of Jesus in Israel's Scriptures, declaring that those Scriptures have reached their divinely appointed climax in him (cf. Rom 1:2; 16:26; 1 Cor 15:3–4; 2 Tim 3:15).

At the same time, as Paul himself recognizes, his proclamation of the gospel of Jesus involves a reading of Israel's Scriptures, and a configuration of messiahship, which is genuinely novel within early Judaism (13:27). Five features of the speech are significant. First, while the Scriptures do not “in direct terms, anticipate a *χριστός* who would suffer and die,”¹⁶ and there is no strong early Jewish parallel for a *crucified* Messiah, Paul asserts that the condemnation of Jesus “fulfilled the utterances of the prophets” (13:27: ἐπλήρωσαν [...] τὰς φωνὰς τῶν προφητῶν), and that, in crucifying Jesus, his enemies “completed all that was written of him” (13:29: ἐτέλεσαν πάντα τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένα).¹⁷ Paul does not here cite or allude to any specific biblical texts, but – as elsewhere – affirms generally that “the prophets” predicted the suffering of the Messiah.¹⁸ G. R. Lanier points to four possible biblical sources for this affirmation, namely, “the ‘Suffering Servant’ (Isa 52–53), the righteous sufferer of the psalms, the violent fate of the prophets, and the eschatological role of various ‘saviour’ or ‘anointed’ figures.”¹⁹ He rightly concludes, however, that Paul’s general appeals to Scripture “reflect what appears to be a burgeoning apostolic hermeneutic” according to which “the entire OT is retrospectively seen as containing a messianology of suffering.”²⁰ In the context of the wider narrative of Luke-Acts, Paul’s state-

(זרע / σπέρμα) promise which stands behind it (Gen 3:15; 15:5; 17:7–8). Cf. Rita F. Cefalu, “The Sufferings and Glory of Jesus the Messiah in Acts 2–3,” in *The Seed of Promise: The Sufferings and Glory of the Messiah*, ed. Paul R. Williamson and Rita F. Cefalu (Wilmore: Glossa House, 2020), 285–98.

¹⁶ Gregory R. Lanier, “‘As It Is Written’... Where? Examining Generic Citations of Scripture in the New Testament,” *JSNT* 43:4 (2021): 570–604, here 578.

¹⁷ Two possible exceptions provide only weak parallels. (1.) 4 Ezra 7:29 announces that “my Son the Messiah shall die,” perhaps reflecting on Dan 9:25–26 (see Michael E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 216, n. 59). This text, however, likely dates from “the time of Domitian (81–96 C.E.)” (*Fourth Ezra*, 10), and thus post-dates Paul, and (likely also) Acts. (2.) Targum Pseudo-Jonathan identifies the Isaianic “servant” (Isa 52–53) as the Messiah (Tg. Ps.-J. on Isa 52:13: עבדִי מְשִׁיחָא [“my servant, the Messiah”]; 53:10: מְלִיכֻת מְשִׁיחָא [“in the kingdom of their Messiah”]). This text, however, also post-dates Paul, and sees in the text a triumphant rather than a suffering Messiah (see Jostein Ådna, “The Servant of Isaiah 53 as Triumphant and Interceding Messiah: The Reception of Isaiah 52:13–53:12 in the Targum of Isaiah with Special Attention to the Concept of the Messiah,” in *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources*, ed. Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 189–224).

¹⁸ Acts 17:2–3; 26:22–23; Rom 3:21, 25; 1 Cor 15:3; cf. Luke 24:25–27, 44–47; Acts 3:18; 1 Pet 1:10–11.

¹⁹ Lanier, “As It Is Written,” 578–9. Cf. Kenneth D. Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God’s People Intertextually*, JSNTSup 282 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 119–41.

²⁰ Lanier, “As It Is Written,” 579. Lanier here refers specifically to Acts 3:18 and 17:2–3; 26:22–23, but his assessment applies equally well to Acts 13:27, 29.

ments may especially evoke the biblical pattern highlighted in Stephen's speech according to which God's people reject those sent to them – first Moses (7:25, 27, 35, 39), then the prophets (7:52), and now “the Righteous One,” Christ (7:52–53).²¹ More specifically, his reference to Jesus's cross as “the tree” (13:29: τὸ ξύλον) probably relies on Deuteronomy's solemn affirmation that the one hung on a “tree” (ῥῡ / ξύλον) is “cursed by God” (Deut 21:22–23; cf. Gal 3:13).²² Further, given the prominence of Isa 52–53 in Christian interpretation of Jesus's suffering, not least in Luke–Acts, Paul's affirmation likely also evokes that prophetic text.²³ Thus, Paul's characterization of Jesus as the rejected and suffering Messiah is profoundly biblical, being rooted in the Law and the Prophets, even as it also appears as a novelty within early Judaism.

Second, and similarly, Paul's affirmation of Jesus's resurrection is simultaneously deeply biblical and remarkably new (13:30–37). The biblical promise of resurrection is rooted in the identity of Israel's God as “the living God,” the “creator of the ends of the earth,”²⁴ and is thus far more pervasive in all three divisions of Israel's Scriptures than has often been recognized.²⁵ Since, however, the explicit promise of bodily resurrection only appears in the Prophets and the Writings,²⁶ the resurrection hope, while accepted among the Pharisees and at Qumran,²⁷ was rejected by the Sadducees.²⁸ Crucially, however, there is no evidence for Jewish expectation that the Messiah would be raised, on his own, in the “middle of history,” ahead of the resurrection of all God's people, at the end.²⁹ Paul's proclamation of Jesus as “*the first* to rise from the dead” (26:23: πρῶτος ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν) is, therefore, unprecedented in early Judaism.

Third, and closely related to this, Paul's identification of Jesus as the resurrected “Son of God” is, again, both deeply biblical, and startlingly new (13:30–37). In biblical perspective, “Son of God” is primarily a covenantal category, and is used metaphorically to describe the filial relationship between God and

²¹ Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2:2067. For Luke's theme of ironic fulfilment in Jesus's death, see: Jerry L. Ray, *Narrative Irony in Luke–Acts: The Paradoxical Interaction of Prophetic Fulfillment and Jewish Rejection*, MBPS 28 (Lewiston: Mellen Biblical Press, 1996), 155–6.

²² Note also: Acts 5:30; 10:39; 1 Pet 2:24. Cf. Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1965), 142.

²³ UBS⁵ identifies allusions to Isa 53 in Luke 22:37; 23:33–34; 24:27, 46; Acts 8:32–33; 10:43. For extended discussion, see: Peter Stuhlmacher, “Isaiah 53 in the Gospels and Acts,” in Janowski and Stuhlmacher, *The Suffering Servant*, 147–62.

²⁴ E.g. Deut 5:26; Josh 3:10; 1 Sam 17:26, 36; Ps 42:2; 84:2; Isa 40:28; Jer 10:10; Dan 6:20, 26; Hos 1:10.

²⁵ See esp. J. D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2006).

²⁶ Job 19:23–27; Isa 25:6–7; 26:19; Ezek 37:1–14; Dan 12:1–2, 13; Hos 13:14.

²⁷ Josephus, *A.J.* 18.11–25; 4Q521 frg. 2+4 ii, 12; frg. 7+5 ii, 6–12; Acts 23:6–9; 24:15.

²⁸ Luke 20:27–40; Acts 23:6–9; 24:15. See N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, COQG 3 (London: SPCK, 2003), 129–206.

²⁹ So Wright, *Resurrection*, 372, 415; idem, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, COQG 4 (London: SPCK, 2013), 1046, 1099, 1101, 1211.

his human covenant partners, first Adam (Gen 1:26–28 with 5:1–3; cf. Luke 3:38), then Israel (Exod 4:22–23; Jer 31:20; Hos 11:1),³⁰ then David and his descendants (2 Sam 7:14; 1 Chr 22:10; 28:6; Ps 2:7).³¹ Following this trajectory, “Son of God” functions as a messianic title in some texts from Qumran (4Q246 II, 1; 4Q174 I, 11 citing 2 Sam 7:14),³² and in Fourth Ezra (7:28–29; 13:32, 37, 52; 14:9).³³ Paul draws on this biblical trajectory to declare Jesus as the messianic “Son of God,” but further connects this identity – in an entirely unprecedented manner – to Jesus’s resurrection from the dead (13:32–33). Nevertheless, Paul sees Jesus’s resurrection and ascension prefigured in God’s “lifting up” (ὑψωσεν) of his typological “son,” Israel, in the Exodus (13:17),³⁴ and in God’s “raising up” (ἡγειρεν) of his royal “son,” David, to the kingship (13:22–23).³⁵ He identifies, further, three Scriptures – Ps 2:7 (13:33), Isa 55:3 (13:34), and Ps 16:10 (13:35) – which, he declares, speak prophetically of Messiah Jesus’s resurrection to incorruptible life. Indeed, Paul also finds the theological ground for Jesus’s resurrection in these texts: unlike David, the typological “son” who “saw corruption” for his sin, Jesus is the LORD’s “Holy One” (τὸν ὁσίον) – his perfectly obedient Son – whom the LORD would not allow to “see corruption” (ιδεῖν διαφθοράν) (13:35–36 citing Ps 16:10 [15:10 LXX]),³⁶ and so raised from the dead (cf. Acts 2:24–32).³⁷ These connections between the Messiah’s obedient life, resurrection, and identity as “Son of God” find clear parallels in Paul’s letters, where Jesus’s perfect obedience (esp. Rom 5:18–19; cf. Phil 2:8) provides the ground for his resurrection and exaltation as “Son of God in power” (Rom 1:3–4; cf. Phil 2:9–11).³⁸

³⁰ Cf. plural constructions in Deut 14:1; 32:19; Isa 1:2. Note also God as “Father” of Israel: Deut 32:6; Ps 103:13; Isa 63:16; 64:7; Jer 3:4, 19; 31:9; Mal 1:6; 2:10.

³¹ Angels appear as “sons of God,” but always in the plural (Job 1:6; Ps 29:1; 89:7).

³² Tucker S. Ferda, “Naming the Messiah: A Contribution to the 4Q246 ‘Son of God’ Debate,” *DSD* 21:2 (2014): 150–75; Ruben A. Bühner, *Hohe Messianologie: Übermenschliche Aspekte eschatologischer Heilsgestalten im Frühjudentum*, WUNT 2/523 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 283–92; idem, *Messianic High Christology: New Testament Variants of Second Temple Judaism* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2021), 114–8.

³³ Michael E. Stone, “The Concept of the Messiah in 4 Ezra,” in *Religions in Antiquity: E. R. Goodenough Memorial*, ed. Jacob Neusner, SHR 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 295–312; Bühner, *Hohe Messianologie*, 152–71; idem, *Messianic High Christology*, 75–82.

³⁴ Cf. Luke 1:52; Acts 2:33; 5:31 which employ ὑψώω to speak of Jesus’s exaltation.

³⁵ In Acts 13:23 several MSS read ἡγειρεν (“he has raised up”; cf. Jdg 3:9 LXX) rather than ἡγαγεν (“he has brought”). While ἡγαγεν is likely original, the presence of ἡγειρεν in the textual tradition indicates that early readers of Acts recognized Paul’s emphasis on Jesus’s resurrection in this speech. See Crowe, *Hope of Israel*, 50–2.

³⁶ In Acts 13:36–37, Paul employs yet other Scriptures to interpret Psalm 16:10, arguing from the record in 1 Kgs 2:10 – that David “fell asleep” (ἐκοιμήθη), “was laid with his fathers” (προσετέθη πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας αὐτοῦ), and “saw corruption” (εἶδεν διαφθοράν) – that the psalm does not apply to David himself but to his promised seed, Jesus.

³⁷ Cf. Crowe, *Hope of Israel*, 64.

³⁸ Acts 13:22–23, 33–34 and Rom 1:1–4 share reference to: (1.) God’s “promise” (ἐπαγγελία / προεπαγγέλλω); (2.) “the gospel” (εὐαγγελίζω / εὐαγγέλιον); (3.) the “seed of David” (ἀπὸ

There is, moreover, at least a hint in Paul's declaration of Jesus as "Son of God" that he is also the pre-existent, divine "Son". Israel's Scriptures anticipate the pre-existence, and even the divinity, of certain eschatological "son" figures,³⁹ and some early Jewish texts develop this expectation.⁴⁰ Certainly, in Luke-Acts, Jesus's identity as "Son of God" evinces both messianic and divine dimensions,⁴¹ not least in Paul's initial proclamation of Jesus as "Son of God" (9:20), which immediately follows his encounter with the heavenly Lord on the Damascus Road (9:3–5).⁴² In this context, Paul's declaration of Jesus's enthronement as the royal "Son of God" (13:33–37; cf. Luke 24:26) suggests that his resurrection and ascension are the eschatological manifestation of his identity as the eternal, divine "Son."⁴³ This understanding again finds a parallel in Paul's letters, where the apostle speaks not merely of Jesus's "descent" from David, but of the divine Son's *incarnation* in the line of David – he "became" (τοῦ γενομένου) Son "according to the flesh" (κατὰ σάρκα) – followed by his *enthronement* in power (Rom 1:3; cf. Phil 2:6–7).⁴⁴ Paul, then, draws a line, in an unprecedented manner, from the divine "Son's" pre-existence, to his incarnation, obedient life, resurrection, and exaltation.

