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Jesus in the