Fourth, Paul's characterization of Jesus as "Saviour" (13:23: σωτήρ) is similarly rooted in Scripture, but unusual in early Judaism.⁴⁵ While Greco-Roman

τοῦ σπέρματος + Δαυὶδ / ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ); (4.) Jesus as "son of God" (Υἱός μου εἰ σύ / υἱοῦ θεοῦ), and; (5.) "raise" / "resurrection from the dead" (ἐγείρω / ἀνίστημι / ἀνέστησεν αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν / ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν). The significance of the parallel is well recognized. E.g. Richard B. Gaffin Jr., *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1987), 113; Frederick F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, ed. Gordon D. Fee, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 270; Wright, *Resurrection*, 451; Crowe, *Hope of Israel*, 57.

³⁹ E.g. Ps 45:7; Ezek 37:25; Dan 7:13–14; Mic 5:1. Cf. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Christology and Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 1–49.

⁴⁰ E.g. Ps 109:3 LXX; 1 En. 39:6–7; 46:1–2; 48:2–3, 6; 62:7; 4 Ezra 12:32; 13:26, 52. Cf. John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, 2nd ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2010), 235–6; Bühner, *Hohe Messianologie*, 65–73, 102–05, 134–37, 160–62.

⁴¹ For Jesus as "Son of God" in Luke-Acts, see: Luke 1:32, 35; 3:22, 38; 4:3, 9, 41; 8:28; 9:35; 10:21–22; 20:41–44; 22:28–30, 70; Acts 9:20; 13:33. The divine dimension is especially evident in Luke 1:32–35; 3:22; 9:35; 10:21–22; 20:41–44; 22:28–30; Acts 9:20. For discussion, see esp. Simon J. Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 231–42, 281–2.

⁴² See § 5.2 below for the Damascus Road encounter as a theophany.

⁴³ Crowe, *Hope of Israel*, 57–61.

⁴⁴ Cf. Geerhardus Vos, "The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of Spirit," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1980), 104–5; Matthew W. Bates, "A Christology of Incarnation and Enthronement: Romans 1.3–4 as Unified, Nonadoptionist, and Non-conciliatory," *CBQ* 77 (2015): 107–27, here 115–23.

⁴⁵ Ⲫ⁷⁴ E L Ⲙ, and several minuscules, read σωτηρίαν ("salvation"), but σωτήρα ("saviour") is more likely original. It is found in the major Codices Ⲛ A B C Ψ, several minuscules, the Vulgate, Syriac, Sahidic, and Bohairic versions, and citations in Athanasius and Theodoret.

sources commonly designate human benefactors, including the emperor, as “Saviour,”⁴⁶ Luke-Acts especially relates Jesus’s identity as “Saviour” to Israel (Luke 1:47; 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23).⁴⁷ It is therefore significant that while the Scriptures occasionally refer to human deliverers, especially the Judges, as God-given “saviours” (יְשׁוּעָה / σωτήρ or יִשׁוּעַ / σῶζω),⁴⁸ they far more commonly identify God himself as Israel’s “Saviour” (יְשׁוּעָה or יִשׁוּעַ / σωτήρ), or “salvation” (יִשׁוּעַ / σωτηρία or יְשׁוּעָה / σωτήριον),⁴⁹ or celebrate the LORD God as the one who “saves” (יִשׁוּעַ / σῶζω).⁵⁰ In the Psalms and the Prophets, especially Isaiah, the LORD emphatically declares that he alone is the “Saviour” of his people; there is no other.⁵¹ By contrast, the Scriptures never refer to the Messiah or any other eschatological deliverer as “Saviour,” and this emphasis continues in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, where “the title σωτήρ [...] is confined to God”.⁵² It is striking, therefore, that while God appears once as “Saviour” (σωτήρ) in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:47), it is especially Jesus who appears in this role (Luke 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23).⁵³ Consistent with this, Paul declares this it is Jesus who now

This reading is also supported by Luke-Acts’ identification of Jesus as σωτήρ (Luke 2:11; Acts 5:31). Cf. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (London/New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 359.

⁴⁶ Gary Gilbert, “Roman Propaganda and Christian Identity in the Worldview of Luke-Acts,” in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse*, ed. Todd Penner and Caroline V. Stichele, SBLSymS 20 (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 237–42.

⁴⁷ Cf. Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 17 ed., KEK 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 208, n. 576.

⁴⁸ The substantives יְשׁוּעָה / σωτήρ are applied to human “saviours” at: Judg 3:9, 15; Neh 9:27 [pl.]; Obad 21; cf. 2 Kgs 13:5 [LXX: σωτηρίαν]; Isa 19:20 [LXX: ἄνθρωπον, ὃς σώσει αὐτούς]. The verbs יִשׁוּעַ / σῶζω describe the actions of human “saviours” throughout the book of Judges, but it is clear that, properly speaking, the LORD saves Israel, *through* human “saviours” (esp. Judg 2:16, 18; 3:9; 6:36; 7:2, 7; 10:12–14).

⁴⁹ Gen 49:18; Exod 14:13; 15:2; Deut 32:15; 1 Sam 2:1; 10:19; 14:45; 2 Sam 22:3 [x2], 5, 36, 47, 51; 1 Chr 16:23, 35; 2 Chr 20:17; Ps 3:3, 9; 9:15; 12:6; 13:6; 14:7; 18:3, 36, 47, 51; 20:6; 21:2, 6; 24:5; 25:5; 27:1, 9; 28:8; 35:3, 9; 42:6, 12; 43:5; 44:5; 50:23; 51:14; 53:7; 62:2–3, 7–8; 65:6; 67:3; 68:20; 69:14, 30; 70:5; 74:12; 78:22; 79:9; 80:3; 85:5, 8, 10; 89:27; 91:16; 95:1; 96:2; 98:2; 106:4, 21; 116:13; 118:14, 21; 119:123, 155, 166, 174; 132:16; 140:8; 149:4; Isa 12:2 [x2]; 17:10; 25:9; 26:1; 33:2, 6; 43:3, 11; 45:8, 15, 21; 49:6, 8 (mediated by the LORD’s “servant”), 26 [LXX: ὁ ρησάμενός]; 51:5–6, 8; 52:7, 10; 56:1; 59:17; 60:16; 61:10; 62:1, 11; 63:8; Jer 14:8; Hos 13:4; Jon 2:10; Mic 7:7; Hab 3:13, 18.

⁵⁰ E.g. Exod 14:30; Num 10:9; Deut 33:29; Judg 2:18; 1 Sam 10:19; 14:39; 17:47; 2 Sam 22:4; 23:12; 1 Chr 11:14; 18:6; Ps 3:8; 6:5; 7:2, 10; 12:2; 17:7; 18:4, 28; 20:7, 10; 22:22; 28:9; 31:3, 17; 34:7, 19; 36:7; 37:40; 44:8; 54:3; 55:17; 57:4; 59:3; 60:7; 69:2, 36; 71:2–3; 72:4, 13; 76:10; 80:4, 8, 20; 86:2, 16; 98:1; 106:8, 10, 47; 107:13, 19; 108:7; 109:26, 31; 116:6; 118:25; 119:94, 117, 146; 138:7; 145:19; Isa 25:9; 30:15; 33:22; 35:4; 37:20, 35; 38:20; 43:12; 45:17, 22; 49:25; 59:1, 16; 63:1, 5; 64:5 (cf. 63:9: “the angel of his presence” as subject); Jer 17:14; 23:6; 31:7; 33:16; Ezek 34:22; Hab 3:13; Zech 8:7; 9:9. Note the negative statements in Ps 33:16; 44:3, 7; Isa 45:20; 46:7; 47:13 (false gods and human strength cannot save).

⁵¹ Ps 62:3, 7; Isa 43:3, 11; 45:15, 21–22; 49:26; 60:16; 63:8; Hos 13:4.

⁵² Moises Silva, ed., *NIDNTTE*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 4:426. E.g. 1 Macc. 4:30; 3 Macc. 6:29, 32; 7:16; Wis 16:17; Sir 51:1; Pss. Sol. 17:3; Bar 4:22; Jdt 9:11.

⁵³ Note also “salvation” language associated with Jesus: (1.) ἡ σωτηρία: Luke 1:69, 71, 77;

uniquely exercises the divine prerogative of granting “forgiveness of sins” (13:38–39: ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν; cf. 5:31).⁵⁴ Indeed, he does so in a manner which transcends the God-given Mosaic economy in both efficacy and scope: the forgiveness he offers brings “justification” beyond that offered by the law of Moses (13:39: ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν νόμῳ Μωϋσέως δικαιωθῆναι [...] πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιούται),⁵⁵ and is not for Israel only, but for “everyone who believes” (13:39: πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων; cf. 13:46–48 with Isa 49:6). Thus, Paul’s declaration of Jesus as “Saviour” is rooted in Israel’s Scriptures, but applies that title in an historically novel way, to ascribe to Jesus prerogatives normally reserved for God alone.

Finally, Paul’s reference, in the sequel to this speech (13:46–47), to Jesus as the “Lord” (κύριος) who “commanded” his Gentile mission further exhibits the same pattern of biblical foundation and historical novelty. C.K. Rowe has shown that the Gospel of Luke already applies the title κύριος to both the “Lord” God and the “Lord” Jesus in such a way that “the totality of the life of Jesus κύριος” appears “as the embodied revelation of κύριος ὁ θεός”.⁵⁶ In Luke 3:4–6 (with Isa 40:3–5) and 7:22, 27 (with Isa 26:19; 35:5; Mal 3:1), for example, the Gospel applies prophetic promises of the coming of the LORD God to the arrival of the Lord Jesus.⁵⁷ By the end of the Gospel Jesus is “worshipped” (προσκυνέω) with the devotion that belongs to “the Lord ... God” alone (Luke 24:52 with 4:7–8 citing Deut 6:13).⁵⁸ This exalted κύριος-Christology is then confirmed in Peter’s Pentecost speech at the beginning of Acts: Jesus has now been enthroned as “Lord” and “Christ” at God’s “right hand” (2:32–36 citing Ps 110:1); from this exalted position he has exercised the divine prerogative of pouring out the Holy Spirit (2:33 with 2:17–18 and Joel 3:1; cf. Luke 3:16–17),⁵⁹

19:9; Acts 4:12; 13:26, 47; 16:17; (2.) σωτήριος; Luke 2:30; 3:6; Acts 28:28; (3.) σῶζω; Luke 6:9; 7:50; 8:12, 36, 48, 50; 9:24; 17:19; 18:42; 19:10; 23:35, 37, 39; Acts 2:21, 40, 47; 4:9, 12; 11:14; 15:11; 16:30–31.

⁵⁴ Note esp.: Exod 32:32; Num 30:5, 8, 12; Deut 29:20; Josh 24:9; 1 Kgs 8:30, 34, 36, 39, 50; 2 Chr 6:21, 25, 27, 30, 39; 7:14; Neh 9:17; Ps 32:5; 85:3; Isa 40:2; Jer 31:34; 33:8; 36:3; Dan 9:19; Hos 1:6; Amos 7:2; Mic 7:19. See Daniel Johansson, “‘Who Can Forgive Sins but God Alone?’ Human and Angelic Agents, and Divine Forgiveness in Early Judaism,” *JSNT* 33 (2011): 351–74.

⁵⁵ In Acts 13:39 Paul’s reference to “being justified” (δικαιούται) by Jesus possibly alludes to the “servant’s” role in Isaiah 53:11 (עִבְדִּי / δίκαιῶσαι). If so, this strengthens the case that Paul’s earlier statement about the suffering of the Christ (13:27, 29) evokes Isaiah 53.

⁵⁶ Christopher K. Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke*, BZNW 139 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 218.

⁵⁷ Cf. Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 62–4; Steve Walton, “Jesus, Present and/or Absent? The Presence and Presentation of Jesus as a Character in the Book of Acts,” in *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts*, ed. Frank Dicken and Julia A. Snyder, LNTS 548 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 123–40, here 137–8.

⁵⁸ προσκυνέω appears only in these two texts in Luke. Cf. Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 69.

⁵⁹ See: Douglas Buckwalter, *The Character and Purpose of Luke’s Christology*, SNTSMS

and so to call on *Jesus's* "name" is to "call on the name of the Lord," that is, God (2:21 citing Joel 3:5: ἐπικαλέσεται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου; with 2:36, 38).⁶⁰ Peter subsequently affirms of Jesus that "he is Lord of all" (10:36: οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων κύριος).⁶¹

In this narrative context, Paul's repeated designation of Jesus as "Lord" suggests that he, too, recognizes Jesus as the one who embodies Israel's God.⁶² Certainly, Jesus's appearance to Paul on the Damascus Road evokes the appearance of the LORD God at Sinai: he "appears" as "Lord" (9:5, 17: κύριος + ὅραω pass.), with a "flashing light from heaven" (9:3: περιήστραψεν φῶς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ), and an audible "voice" (9:4, 7: φωνή), to reveal his name – "I am Jesus" (9:5: Ἐγώ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς).⁶³ The Lord Jesus then commissions Paul, through Ananias, "to carry my name before the Gentiles" (9:15: τοῦ βαστάσαι τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐνώπιον ἐθνῶν), and Paul begins to preach boldly "in the name of Jesus," that is, "in the name of the Lord" (9:27: ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ; 9:28: ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου). In this light, Paul's appeal, in Acts 13:47, to "the Lord" who "commanded" his Gentile mission naturally includes reference to the Lord Jesus.⁶⁴

89 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 194–6; Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts*, JPTSUP 9 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 277–9.

⁶⁰ For "calling on the name of the LORD" (קרא + הנה' / ἐπικαλέω + τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου) in Israel's Scriptures: Gen 4:26; 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25; 1 Kgs 18:24; 2 Kgs 5:11; Ps 116:4, 13, 17; Joel 3:5; Zeph 3:9; cf. Ps 80:19; Isa 12:4; Zech 13:9. For "calling on the name" (ἐπικαλέω + τὸ ὄνομα) of the Lord Jesus in Acts: 9:14, 21; 22:16; cf. 7:59; 19:13. For the "name" of Jesus elsewhere in Acts: 2:21, 38; 3:6, 16; 4:7, 10, 12, 17, 18, 30; 5:28, 40–41; 8:12, 16; 9:14–16, 21, 27, 28; 10:43, 48; 15:26; 16:18; 19:5, 13, 17; 21:13; 22:16; 26:9. Cf. C.F.D. Moule, "The Christology of Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honour of Paul Schubert*, ed. Leander E. Keck and James L. Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 161; Charles A. Gieschen, "The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology," VC 57:2 (2003): 115–58, here 146–8; idem, "The Divine Name as a Characteristic of Divine Identity in Second-Temple Judaism and Early Christianity," in Novenson, *Monotheism and Christology*, 62–84, here 79–80; Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 179–85, 197–206.

⁶¹ Cf. Steve Walton, "Identity and Christology: The Ascended Jesus in the Book of Acts," in *The Earliest Perceptions of Jesus in Context: Essays in Honour of John Nolland*, ed. Aaron W. White, David Wenham, and Craig A. Evans, LNTS 566 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 141: the κύριος-Christology of Peter's Pentecost speech places Jesus "in the same category as Israel's God".

⁶² Paul refers to Jesus as κύριος at Acts 9:5, 28; 13:10–12, 47–48; 15:36; 16:31; 21:13; 22:8, 10, 19; 26:15. Cf. 9:17; 13:2, 44; 14:3, 23; 15:26, 35, 40; 16:14–15, 32; 18:8–9; 19:5, 10, 13, 17, 20; 21:14; 23:11; 28:31.

⁶³ See below § 5.2 for the echoes of Sinai and the biblical theophany tradition. For extended analysis of Acts 9, compare esp. Timothy W. R. Churchill, *Divine Initiative and the Christology of the Damascus Road Encounter* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2010), 191–249.

⁶⁴ Cf. Martin Rese, "Die Funktion der alttestamentlichen Zitate und Anspielungen in den Reden der Apostelgeschichte," in *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, ed. Jacob Kremer, BETL 48 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 77–79; Gert J. Steyn, *Septuagint Quotations in the Context of the Petrine and Pauline Speeches of the Acta Apostolorum*, CBET 12 (Kampen: Pharos, 1995), 197; David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*,

Significantly, Paul immediately identifies this command with the LORD God's prophetic word through Isaiah (13:47 citing Isa 49:6). The result is that Paul – consistent with Luke-Acts elsewhere – identifies Jesus with the LORD who spoke through Isaiah.⁶⁵ The Lord Jesus's commissioning of Paul's Gentile mission appears as the eschatological confirmation of what the same "Lord" spoke beforehand, through the prophet.

Paul's Christology in his synagogue exhortation in Pisidian Antioch lays the groundwork for the other speeches in Acts: it is thoroughly Jewish, being rooted in the Scriptures and focussed on Jesus's identity as the Davidic Messiah; it is also historically novel, affirming that Messiah Jesus suffered God's curse, was raised from the dead ahead of the rest, and is now declared "Son of God," "Saviour," and "Lord" in the most exalted sense.

3. The Judge of the Nations: The Christology of Paul's Athens Address (Acts 17:22–31)

Paul's address to the Areopagus in Acts 17:22–31 is the most extended presentation in Acts of his proclamation of Jesus in a Gentile context, and presents Jesus as the Judge of the nations.⁶⁶

This speech is, again, deeply rooted in Israel's Scriptures. The major emphasis of the first part of the speech (17:22–29) is the supremacy of God as the creator, ruler, and sustainer of all that exists: he is "the God who made the world (ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας τὸν κόσμον) and everything in it (καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ) [...] the Lord of heaven and earth (οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὑπάρχων κύριος) [...] [who] gives to everyone (δίδους πᾶσιν) life and breath and everything" (ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα) (17:24–25; cf. 14:15–17). Paul's here asserts a radical distinction between the sole creator and his creation: he is the sole source of all reality outside of himself, and the only sovereign over all that exists. These formulations, of course, reflect the common biblical teaching that the LORD alone, Israel's God, is the one, true,

WUNT 2/130 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 101. *Contra* Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 414, n. 5; Bart J. Koet, *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, SNTA 14 (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 113.

⁶⁵ In Acts 26:23, Paul also identifies "Messiah" Jesus as the LORD's "servant" of Isaiah 49:6 and 42:6 (cf. Luke 2:23), and so characterizes Paul's Gentile mission as an extension of Jesus's mission as the "servant of the LORD". Paul thus recognizes Jesus as *both* the LORD who sends, *and* the servant who is sent. The same juxtaposition is evident in Luke 3:4–6 (citing Isaiah 40:3–5 and identifying Jesus as the coming LORD) and 3:22 (alluding to Isaiah 42:1 and identifying Jesus as the Isaianic "servant").

⁶⁶ For a review of scholarship on the Areopagus speech, see Claire K. Rothschild, *Paul in Athens: The Popular Religious Context of Acts 17*, WUNT 341 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 157–60.

and living God,⁶⁷ the sole creator of heaven and earth,⁶⁸ who has no equal,⁶⁹ and brooks no rivals.⁷⁰ Indeed, the Scriptures affirm that he is “the only God,”⁷¹ that there is “none like him,”⁷² that beside him “there is no other,”⁷³ and that before him the “gods” of the nations are “worthless idols,”⁷⁴ and “no gods at all.”⁷⁵ While the biblical and early Jewish texts recognize the existence of other heavenly beings, and even sometimes designate them “gods” (אֱלֹהִים / θεοί), they nevertheless maintain a fundamental ontological distinction between the creator God and his creatures, over whom he exercises sovereign rule, and from whom he requires exclusive worship.⁷⁶ Paul certainly echoes these affirmations in his letters, declaring that Israel’s God is the “only God” (μόνος θεός), “the living and true God,”⁷⁷ and Paul’s formulations in Acts 17:22–29 affirm the same.

It is, therefore, significant that in this same speech, Paul applies to Jesus biblical texts which, in their original contexts, refer to the one true God of Israel, and so includes Jesus within the identity of God himself.⁷⁸ Paul does not mention Jesus by name, but the introduction indicates that his preaching at the Areopagus concerns “Jesus and the resurrection” (17:18: τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν), and “the man whom he [God] has appointed” is clearly Jesus (17:31).⁷⁹ Crucially, Paul’s affirmation that God “has fixed a day [ἔστησεν ἡμέραν] on which he will judge the world in righteousness [ἐν ᾗ μέλλει κρίνειν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ]” (17:31) echoes a series of biblical texts which affirm God’s righteous final judgment. The reference to a fixed eschatological

⁶⁷ Deut 6:4–5; Jer 10:10.

⁶⁸ Gen 1:1; Exod 19:5; Neh 9:6; Ps 24:1–2; 96:5; 103:19; 148:1–5; Isa 37:16; 40:28; 44:24; 54:5; Jer 10:11.

⁶⁹ Exod 8:10; 15:11; Deut 3:24; 33:26; 1 Sam 2:2; 1 Kgs 8:23; 22:19; 2 Chr 6:14; Ps 29:1; 71:19; 95:3; 97:9; 113:5; Isa 40:18; 46:5, 9; Jer 10:6–7, 16; Dan 4:35.

⁷⁰ Exod 20:3; Deut 5:7.

⁷¹ Ps 86:10; Isa 37:20.

⁷² Exod 8:10; 15:11; Deut 3:24; 33:26; Jer 10:16; 1 Sam 2:2; 1 Kgs 8:23.

⁷³ Deut 4:35, 39; 32:39; 1 Sam 2:2; 1 Kgs 18:39; 86:10; Isa 37:16, 20; 43:10; 44:6, 8; 45:5, 14, 18, 21–22; 46:9; Joel 2:27.

⁷⁴ 1 Chr 16:26; Ps 31:7; 96:5; 115:2–8; 135:5, 15–18; Isa 2:6–21; 37:19; 41:22–24; 42:8, 17; 44:6–20; 45:14–25; Jer 2:11, 28.

⁷⁵ Jer 2:11; 16:20; cf. Deut 32:17.

⁷⁶ See esp. Richard J. Bauckham, “The Throne of God and the Worship of Jesus,” in *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 152–81. Cf. Michael S. Heiser, “Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry, or Henotheism? Toward an Assessment of Divine Plurality in the Hebrew Bible,” *BBR* 18:1 (2008): 1–30, here 4–13; idem, “Monotheism and the Language of Divine Plurality in the Hebrew Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *TynB* 65:1 (2014): 85–100. *Contra* Fredriksen, “How High?,” 295–303.

⁷⁷ Rom 3:30; 16:27; 1 Cor 8:4–6; Eph 4:6; 1 Thess 1:9; 1 Tim 1:17; 2:5.

⁷⁸ For this phenomenon in Paul’s letters, see esp. David B. Capes, “Jesus’ Unique Relationship with Yhwh in Biblical Exegesis: A Response to Recent Objections,” in Novenson, *Monotheism and Christology*, 85–98.

⁷⁹ D it^{ar}, d Irenaeus^{lat} read ἀνδρὶ Ἰησοῦ, but most mss lack explicit reference to Jesus, and this is also the *lectio difficilior*.

“day” evokes the biblical “day of the LORD” tradition,⁸⁰ especially those texts in which the “day of the LORD” (יהוה יום / ἡμέρα κυρίου) is associated with final, universal, judgment.⁸¹ More specifically, Paul’s affirmation reflects a series of texts in the Psalms, which declare that God “will judge the world in righteousness” (Ps 9:9; 96:13; 98:9: קִרְיֵי תִּבְרֵיטִשׁ / κρινεῖ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ). Across the Scriptures, righteous judgment is an exclusively divine prerogative,⁸² and the LORD’s judgment on the “day of the LORD” is often associated with the “coming of God” himself.⁸³ This is certainly the case in the psalms Paul evokes, which call on creation to rejoice “before the LORD” (יהוה לפני / πρὸ προσώπου κυρίου), because “he comes to judge the earth” (96:13; 98:9: בָּא לִפְנֵי הָאָרֶץ / ἔρχεται κρίναι τὴν γῆν / ἥκα κριναι τὴν γῆν). Thus, Paul’s declaration is thoroughly Jewish – it repeats the biblical affirmation that God will come to judge.

The striking new emphasis in Paul’s declaration is that *God* will judge the world “by a man whom he has appointed” (17:31: ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὥρισεν).⁸⁴ This affirmation has no direct precedent in Israel’s Scriptures, but is neither without biblical foundation, nor lacking in early Jewish parallels. His affirmation is conceptually similar to Ps 110:1–7 and Dan 7:13–14, both of which present visions of an eschatological human figure – a “Lord” or “son of man” – who participates in, and even embodies, the final coming of God to judge. The parallel to Psalm 110 has not been widely recognized, but Ps 110:1 is prominently associated with Jesus’s resurrection and exaltation in the narrative of Luke-Acts,⁸⁵ and may stand behind Paul’s reference to Jesus being “appointed” (ὀρίζω) as “judge” (Acts 17:31; cf. 10:42; Rom 1:4; 8:34). Certainly, Paul’s declaration parallels the psalm’s eschatological vision: God will “execute judgment” (Acts 17:31; cf. Ps 110:6: דִּין / κρίνω), over “the world” (Acts 17:31: οἰκουμένη; cf. Ps 110:6: גוֹיִם + עַרְצֵי / ἔθνοι + γῆ), on the eschatological “day” (Acts 17:31; cf. Ps 110:3, 5: יום / ἡμέρα), through his chosen human agent (Acts 17:31: ἀνὴρ; cf. Ps 110:1: נָבִיא / κύριος).⁸⁶ Similarly, Paul’s declaration parallels Dan 7:13–14 with its vision of a

⁸⁰ The precise phrase יהוה יום occurs sixteen times in fourteen texts: Isa 13:6, 9; Ezek 13:5; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18 [x2], 20; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7, 14 [x2]; Mal 4:5. The motif of a “day” of the LORD’s powerful action appears in a range of other closely related descriptions: Isa 2:12; 3:13; 34:8; 61:2; Jer 46:10; Lam 1:12; 2:22; Ezek 7:19; 30:2–3; Joel 2:2; Mic 7:4; Zeph 1:18; 2:2–3; Zech 14:1, 7; Mal 3:2, 17; 4:1, 3. A number of other phrases are also relevant, including “on that day” and “in those days.” For a brief survey, see Joel D. Barker, “Day of the LORD,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, ed. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 132–43.

⁸¹ E.g. Isa 2:11–12; 61:2; Joel 3:4; 4:14; Mal 3:23; Zeph 1:7, 14, 17–18; Zech 14.4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21.

⁸² E.g. Gen 18:25; Judg 11:27; 1 Sam 2:10; Ps 67:5; 82:8; 94:2; 96:10; Isa 33:22.

⁸³ E.g. Isa 2:5–22; Joel 4:14–21; Zech 14:1–9.

⁸⁴ The prepositional phrase ἐν ἀνδρὶ is instrumental: “by / through a man.”

⁸⁵ Luke 20:42; 22:69; Acts 2:33–34; 3:20–21; 5:31; 7:55–56.

⁸⁶ The Lord God – אֱלֹהִים (*dōnāy) not אֲדֹנָי (*dōnī) – is the grammatical subject at the beginning of verse 5, and there is no clear grammatical indication that the subject changes at any point before the end of the psalm. See Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 3: A*

human figure – the “one like a son of man” (שֶׁנֶלֶךְ בֶּרֶךְ / ὅς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου) – who embodies the final coming of God.⁸⁷ Daniel’s vision is also prominent in the wider narrative of Luke-Acts, being especially associated with Jesus’s eschatological return.⁸⁸ Although Daniel’s “son of man” is never explicitly said to “judge,” he comes “with the clouds of heaven,” as only God does (Dan 7:13: אֵלֶּיךָ יָבִי / OG: ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ / Θ: μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ),⁸⁹ receives universal “worship,” as only God should (Dan 7:14, 27: פָּלַךְ / OG: λατρεύω / Θ: δουλεύω),⁹⁰ and is entrusted with the universal and everlasting “dominion” that properly belongs to God alone (Dan 7:14: לְךָ / ἐξουσία).⁹¹ He thus comes *as* God, and is co-enthroned *with* “the Ancient of Days,” which suggests that he might play a role in the final judgment. Certainly, several early Jewish texts – especially 1 En. 37–71 and 4 Ezra 13 – develop Daniel’s vision in this direction, and depict a human figure executing the final judgment on earth.⁹² Still, Paul’s declaration in the Areopagus speech is unprecedented in one important respect: it affirms that the identity of this “man appointed by God” has been revealed ahead of time; the once-crucified Jesus will be the judge on the final day.⁹³

Paul appeals to Jesus’s resurrection as the “proof” that God has appointed him as judge: God “has given assurance to all (πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν) by raising him from the dead (ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν)” (17:31). Paul does not here

Commentary on Psalms 101–150, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 143–44. Note, similarly, Ps 2:7–12, which lacks explicit reference to “judgment.”

⁸⁷ The allusion to Dan 7:13–14 is recognized, but not developed, by: Bruce, *Acts*, 341; Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 570; David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 503. For Dan 7 as a vision of the “coming of God,” see esp. George R. Beasley-Murray, “The Interpretation of Daniel 7,” *CBQ* 45:1 (1983): 44–58.

⁸⁸ Luke 9:26; 12:40; 17:24, 30; 18:8; 21:27, 36; 22:28–30; Acts 1:9–11.

⁸⁹ E.g. Exod 19:9; 33:9; 34:5; Num 11:25; 12:5; 2 Sam 22:10; Ps 18:10; Isa 30:30; Ezek 1:4; Nah 1:3. Cf. Markus Zehnder, “Why the Danielic ‘Son of Man’ is a Divine Being,” *BBR* 24:3 (2014): 331–47, here 337–40. The Old Greek Translation makes this coming *as* God explicit (Dan 7:13 OG: ὡς παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν). See Benjamin E. Reynolds, “The ‘One Like a Son of Man’ According to the Old Greek of Daniel 7.13–14,” *Bib* 89 (2008): 70–80.

⁹⁰ Dan 3:12, 14, 17, 18, 28; 6:17, 21; 7:14, 27. Cf. Zehnder, “Divine Being,” 340.

⁹¹ Dan 2:44; 3:33; 4:31; 6:26. Cf. Zehnder, “Divine Being,” 340–1.

⁹² 1 En. 45:2–5; 46:4–5; 51:3; 55:4; 61:8; 62:2–12; 69:27 B and C, 29; 4 Ezra 13:1–13; cf. 12:32–34; 13:37–38. Note also Testament of Abraham A 13:2–3, which depicts “the Son of Adam, the first formed,” that is “Abel,” “seated on the throne [...] to judge the entire creation.” Indeed, Acts 17 and the Testament of Abraham also both affirm: (1.) the organic unity of the human race descended from Adam (T. Abr. A 13:5; Acts 17:26), and; (2.) the fittingness of judgment by a “son” of Adam (T. Abr. A 13:5; Acts 17:31). The parallel is, however, only partial, since the judgment executed by Abel is not the final judgment, which remains the prerogative of God alone (T. Abr. A 13:5–14). Cf. E. P. Sanders, “Testament of Abraham,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume 1 – Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 878.

⁹³ This teaching is anticipated by Jesus in the Gospels (esp. Matt 13:41; 16:27; 19:28; 25:31–46; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; 22:28–30; John 5:22, 27), and by Peter earlier in Acts (10:42).

elaborate on how the resurrection provides this assurance that Jesus will judge, but statements elsewhere in Acts supply a two-fold logic. First, Jesus's resurrection indicates that God has "set the day" (ἔστησεν ἡμέραν) for the judgment (17:31): since Jesus was "the first to rise from the dead" (26:23: πρῶτος ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν; cf. 4:2), his resurrection has inaugurated the general resurrection;⁹⁴ since that general resurrection will involve "both the just and the unjust" (24:15: δίκαιων τε καὶ ἀδίκων; cf. Dan 12:2), it will be a resurrection to judgment.⁹⁵ Second, Jesus's resurrection indicates that Jesus himself has been "appointed" (ὥρισεν) as judge of the final day (17:31): since Jesus's resurrection and ascension constitute his enthronement at God's "right hand" as "Lord and Christ" (2:32–36), "Leader and Saviour" (5:31), and "Son of Man" (7:55–56),⁹⁶ they also indicate his "appointment" (ὀρίζω) as judge (Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom 1:4).⁹⁷ This twofold understanding finds clear parallels in Paul's letters, where Jesus's resurrection and ascension provide the ground for his "appointment" (ὀρίζω) as "Son of God in power" (Rom 1:4), at the "right hand of God" (Rom 8:34; cf. 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1), which supports the conclusion that God will judge people's secrets "through Christ Jesus (διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ)" (Rom 2:16). Accordingly Paul, in his letters, regularly speaks of the fixed eschatological "day" (ἡμέρα) of judgment, and interprets this in Christo-centric terms as "the day of Christ Jesus."⁹⁸ The remarkable Christological conclusion – for Paul in Acts no less than Paul in his letters – is that *Jesus* will embody the final coming of God to execute the judgment; every knee will bow before *his* throne; every person will receive just recompense from *his* hand (17:31; cf. Rom 14:10–12; Phil 2:10–11; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:1).

Paul's Areopagus speech thus confirms and extends the Christology in the earlier synagogue address. In this Gentile context, Paul draws on the fundamental biblical distinction between God and creation, and characterizes Jesus as the eschatological "Lord-son of man," who will embody the final coming of God, and execute God's judgment on the final day.

⁹⁴ Cf. Rom 1:4; 8:11, 29; 1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14; 15:20–23; Col 1:18; 1 Thess 4:14–16.

⁹⁵ For resurrection associated with final judgment, see: John 5:28–29; Acts 10:42; 1 Thess 1:10; Heb 6:2.

⁹⁶ The Son of Man "standing" (contrast Luke 22:69 "sitting") likely indicates his forensic function: he stands as Stephen's advocate, ready to judge. For surveys of the major interpretations, with arguments for this view, see: Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology*, JSNTSup 12 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 222–4; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1440–3.

⁹⁷ Cf. I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 307; Peter J. Scaer, "Resurrection as Justification in the Book of Acts," *CTQ* 70:3–4 (2006): 219–31, here 224.

⁹⁸ Rom 2:5, 16; 13:12; 1 Cor 1:8; 3:13; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16; 1 Thess 5:2, 4, 5, 8; 2 Thess 1:10; 2:2; 2 Tim 1:12, 18; 4:8.

4. The Lord of His Church: The Christology of Paul's Ephesian Exhortation (Acts 20:17–35)

Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders gathered at Miletus (20:17–35) further draws on the language and categories of Israel's Scriptures – reworked in light of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection – to present Jesus as the “Lord” of his church (20:19, 21, 24, 35: κύριος).

As we have seen (above § 2), within the narrative of Luke-Acts, Paul's repeated designation of Jesus as κύριος already implies that he mediates and embodies God's lordship in the world. Three further features of Paul's characterization of Jesus in this speech confirm this identity. First, Paul co-ordinates “repentance towards God” (τὴν εἰς θεὸν μετάνοιαν) with “faith in our Lord Jesus” (πίστιν εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν) in a manner that closely aligns Jesus with God (20:21). While the Scriptures commonly call for repentance towards God,⁹⁹ and God (θεός) is also the one towards whom people repent throughout Luke-Acts,¹⁰⁰ several texts call for repentance towards the “Lord” (κύριος), in terms which probably include reference to the Lord Jesus (8:22; 9:35; 11:21).¹⁰¹ Similarly, while the Scriptures typically call for faith in the LORD God, or in his servants, or his words,¹⁰² in Luke-Acts, the general call for faith in God or his word,¹⁰³ is sharply focussed on faith in the Lord *Jesus* and *his* word, or the gospel concerning *him*.¹⁰⁴ In this context, Paul presents “repentance towards God” and “faith in our Lord Jesus” as distinct but inseparable responses to God-in-Christ, and so implies that God and Christ are themselves distinct but inseparable (20:21).

Second, Paul's charge to the Ephesian elders – to “care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood” (20:28: ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἣν περιεποιήσατο διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου) – most likely characterizes Jesus *as* God.¹⁰⁵ It is possible that the crucial phrase – διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου – does not mean “with his own blood” [= God's blood], but “with the blood of his

⁹⁹ “Turn” or “return” to God (שוב / ἐπιστρέφω): Deut 4:30; 30:2; 1 Kgs 8:33, 48; 2 Kgs 23:25; 2 Chr 6:24; 30:9; Neh 1:9; Job 22:23; Prov 1:23 [LXX alters the sense]; Isa 6:10; 9:13 [LXX: ἀποστρέφω]; 44:22; 55:7; Jer 3:7 [LXX: ἀναστρέφω], 12, 14, 22; 18:8; 24:7; Lam 3:40; 5:21; Hos 14:1; Joel 2:12–13; Amos 4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11; Zech 1:3. Cf. 2 Cor 3:16; 1 Thess 1:9; 1 Pet 2:25.

¹⁰⁰ Acts 14:15; 15:19; 26:18, 20; 28:27. In several other texts, God is the implied object of “turning back” (ἐπιστρέφω) or “repenting” (μετάνοια / μετανοέω): Luke 3:3, 8; 5:32; 10:13; 11:32; 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 16:30; 24:47; 22:32; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4.

¹⁰¹ Certainly, Peter explicitly declares that it is the risen and exalted Lord Jesus who performs the divine function of “giv[ing] repentance to Israel” (5:31; cf. Luke 24:47). For repentance as a divine gift, see: Deut 30:6; 1 Kgs 18:37–39; 2 Chr 30:12 [with 30:9]; Ps 23:3; Lam 5:21.

¹⁰² E.g. Gen 15:6; Exod 4:31; 14:31; Ps 106:12; 119:66; Jon 3:5.

¹⁰³ Luke 1:20, 45; 24:25; Acts 16:34; 24:14; 26:27; 27:25; cf. Luke 16:31; 17:5–6.

¹⁰⁴ Luke 5:20; 7:9, 50; 8:12–13, 25, 48, 50; 17:19; 18:8, 42; 22:67; Acts 2:44; 3:16; 4:4; 5:14; 8:12; 9:42; 10:43; 11:17, 21; 13:39, 48; 14:23; 15:7, 11; 16:31; 18:8; 19:4; 22:19; 24:24; 26:18; cf. Luke 16:31.

¹⁰⁵ The mss are divided between those which read “the church of God” (τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ), and those which read “the church of the Lord” (τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ κυρίου). Although it

own" [= God's Son, Jesus].¹⁰⁶ This reading takes ὁ ἰδιος as a kind of Christological title. Its strengths are that (1.) it avoids the unusual notion that God has blood; (2.) it is supported by the common use of ὁ ἰδιος in the papyri as "a term of endearment referring to near relatives,"¹⁰⁷ and (3.) it finds a partial parallel in Paul's reference to Jesus as "his [God's] own son" (Rom 8:32: τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ; cf. Diogn. 9:2: τὸν ἰδιον υἱὸν). The more natural reading of the Greek, however, is that Paul identifies Jesus as *God* (ὁ θεός), affirming that *God* obtained the church with "*his own blood*" (cf. Heb 9:12).¹⁰⁸ Although Acts does not elsewhere explicitly apply the noun θεός to Jesus, the narrative – as we have noted – includes Jesus within the identity of the LORD God of Israel,¹⁰⁹ and the designation of Jesus as "God" (θεός) certainly finds parallels in Paul's letters (Rom 9:5; Tit 2:13–14).¹¹⁰ Further, while the idea of God's "blood" is foreign to Israel's Scriptures and early Judaism,¹¹¹ and also unusual in early Christian literature, Ignatius and Tertullian do refer to "God's blood" in reference God's redemptive work in Christ (Ign. *Eph.* 1:1: ἐν αἵματι θεοῦ; Tertullian, *Ux.* 2.3.1: *sanguine dei*). Christian theology can account for the striking phrase by reading it as shorthand for how "God," in the person of his Son, through his human nature, shed "his own blood."¹¹² Thus, while it is possible that Paul refers here to Jesus as God's "own [Son]," he more probably speaks of Jesus as *God*.

Third, Paul's affirmation that God "obtained" (περιεποιήσατο) "the church" for himself further confirms this reading (20:28).¹¹³ The affirmation probably

is difficult to be certain, the former reading is more likely. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 425–7.

¹⁰⁶ Bruce, *Acts*, 416, n. 59; Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 139–41; Steve Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle: The Portrait of Paul in the Miletus Speech and 1 Thessalonians*, SNTSMS 108 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 91, 94–9; Larry W. Hurtado, "Christology in Acts: Jesus in Early Christian Belief and Practice," in *Issues in Luke-Acts: Selected Essays*, ed. Sean A. Adams and Michael W. Pahl, Gorgias Handbooks 26 (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2013), 22 n. 17.

¹⁰⁷ Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 426 citing James H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek. Vol. 1, Prolegomena*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908), 90; idem and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), s.v.

¹⁰⁸ So: Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 680; Keener, *Acts*, 3:3039. Note that, unlike Rom 8:32, Acts 20:28 lacks reference to God's "son" (υἱός).

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Peter's similarly paradoxical statement, "you killed the Author of Life" (Acts 3:15).

¹¹⁰ See esp. Harris, *Jesus as God*, 143–72 [on Rom 9:5]; 173–85 [on Tit 2:13–14]. Cf. George Carraway, *Christ is God Over All: Romans 9:5 in the Context of Romans 9–11*, LNTS 489 (London: Bloomsbury, 2013). Possibly also: 2 Thess 1:12.

¹¹¹ E.g. Exod 20:4; 33:20; Deut 4:12, 15–16; 1 Kgs 8:27; Jer 23:23–24; Ezek 1:28; Mal 3:6.

¹¹² See *Westminster Confession of Faith* §8.7 citing Acts 20:28. Cf. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Vol. 3 – Sin and Salvation in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), §371 (p. 308).

¹¹³ The phrase ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ is unique to Paul in the New Testament (1 Cor 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:13. Cf. pl.: 1 Cor 11:16; 1 Thess 2:14; 2 Thess 1:4). It evokes

alludes to the LORD's declaration, through Isaiah, that he is doing "a new thing" in bringing about a "new Exodus," "obtaining" a people for himself (Isa 43:21 LXX: λαόν μου, ὃν περιποιησάμην; cf. Ps 74:2).¹¹⁴ In the narrative of Luke-Acts, this new Exodus theme is especially connected with Jesus's reference to "the new covenant *in my blood*" (Luke 22:20: ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου; cf. Exod 24:8; Jer 31:31; 32:40; Zech 9:11).¹¹⁵ In this context, Paul's affirmation that *God* has "obtained" a people for himself, with "his own blood" – that is, the blood of *Jesus* – again serves to identify Jesus as God.

Paul's Christology in the Miletus speech thus again has deep roots in Israel's Scriptures and is, in that sense, thoroughly Jewish. At the same time, Paul develops these biblical themes in striking ways, declaring that Jesus himself is "Lord" and the proper object of "faith," that Jesus's blood is – in some sense – God's "own blood," and that by this blood God has obtained a people for himself in a remarkable "new Exodus."

5. The Presence of God: The Christology of Paul's Defence Speeches (Acts 22:1–21; 24:10–21; 26:2–29)

Paul's three defence speeches in the latter part of Acts – before the crowds in Jerusalem (22:1–21), before Felix (24:10–21), and before Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice (26:2–29) – exhibit common Christological emphases, and may be examined together. According to Paul in these speeches, Jesus is both "the Righteous One," whose resurrection effects the resurrection of all, and the highly exalted one, whose appearances to Paul embody the presence of the LORD God himself.

5.1 *The Resurrected Righteous One*

Paul first draws on biblical language to characterize Jesus as "the Righteous One" (22:14: τὸν δίκαιον).¹¹⁶ This designation finds broad antecedent in the fre-

the biblical characterization of Israel, from the Exodus and Sinai onwards, as "the assembly of the LORD" (Deut 23:3–4, 9; 1 Chr 28:8; Mic 2:5 LXX: ἐκκλησία κυρίου) or "the assembly of God" (Neh 13:1 LXX: ἐκκλησία θεοῦ; cf. Judg 20:2).

¹¹⁴ The verb περιποιέω, in combination with "blood" (αἷμα), carries the sense of redemption by sacrifice (cf. Rom 3:24–25; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14, 20; 1 Pet 1:2, 18–19). The cognate noun περιποίησις is used in Exodus / new Exodus contexts, reflecting the understanding of God's people as his "treasured possession." See: Mal 3:17 LXX; Eph 1:14; 1 Pet 2:9. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 3:3038.

¹¹⁵ The echoes of the Exodus are further underlined by Paul's reference to "the inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32: τὴν κληρονομίαν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πασιν; cf. 26:18 with Deut 33:3–4; Wis 5:5).

¹¹⁶ "Righteous One" is used as title or descriptor for pagan rulers, but Acts uses it only in Jerusalem speeches (3:14; 7:52; 22:14). Ananias's references to "brother Saul" (Σαοὺλ ἀδελφέ),

quent references to “the righteous” in the psalms (קִי־צָ; often δίκαιος or ὁ δίκαιος),¹¹⁷ and especially in the prophets’ application of the adjective קִי־צָ / δίκαιος (“righteous”) and the noun קִי־צָ / δίκαιοσύνη (“righteousness”) to promised eschatological figures.¹¹⁸ “The Righteous One” appears as something of a title for such a figure in both Isa 53:11 (קִי־צָ / δίκαιον),¹¹⁹ and Hab 2:4b (קִי־צָ / ὁ δίκαιος).¹²⁰ Among the early Jewish texts, the Parables of Enoch apply the title “the Righteous One” to the highly exalted eschatological figure also identified as “the Son of Man,” “the Elect One,” and “the Messiah.”¹²¹ Other early Jewish texts employ the designation in similar ways.¹²² Among the early Christian texts, Jesus’s identity as “the Righteous One” is especially prominent in Luke-Acts (Acts 3:14: τὸν ἅγιον καὶ δίκαιον; 7:52: τοῦ δικαίου; cf. Luke 23:47: δίκαιος),¹²³ and in Paul’s letters (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11: ὁ δίκαιος; cf. Hab 2:4b),¹²⁴ but also appears elsewhere (1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 2:1; Justin, *Dial.* 16.4; possibly Heb 10:38; Jas

and “the God of our fathers (Ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν) confirm this Jewish context (Acts 22:14). Cf. Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 126–7; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1091.

¹¹⁷ Ps 5:13; 7:10; 11:3, 5; 14:5; 31:18; 34:20, 22; 37:12, 16, 21, 25, 30, 32; 55:23; 58:11–12; 64:11; 72:7; 75:11; 92:13; 94:21; 97:11; 112:6. Cf. similar use in Wis 2:12–20; 4:10–20.

¹¹⁸ Isa 11:4–5; 53:11; Jer 23:5–6; 33:15–16; Hab 2:4b; Zech 9:9.

¹¹⁹ Some omit קִי־צָ on the ground of supposed dittography of the verb קִי־צָ (Anthony Gelston, “Some Notes on Second Isaiah,” *VT* 21 (1971): 517–27), or a judgment that it “overburdens the verse” (Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19A (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 346). Against this, see John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 399 n. 45: “the word is represented in all the versions.”

¹²⁰ The masculine singular קִי־צָ could be generic (NIV: “the righteous person”) or monadic, referring to a particular individual. The LXX translates with the article as ὁ δίκαιος (“the righteous one”) and so provides a “messianic” reading. See: Desta Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One: A Study of Romans 1:17 against the Background of Scripture and Second Temple Jewish Literature*, WUNT 2/235 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 40–53.

¹²¹ 1 En. 38:2–3; 53:6; cf. 46:3; also possibly 91:10; 92:3–4. See esp.: James C. VanderKam, “Righteous One, Messiah, Chosen One, and Son of Man in 1 Enoch 37–71,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) 169–91; George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 113–23.

¹²² Pss. Sol. 17:23–51 esp. 32; 18:7–8; 4Q161 frg. 8 X, 16; 4Q252 V, 3. Note, also, the common description of Enoch and Noah as “righteous”: T. Lev. 10:5; T. Jud. 18:1; 24:5–6; T. Dan. 5:6; T. Ben. 9:1; 1 En. 1:2; 2 En. 1a:1 rec. A; 4 Bar. 7:8–9.

¹²³ On Acts 7:52, see Gerbern S. Oegema, “‘The Coming of the Righteous One’ in Acts and 1 Enoch,” in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 250–9.

¹²⁴ See esp.: Heliso, *Pistis*, 122–64. Cf. Stephen L. Young, “Romans 1.1–5 and Paul’s Christological Use of Hab. 2.4 in Rom. 1.17: An Underutilized Consideration in the Debate,” *JSN T* 34 (2012): 277–85; Joshua W. Jipp, *Christ is King: Paul’s Royal Ideology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 253–7.

5:6).¹²⁵ In this broad context, Paul's characterization of Jesus as "the Righteous One" (Acts 22:14) identifies him as the promised eschatological deliverer.

More specifically, Paul's designation probably identifies Jesus as "the Righteous One, my Servant" of Isa 53:11 (יְדִיִּם עַבְדִּי), who is vindicated and exalted after his suffering (Isa 52:13; 53:10b, 12a). Earlier in the narrative of Luke-Acts, Peter's declaration of Jesus as "the Righteous One" draws on Isa 53:11, and connects this to Jesus's resurrection (Acts 3:13–15).¹²⁶ Paul's affirmation in Acts 22:14 evokes that earlier text,¹²⁷ and – in the wider context of the defence speeches – has similar connections with Isaiah's "servant" passages (26:18 with Isa 42:7, 16; 61:1 LXX; 26:23 with Isa 42:6 and 49:6), and with "the resurrection" as the common "hope of Israel" (23:6; 24:14–15, 21; 26:6–8, 22–23; cf. 28:20: ἡ ἐλπίς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ). Significantly, in Acts 26:22–23 Paul draws on Isa 42:6 and 49:6 when he declares that "the Christ [...] by being the first to rise from the dead (πρῶτος ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν) [...] would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles" (φῶς μέλλει καταγγέλλειν τῷ τε λαῷ καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν). Since these Isaianic texts present the "servant" as "a covenant for the people, a light for the nations" (Isa 42:6: גִּוִּים יְאֻרֶךְ עַבְדִּי יְרֵאֵהוּ / εἰς διαθήκην γένους, εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν; Isa 49:6: גִּוִּים יְאֻרֶךְ / εἰς διαθήκην γένους εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν), Paul is able to draw on them to affirm a covenant union between "the righteous servant" – Jesus – and those whom he represents such that his resurrection will effect theirs (26:23). Moreover, this recognition of Jesus as "the Righteous One," who will "make many to be accounted righteous" (קִיָּץ / δικαιῶσαι) (Isa 53:11), also provides the basis for Paul's declaration that Jesus's resurrection secures the justification of those who belong to him (cf. Acts 13:38–39; Rom 4:25).¹²⁸

In addition to all of this, Paul's recognition of Jesus as "the Righteous One" may also hint at his divine identity (22:14; cf. 3:14: τὸν ἅγιον καὶ δίκαιον).¹²⁹ Certainly, God is regularly described as "righteous" (קִיָּץ / δίκαιος) in Scripture,¹³⁰

¹²⁵ For Hebrews 10:38, see Heliso, *Pistis*, 61–68. For James 5:6, see Richard N. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*, SBT 17 (London: SCM, 1970), 47.

¹²⁶ See: Morris, *Cross*, 141; David P. Moessner, "The 'Script' of the Scriptures in Acts: Suffering as God's 'Plan' (βουλή) for the World for the 'Release of Sins,'" in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts*, ed. Ben Witherington III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 228; Keener, *Acts*, 2: 1092.

¹²⁷ Note: (1). "the God of our fathers" (ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν) (3:13; 22:14); (2). "the Righteous One" (τὸν δίκαιον) (3:14; 22:14).

¹²⁸ Cf. Scaer, "Resurrection," 219–31; Richard B. Gaffin Jr., "Justification in Luke-Acts," in *Right with God: Justification in the Bible and the World*, ed. Donald A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 106–25. For the similar conception in Romans 4:25, see: idem, *Resurrection*, 99–125; Michael F. Bird, "Justified by Christ's Resurrection: A Neglected Aspect of Paul's Doctrine of Justification," *SBET* 22:1 (2004): 72–91.

¹²⁹ Keener, *Acts*, 2: 1091.

¹³⁰ Note esp. Isa 24:16 which refers to God as "the Righteous One" (צַדִּיק). Cf. Deut 32:4; 2 Chr 12:6; Ezra 9:15; Neh 9:8, 33; Ps 11:7; 116:5; 145:17; Isa 45:21; Lam 1:18; Dan 9:14; Zeph 3:5; Zech 9:9.

and in early Jewish texts,¹³¹ and in the Parables of Enoch, “the Righteous One” appears as a highly exalted, pre-existent figure (1 En. 46:1–2; 48:2–3, 6; 62:7; cf. 39:6–7), who bears the divine name (1 En. 48:2–3),¹³² and – as we noted already – embodies the final coming of God (§2). Thus, while Paul’s use of “the Righteous One” as a title for Jesus primarily evokes the Isaianic servant, in the context of the highly exalted Christology we have sketched so far, a further hint of Jesus’s divine identity cannot be ruled out.

5.2 Christo-theophany

Above and beyond this recognition of Jesus as “the Righteous One,” Paul characterizes his visions of Jesus on the Damascus Road (22:6–11; 26:12–18), and in the Jerusalem temple (22:17–21), as nothing less than visions of God himself. While the accounts have some parallels with Greco-Roman-style epiphanies,¹³³ the most important connections are with the biblical accounts of the great theophany at Sinai (esp. Exod 3–4; 19–24, 33–34; Deut 4–5), and the wider biblical theophany tradition.¹³⁴ Paul establishes this connection through four basic echoes of the Sinai theophany, and eight further allusions to subsequent biblical theophany texts.¹³⁵

¹³¹ E.g. 4 Ezra 10:15–16; 14:32; 2 Bar 44:4; 78:5; cf. Sib. Or. 3.720: δικαιοτάτος; *b. Sanh.* 26b; *y. Hag.* 2:1 §12; *Pesiq. Rab.* 14:6.

¹³² Charles A. Gieschen, “The Name of the Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch,” in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 238–49.

¹³³ See, for example: Jan N. Bremmer, “Close Encounters of the Third Kind: Heliodorus in the Temple and Paul on the Road to Damascus,” in *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible, and the Ancient Near East*, Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 215–33; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia 65 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 631–2.

¹³⁴ For the foundational significance of the Sinai theophany and its influence on subsequent theophanies, see esp. Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East*, SOTBT (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), 181–332. Note esp. the echoes and remembrances of the Sinai theophany at: Judg 5:4–5; Neh 9:13; Ps 18:8–17; 68:8–11, 18; 74:12–17; 77:17–21; 78:12–66; 97:2–6; Isa 4:5; 29:5–6; 30:27–30; 51:9–11; 60:1; 64.2; Ezek 1:4, 13, 27–28; 10:4; Hab 3:3–15; Zeph 1:15–16.

¹³⁵ The theophanic character of Paul’s visions has sometimes been observed, but the foundational significance of Sinai does not appear to have been recognized. For a review of major proposals, see Churchill, *Divine Initiative*, 1–31. Churchill himself does not include Exodus 19–24, 33–34 or Deuteronomy 4–5 in his (necessarily) selective analysis of Old Testament “epiphanies” (42–58). He characterizes the “Damascus Road Encounter” as a “Divine Initiative epiphany” (204–249). For brief observations on the theophanic character of Paul’s visions, see: Fergus Kerr, “Paul’s Experience: Sighting or Theophany?,” *New Blackfriars* 58 (1977): 306–13; Otto Michel, “Das Licht der Messias,” in *Donum Gentilicium: New Testament Studies in Honour of David Daube*, ed. Ernst Bammel, Charles K. Barrett, and W.D. Davies (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 40–50, esp. 44; V.S. Poythress, *Theophany: A Biblical Theology of God’s Appearing* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 56, 392.

First, Paul repeatedly refers to the Lord “appearing” to him (ὀράω: 22:18; 26:13, 16; cf. 9:17), and in this context describes “the glory of that light” (τῆς δόξης τοῦ φωτός ἐκείνου) that blinded him (22:11).¹³⁶ This language evokes the LORD’s “appearance” in “glory” at Sinai, and in the subsequent theophany tradition, which regularly combines the verb רָאָה (LXX: ὀράω) with reference to “the glory of the LORD” (הַגְּדֻלָּהּ / הָאֲדֹנָי / הָאֱלֹהִים) to speak of the LORD’s visible manifestation of his presence on earth.¹³⁷ Crucially, both Exodus and Isaiah declare that the LORD’s “glory” is his unique possession, closely associated with his “name,” such that to “see” the LORD’s “glory” is to come as close as is humanly possible to seeing the LORD himself (Exod 33:18–19, 22; 34:5–7; Isa 42:8; 48:11). The early Jewish texts continue to associate “glory” with the manifestation of God’s presence on earth,¹³⁸ while the Greco-Roman epiphany texts, by contrast, do not use δόξα language in this way.¹³⁹ Earlier in Acts, Stephen speaks of “the God of glory” who “appeared” to Abraham (7:2: Ὁ θεὸς τῆς δόξης ὡφθῆναι), and then sees “the glory of God” and the risen Jesus at God’s “right hand” (7:55: εἶδεν δόξαν θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦν ἐστῶτα ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ). In this context, Paul’s use of the same language characterizes his vision as a theophany. Certainly this pattern of speech finds significant parallels in Paul’s letters, where the apostle regularly speaks of how Jesus “appeared” (ὀράω) to him, and identifies Jesus as the revelation of “the glory of the Lord / God” (ἡ δόξα κυρίου / θεοῦ).¹⁴⁰

Second, Paul describes “a great flashing light from heaven” (22:6: ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ περιαστράψαι φῶς ἰκανόν; 26:13: οὐρανόθεν ὑπὲρ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου περιλάμψαν με φῶς; cf. 9:3) through which the Lord Jesus manifested his

¹³⁶ Modern translations render δόξα with “brightness” (RSV, NRSV, ESV, CSB), “brilliance” (NIV), or “Klarheit” (Lutherbibel 2017). This is correct at the level of denotation, but misses the theophanic connotations. Better is the KJV, which renders δόξα with “glory”.

¹³⁷ רָאָה / ὀράω with הַגְּדֻלָּהּ / הָאֲדֹנָי / הָאֱלֹהִים: Exod 16:7, 10; 33:23; Lev 9:6, 23–24; Num 14:10, 22; 16:19; 17:7; 20:6; 2 Chr 7:3; Ps 63:3; 97:6; 102:17; Isa 35:2; 40:5; 60:2; 66:18–19; Ezek 1:28; 3:23; 8:4; 10:22 LXX; 44:4. Related to this: (1.) מְרָאָה: Exod 24:17 [LXX: τὸ εἶδος]; Ezek 1:28 [LXX: ἡ ὄρασις]; (2.) הָרָאָה: Ps 63:3; Isa 33:17. See, further, Carey C. Newman, *Paul’s Glory Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric*, NovTSupp 69 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 24, 133, 190; “God and Glory and Paul, Again: Divine Identity and Community Formation in the Early Jesus Movement,” in Novenson, *Monotheism and Christology*, 109–110, 112–3.

¹³⁸ E.g. 1 En. 25:3–4; 27:2–4; 102:3; Pss. Sol. 17:31; Tob 3:15–16; T. Abr. A 13:4; T. Levi 8:11; 4 Ezra 7:38–42, 87, 91 (cf. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 223: “In 4 Ezra, going back to biblical usage, ‘glory’ is connected with the appearance of God on earth”); 2 Bar. 21:23, 25. Note, however, that Pss. Sol. 17:31–32 applies Isaiah’s vision of “the glory of the Lord” (Isa 66:18–20) to “the Lord Messiah.” (Cf. William T. Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998), 103).

¹³⁹ Newman, “God and Glory,” 102–9.

¹⁴⁰ For Jesus “appearing” (ὀράω) to Paul: 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8; cf. Gal 1:16 (ἀποκαλύπτω). For Jesus as the revelation of “the glory of God”: 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4, 6; Phil 3:21; Col 3:4; 2 Thess 1:9; 2:14; Tit 2:13; cf. Rom 5:2; 6:4; 8:18–25; 1 Cor 2:7. See *Paul’s Glory Christology*, 157–247, esp. 186; “God and Glory,” 99–138, esp. 124; cf. Sigurd Grindheim, “A Theology of Glory: Paul’s Use of Δόξα Terminology in Romans,” *JBL* 136.2 (2017): 451–65.

presence (cf. 2 Cor 4:6). This further evokes the biblical theophany tradition – again beginning at Sinai – which often associates the LORD’s presence with “lightning” (קֶרֶק / ἄστραπή),¹⁴¹ or with bright “light” described in other terms.¹⁴² Third, Paul’s description of the “voice” (φωνή) which addressed him from heaven (22:7, 9, 14; 26:14: φωνή; cf. 9:4, 7) also evokes the biblical reports of the theophany at Sinai, the only places in Israel’s Scriptures where the LORD God addresses his people with an audible “voice from heaven”.¹⁴³ Some early Jewish texts similarly describe a voice from heaven as the voice of God,¹⁴⁴ and in the New Testament, a “voice from heaven” is almost always either the voice of God,¹⁴⁵ or – in Acts and Revelation – the voice of the risen and exalted Lord Jesus, himself divine.¹⁴⁶ Finally, in this context, Paul’s description of how the “Lord” (κύριος) revealed his name to him (22:8; 26:15: κύριος + Ἐγώ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς; cf. 9:5) evokes the LORD’s progressive revelation of his “name” to Moses at Sinai (Exod 3:14 LXX: Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν; Exod 3:15; 33:19; 34:5 LXX: ὄνομα + κύριος).¹⁴⁷ The collocation of references to the “Lord” (κύριος) and his “appearing” (ὀράω) in “glory” (δόξα) and “light” (φῶς) with an audible “voice” (φωνή) to reveal his “name” (ὄνομα) seems deliberate: Paul characterizes his encounter with the risen Lord Jesus as a further, climactic, revelation of the “name” of the God of Sinai.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴¹ קֶרֶק (LXX: ἄστραπή): Exod 19:16; 2 Sam 22:15; Ps 18:15; 77:19; 97:4; 144:6; Ezek 1:13; Dan 10:6; Hab 3:11 LXX; Zech 9:14 (note LXX strengthens the identification of the LORD with the lightning by omitting the Hebrew text’s reference to “his arrow”: καὶ κύριος [...] ἐξελεύσεται ὡς ἄστραπή βολίς / “the LORD [...] will go forth as a lightning bolt”).

¹⁴² (1.) דִּפְדִּי [LXX: λαμπάς]: Exod 20:18; (2.) אור [LXX: φῶς]: Job 36:30, 32–33; 37:3, 11, 15 (esp. 36:33: “its crashing declares his presence”); (3.) קִרְק: Ezek 1:14; (4.) נגן (LXX: φέγγος): 2 Sam 22:13; Ps 18:13 [LXX: τηλαύγησις]; Isa 4:5 [φῶς]; 60:3 [λαμπρότης]; 60:19 [φωτίζω; compared with the moon]; Ezek 1:4, 13, 27–28; 10:4; Hab 3:4, 11. In the early Jewish literature, compare: Wis 5:21; 2 Bar. 53:8–10. The latter text describes the Messiah’s appearance in these terms.

¹⁴³ Exod 20:22; Deut 4:12, 15, 33, 36; 5:4, 22; Neh. 9:13. Cf. Dan 4:28 where an unidentified “voice from heaven” addresses Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁴⁴ 2 Bar. 22:1–2; T. Lev. 2:6; 18:6–7. The latter references may reflect Christian influence.

¹⁴⁵ Matt 3:17 // Mark 1:11 // Luke 3:22; Matt 17:5 // Mark 9:7 // 9:35; cf. 2 Pet 1:18; John 12:28–30.

¹⁴⁶ Acts 10:13, 15; 11:7, 9; Rev 4:1; 10:4, 8; 11:12; 12:10; 14:13; 18:4. For Revelation, see Brandon D. Smith, “The Identification of Jesus with YHWH in the Book of Revelation: A Brief Sketch,” *CTR* 14 (2016): 67–84.

¹⁴⁷ The self-identification Ἐγώ εἰμι does not necessitate a reference to the divine name (e.g. Luke 1:19; Acts 10:21; 22:3; 26:29), but carries this connotation when associated with the other indications of theophany noted above. Cf. Gen 15:7; 17:1; 26:24; 28:13; 31:13; 35:11; 46:3; Exod 3:6, 14–17; 20:2; Isa 41:4; 43:10, 25; 45:8, 18–19, 22; 46:4, 9; 48:12, 17; 51:12; 52:6. Within Acts, note 7:32; 18:10. In Acts 22, the allusion to God’s revelation of his name at Sinai is further strengthened by Ananias’ reference to “the God of our fathers” (22:14: Ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν; Exod 3:13, 15, 16 LXX: ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν). For the revelation of the divine “name” associated with theophany, see esp. Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence*, AGJU 42 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 30–3. For these associations in Acts 9:5, see: Keener, *Acts*, 2:1638.

¹⁴⁸ See esp. Exod 3:1–15: κύριος + ὀράω + ὄνομα; 24:9–18 LXX: κύριος + ὀράω + δόξα; 33:18–

In addition to these echoes of the Sinai theophany, Paul also alludes to no less than eight other texts from the biblical theophany tradition.¹⁴⁹

1. Ananias's affirmation that "God [...] appointed you [Paul] *to know* (γνῶναι) his will, *to see* (ιδεῖν) the Righteous One and *to hear* (ἀκούσαι) a voice from his mouth" (22:14) echoes Balaam's description of himself as one who "*hears* (ἀκούων) the words of God [...] *knows* (ἐπιστάμενος) the knowledge of the Most High [...] [and] *sees* (ιδὼν) the vision of the Almighty" (Num 24:16 LXX).¹⁵⁰
2. Ananias's injunction to Paul – "wash away your sins, calling on his name [ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ]" (22:16) – evokes the biblical pattern of calling on the name of the LORD, applied to Jesus throughout Acts, and especially recalls Joel's prophecy, cited earlier in Peter's Pentecost speech (2:21), that "everyone who calls on the name of the LORD [הַיְהוָה יִקְרָא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה / ὅς ἂν ἐπικαλέσεται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου] shall be saved" (Joel 3:5; cf. Acts 2:36, 38; 4:12; 9:14).¹⁵¹
3. The Lord Jesus's instruction to Paul – "rise and stand on your feet" (26:16: ἀνάστηθι καὶ στῆθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου) – alludes to the LORD's words to Ezekiel (Ezek 2:1: הִלָּךְ-לְעַד מִנָּךְ / στῆθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου), which immediately follow the prophet's vision of "the glory of the LORD" by the Chebar canal (Ezek 1:1–28).¹⁵²

19 and 34:5–7 LXX: κύριος + δόξα + ὄνομα; Deut 5:24 LXX: κύριος + ὁράω + δόξα + φωνή. This constellation of terms does not occur in the same concentration anywhere else in Israel's Scriptures.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. I. Howard Marshall, "Acts," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Greg K. Beale and Donald A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 597–9 observes allusions (2.)–(8.) but does not draw out the implications for Paul's vision as a theophany.

¹⁵⁰ Keener, *Acts*, 3:3233. In addition to the three verbs highlighted, there are two further interesting parallels between Num 24:16 and the descriptions of Paul's vision in Acts and Paul's letters. (1.) Balaam sees the "vision of the Almighty" (יִרְאֵה הַנֶּחֱמָה / ὄρασιν θεοῦ), and Paul speaks of "the vision from heaven" (Acts 26:19: τῇ οὐρανίῳ ὁπτασίᾳ; cf. 2 Cor 12:1: ὁπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου). (2.) Balaam describes himself as "falling down with eyes uncovered" (עָנָה וְעֵינָיו / ἀποκεκαλυμμένοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ), and Paul has his "eyes" (οἱ ὀφθαλμοί) opened (Acts 9:18), is called "to open ... eyes" (ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμούς ...) (Acts 26:18), and speaks of receiving the gospel "through a revelation / unveiling of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12: δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; cf. Gal 1:16; 2:2; Rom 1:17; 16:25; 1 Cor 2:10; 2 Cor 12:1, 7; Eph 3:3, 5).

¹⁵¹ See above n. 60. Paul's letters make the same connection (esp. Rom 10:13 with Joel 3:5; Phil 2:9–11 with Isa 45:23; cf. 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Tim 2:2). See: Christopher K. Rowe, "Romans 10:13: What is the Name of the Lord?," *HBT* 22 (2000): 135–73; Bauckham, "Paul's Christology of Divine Identity," 195–210; Gieschen, "Ante-Nicene Christology," 128–31; idem, "Characteristic," 74–5.

¹⁵² The allusion to Ezekiel 2:1 is well recognized. See: E.g. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke X–XXIV*, AB 28A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 759; Bruce, *Acts*, 467; Pervo, *Acts*, 632. These commentators, however, do not observe the theophanic context. The allusion is strengthened by Paul's description of how "we all fell to the ground" (26:14: πάντων τε καταπεσόντων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν γῆν; cf. 9:4; 22:7), which is characteristic of Ezekiel's response to

4. Jesus's command – "I am sending you" (26:17: ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε) echoes the LORD's call to the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 1:7: אֶנְשִׁיךָ / ἐξαποστείλω σε),¹⁵³ and perhaps also the LORD's call to Ezekiel (Ezek 2:3–4: אֶהְיֶה לְךָ כְּחַיִּי / ἐξαποστέλλω ἐγὼ σε), and Isaiah (Isa 6:8: נָשָׂא מִנִּי / τίνα ἀποστείλω), both of which follow dramatic theophanic visions (Ezek 1:1–28; Isa 6:1–6).
5. Jesus's promise to Paul – "I will appear to you, delivering you from your own people and from the Gentiles" (26:17: ἐξαιρούμενός σε ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν) – echoes the similar promise to Jeremiah – "I am with you [...] to deliver you" (Jer 1:8, 19: אֶהְיֶה לְךָ / ἐξαιρεῖσθαι σε), and further alludes to the words of Asaph, crying out to the LORD God to "deliver us from the nations" (1 Chr 16:35: יְיָ יִגְדֵּל לָנוּ מִיָּד הָעַמִּים / καὶ ἐξελοῦ ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν).¹⁵⁴ Indeed, Paul's use of the verb ἐξαιρέω here is particularly significant, since the LXX reserves this verb, and the designation "the LORD who delivers," for the LORD God alone.¹⁵⁵
6. Jesus's description of Paul's mission as his "servant" – "to open their eyes" (26:16, 18: ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν) – echoes the LORD's promise, through Isaiah, that *he* [God] will send *his* "servant," to "open" blind "eyes" (Isa 42:6–7: עֵינַי פָּקַח / ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμούς; cf. 61:1 LXX).¹⁵⁶
7. Jesus's further affirmation that he will, through Paul, cause the Gentiles to "turn from darkness to light" (26:18: τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκοτόους εἰς φῶς) reflects the LORD's promise, through Isaiah, describing what *he* [God] will do (Isa 42:16: רֹאשׁ הַחֹשֶׁךְ אֶפְשָׁה מִיָּשָׁר / ποιήσω αὐτοῖς τὸ σκότος εἰς φῶς).¹⁵⁷ Indeed, although biblical and early Jewish texts apply "light" imagery in a range of ways, in the immediate context it is Jesus who appears to Paul in "light" (9:3; 22:6; 26:13: φῶς; cf. 26:23). The parallel between turning people "from darkness to light," and "from the power of Satan to God" thus implies that he [Jesus] stands in the place of God (cf. Col 1:12–14).
8. Jesus's final promise that the Gentiles will "receive [...] a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (26:18: τοῦ λαβεῖν [...] κληρὸν ἐν τοῖς

his theophanic visions (Ezek 1:28; 3:23; 43:3; 44:4), although not unique to him, or theophanies (note esp. Dan 8:17–18; 10:9). Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 4:3512, 3518 recognizes these connections, but does not draw out the Christological implications.

¹⁵³ In Acts 26:17, the allusion to Jeremiah 1:5–8 is established by the combination of "sending" (ἐξαποστέλλω / ἀποστέλλω), "delivering" (ἐξαιρέω), and "the nations" (ἔθνος; pl. forms). Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 4:3517.

¹⁵⁴ 1 Chr 16:35 LXX and Acts 26:17 share the verb ἐξαιρέω and the prepositional phrase ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν.

¹⁵⁵ Churchill, *Divine Initiative*, 170–1, 217, 240. See also: John J. Scullion, "God in the OT," *ABD* 2:1044.

¹⁵⁶ For the allusion, see: Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 760; Keener, *Acts*, 4: 3517. Cf. Acts 13:47, where Paul includes his mission within that of the Isaianic "servant" of Isa 49:6 (cf. 42:6). In Acts 26:18 there may be a further allusion to Isa 35:4–5, where *God's* coming causes the "the eyes of the blind" to be "opened".

¹⁵⁷ For the allusion, see: Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 760.

ἡγιασμένοις πιστεῖ τῇ εἰς ἐμέ) recalls Acts 20:32 and, behind that, Moses's celebration that when "the LORD came from Sinai," and "all his holy ones" (יְהוָה־לְךָ / πάντες οἱ ἡγιασμένοι), they received "a possession" (נַחֲלָה / κληρονομίαν) from the LORD himself (Deut 33:3–4; cf. Wis 5:5).

This rich network of allusions to biblical theophany texts cannot be accidental. In his defence speeches, Paul consistently characterizes his visions of Jesus in terms which evoke the LORD's advent at Sinai, "the Almighty's" encounter with Balaam, "the day of the LORD" prophesied by Joel, "the glory of God" seen by Ezekiel, the LORD's commissioning of the prophets, and the LORD's promise, through Isaiah, of his own return. By drawing on these texts, Paul claims that on the Damascus Road, and in the Jerusalem temple, he experienced not merely an epiphany – an appearance of a heavenly being – or a Christophany – an appearance of the Christ – but a *Christo-theophany* – an appearance of the risen Christ *as God*.¹⁵⁸

This inclusion of an exalted human figure in the appearance of the God of Israel is certainly striking. It is, however, consistent with the trajectory of Christ-centred theophanies in Luke-Acts, which runs from Jesus's transfiguration in "lightening"-like "glory," accompanied by a Sinai-like "cloud" (Luke 9:28–36: ἐξαστράπτω + δόξα + νεφέλη),¹⁵⁹ through to his promised eschatological return "in a cloud with power and great glory" (ἐν νεφέλῃ μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς) (Luke 21:25–27; cf. 9:26; Acts 1:9–11).¹⁶⁰ Moreover, this whole trajectory – including Paul's Christ-centred theophanic vision – is not without precedent in Israel's Scriptures, or parallel in early Judaism. As we have already noted, Dan 7:13–14 presents the "son of man" as an eschatological Adam, who embodies the final coming of God (above §2), and a number of early Jewish texts – especially the Parables of Enoch and Fourth Ezra – develop Daniel's vision by locating a "son of man" figure at the centre of the final divine advent.¹⁶¹ In these texts, the exalted human figure appears not merely as an intermediary,

¹⁵⁸ This conclusion is consistent with the echoes and interpretations of the event in Paul's letters, where the apostle claims to have seen "the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6), and declares that Jesus Christ is "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2:8). See esp.: Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, WUNT 2/4 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981), 5–13; Newman, *Paul's Glory Christology*, 229–40; "God and Glory," 124.

¹⁵⁹ See esp. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 380–9.

¹⁶⁰ Note, especially, the singular "cloud" (Luke 9:34–35: νεφέλη [x3]; 21:27; Acts 1:9), which recalls the singular "cloud" at Sinai (esp. Exod 34:5; Num 11:25 LXX). See further: Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 774–7; Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1348–51; François Bovon, *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28–24:53*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 116–20; Robert H. Stein, "Jesus, the Destruction of Jerusalem, and the Coming of the Son of Man in Luke 21.5–38," *SBJT* 16:3 (2012): 18–27.

¹⁶¹ 1 En. 38:2–4; 45:3–5; 48:5–7; 51:1–4; 52:4–6; 53:1–3, 7; 62:1–16; 63:11; 69:26–29; 4 Ezra 13:1–13.

or angelic figure, but as a manifestation of God himself.¹⁶² Nevertheless, there is still a crucial difference between Paul's preaching and these biblical precedents and Jewish parallels. For while Dan 7 and the early Jewish texts dependent upon it include a human figure at the centre of the final theophany, they never identify that figure with a known individual from recent history, let alone one who was crucified on a Roman cross.

6. Paul's Christology within Early Judaism: Synthesis and Assessment

How "Jewish" is Paul's Christology in Acts? How we answer that question depends, of course, on how we define the adjective "Jewish."¹⁶³ Although much could be said, it is enough for our purposes to summarize the ways in which Paul's presentations of Jesus in Acts lay claim to Israel's God, Scriptures, and traditions, while "reconfiguring" and "re-evaluating" them in light of the resurrection and exaltation of Messiah Jesus, "the hope of Israel" (28:20).¹⁶⁴

As we have noted, the Paul of Acts regularly claims that "the God of Israel," "the God of our fathers," who is "the God who made the world [...] the Lord of heaven and earth," also raised Jesus from the dead (13:17, 32; 17:24; 24:14). The book of Acts regularly presents Paul as appealing to "the Law and the prophets," and reasoning "from the Scriptures," as he proclaims Jesus as the crucified and risen Messiah (13:15; 17:2–3; 28:23). Indeed, Paul explicitly claims that his proclamation of Jesus is both consistent with the Scriptures (24:14; 26:22–23), and in full accord with Jewish beliefs (24:15; 26:6–7) and customs (28:17).¹⁶⁵ Moreover, Paul's warnings to his contemporaries against rejecting his proclamation take the character of critique-from-within, on the basis of the prophets (13:40–41; 28:25–28). He even justifies the most immediately controversial aspect of his message – the Gentile mission – by identifying Jesus as the Isaianic "servant" destined to bring "light [...] to the Gentiles" (26:23 with Isa 42:6; 49:6), and by locating his own ministry within that commission (13:47 with Isa

¹⁶² See George R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 39–42; Michael E. Stone, *Features of the Eschatology of IV Ezra* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 127–8; Gieschen, "Name of the Son of Man," 238–49; Daniel Boyarin, "Enoch, Ezra, and the Jewishness of 'High Christology,'" in *Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch: Reconstruction after the Fall*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini, Matthias Henze, and Jason Zurawski, SJSJ 164 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 337–62; Bühner, *Messianic High Christology*, 79–82, 135–9.

¹⁶³ For the definitional issues, see Cynthia M. Baker, *Jew, Key Words in Jewish Studies 7* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017), 16–46.

¹⁶⁴ Jipp, "Paul of Acts," 73.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Rom 1:2; 3:21; 16:26; 1 Cor 15:3–4; 2 Tim 3:15–16.

49:6).¹⁶⁶ It is Jesus, Paul claims, the risen and exalted Jewish Messiah, who has sent him to the nations (13:47; 22:21; 26:18–19).¹⁶⁷

The content of Paul's proclamation of Jesus is fundamentally consistent with these claims. His gospel is deeply rooted in the Scriptures, and unmistakably Jewish. His speeches are soaked in the Scriptures, and he regularly cites or alludes to Scriptures not only from the Torah,¹⁶⁸ but also from the Prophets,¹⁶⁹ and the Writings.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, Paul's proclamation of Jesus – including his characterization of his message as “the gospel” (13:32; 14:15; 20:24; cf. 14:7, 21; 15:35; 16:10; 17:18), his primary designation of Jesus as “the Christ” (9:22; 17:3; 18:5; 24:24; 26:23; 28:31), and his announcement of the “resurrection from the dead” (17:18, 32; 23:6; 24:15, 21; 26:23) – consistently make use of fundamentally Jewish categories.¹⁷¹ He further announces Jesus as the “seed” of David (13:23), “the Son of God” (9:20; 13:33), the “Saviour” (13:23), “the Righteous One” (22:14), the “man [...] appointed [to] judge” (17:31), and the “Lord” himself (9:28; 16:31; 20:21; 28:31), in each case manifestly drawing on biblical designations.

Paul, however, recognizes that his Jewish contemporaries do not all read the Scriptures the way he does. He charges that “those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers” did not “understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath” (13:27).¹⁷² He divides the Sanhedrin by drawing attention to the Sadducean denial of the resurrection (23:6–10; cf. 26:5–8; Luke 20:27–40).¹⁷³ He affirms that he worships “the God of our fathers,” but acknowledges that he does so “according to the Way, which they call a sect” (ἡν λέγουσιν αἵρεσιν) (24:14). This last statement highlights the central reason that Paul's reading of

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972), 44–64; Jens Schröter, “Salvation for the Gentiles and Israel: On the Relationship between Christology and People of God in Luke,” in *From Jesus to the New Testament: Early Christian Theology and the Origin of the New Testament Canon*, Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), 227–46.

¹⁶⁷ Jipp, “Paul of Acts,” 72.

¹⁶⁸ Acts 13:29 (Deut 21:22–23); 14:15 (Exod 20:11); 17:26 (Deut 32:8); 17:29 (Gen 1:27); 22:14 (Num 24:16); 26:18 (Deut 33:3–4).

¹⁶⁹ Acts 13:23 (2 Sam 7:12; Isa 11:1); 13:34 (Isa 55:3 LXX); 13:41 (Hab 1:5 LXX); 14:17 (Jer 5:24); 17:24 (1 Kgs 8:27); 17:29 (Isa 40:18–20); 17:24, 25 (Isa 42:5); 17:27 (Isa 55:6; Jer 23:23); 17:29 (Isa 44:10–17); 20:28 (Isa 43:21 LXX); 22:14 (Isa 53:11); 22:16 (Joel 3:5); 26:16 (Ezek 2:1); 26:17 (Jer 1:7, 8, 19; Ezek 2:3–4; Isa 6:8); 26:18 (Isa 35:5; 42:7, 16; 61:1 LXX); 26:23 (Isa 42:6; 49:6).

¹⁷⁰ Acts 13:33 (Ps 2:7); 13:35 (Ps 16:10 LXX); 14:17 (Ps 146:6; 147:8); 17:24 (Ps 146:6); 17:25 (Ps 50:12); 17:27 (145:18); 26:17 (1 Chr 16:35).

¹⁷¹ Cf. Paula Fredriksen, “How Jewish is God? Divine Ethnicity in Paul's Theology,” *JBL* 137 (2018): 193–212, here 211–2 makes this point in relation to “the Messiah” and “the resurrection from the dead.”

¹⁷² In this regard, the rejection of Messiah Jesus is also a rejection of Moses and the prophets, who speak of him (cf. Luke 24:44).

¹⁷³ For discussion, see esp. Wright, *Resurrection*, 131–40.

the Scriptures differs from that of many of his contemporaries: he recognizes the crucified and risen Jesus as Israel's Messiah and Lord.

There are, therefore, several aspects of Paul's Christology that are historically novel. Paul proclaims that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer (13:27, 29; 17:3; 26:22; cf. Luke 24:46–47), and that God has now raised him from the dead, in the middle of history, ahead of the rest (13:23, 30–37; 17:31; 26:23). He affirms that Jesus is both the only "Saviour" (13:23), granting "forgiveness of sins" (13:38), and the one who will execute God's final judgment on earth (17:31). He speaks in striking terms of Jesus's blood as God's "own blood" (20:28) and – yet more remarkably – he characterizes Jesus's appearances to him from heaven as theophanies – dramatic appearances of the LORD God himself (22:6–11, 17–21; 26:12–18). None of these affirmations finds a direct antecedent in Israel's Scriptures, or a straightforward parallel in the early Jewish texts. Nevertheless, as we have seen, all of them are deeply rooted in the Scriptures, and plausible within early Judaism. Thus, while many of Paul's Christological affirmations are historically novel, they remain, in that important sense, deeply Jewish. Indeed, the book of Acts has Paul himself assert that in proclaiming Jesus as the Christ, he declares "nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass" (26:22). According to Acts, the historical novelty of Paul's gospel lies not in any departure from Moses or the Prophets, but in his declaration that those Scriptures find their surprising fulfilment in the once-crucified and now-resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁷⁴

7. Conclusion: Paul's Very Jewish, Most High Christology

Paul's Christology in his speeches in Acts is simultaneously deeply rooted in Israel's Scriptures, and historically novel. At the heart of this "novel fulfilment" is Paul's declaration that the once-crucified and now-resurrected Davidic Messiah also embodies the very presence of God. Despite Fredriksen's incredulity that this "most high" Christology was "already articulated and proclaimed in Jerusalem [...] among Jews" in the earliest days of the church, the book of Acts testifies that Paul did exactly that.¹⁷⁵ Paul in Acts *both* affirms the fundamental biblical distinction between the creator God and his creation, *and* speaks of Je-

¹⁷⁴ This is reflected in the significant construction used throughout Acts, which takes the known category of "the Christ" and identifies "the Christ" as "Jesus" (5:42; 9:22; 17:3; 18:5, 28).

¹⁷⁵ Fredriksen, "How High?," 295. Fredriksen refers to "this new movement" in scholarship which claims that "Jesus *is* God" (*italics original*). While it is true that the "Early High Christology Club" (EHCC) is a relatively recent phenomenon, the explicit confession of Jesus *as* God dates to the earliest days of the church. Moreover, the mode of reasoning adopted by EHCC scholars is explicitly anticipated in earlier Christian confession (E.g. Westminster Larger Catechism, Q11 [AD 1647]).

sus in ways that include him within the unique identity of the one true God.¹⁷⁶ If this “most high” Christology anticipates the church’s later confessions at Nicea and Chalcedon, the testimony of Acts suggests that this is only because the church was following its Jewish Lord, and his Jewish apostle to the Gentiles, who recognised Jesus, Israel’s Messiah, *as* God.¹⁷⁷ It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that Paul radically re-interpreted Israel’s Scriptures in the service of his proclamation of Messiah Jesus. For Paul – both in Acts and in his letters – understands Israel’s Scriptures as divinely inspired (28:25; 2 Tim 3:16), and affirms that their meaning cannot be fully grasped apart from his own apostolic gospel, which is nothing less than “the gospel [...] of God” (20:24).¹⁷⁸ Indeed, both in Acts and in his letters, Paul assumes that the Scriptures are “forward-stretching and forward-looking” and already “postulate” the gospel he proclaims (26:22; cf. Rom 1:2; Gal 3:8; 1 Cor 15:3–5).¹⁷⁹ Consistent with these Pauline convictions, Christian theology affirms that the “true and full sense” of the prophetic Scriptures cannot be known in advance of, or in abstraction from, their divinely ordained fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit-inspired interpretation of that fulfilment in the apostolic writings.¹⁸⁰ From this point of view, Paul’s Christology in Acts, while historically novel, is not a re-interpretation of the Scriptures, but a demonstration of their truest and fullest sense.

¹⁷⁶ Paul does not, however, give any indication that Jesus *became* God at any point in time. Such a thought is inimical to the biblical and Jewish understanding of God as the eternal creator (e.g. Gen 1:1; Isa 40:28). Cf. Charles K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994, 1998), 1:152: “he who is God is what he is from and to eternity – otherwise he is not God.”

¹⁷⁷ This does not mean that Paul, in Acts, remains trapped “between the Scylla of Sabellianism and the Charybdis of ditheism” (Fredriksen, “How High?,” 293 n. 1). Paul simultaneously identifies Jesus as God, and as God’s “Son” (9:20; 13:33), and so recognizes a personal distinction *within* the one God.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Rom 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor 11:7; 1 Thess 2:2, 8–9; 1 Tim 1:11: “the gospel of God”.

¹⁷⁹ Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 299.

¹⁸⁰ I allude here to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* §1.9 and the doctrine of *sensus plenior*.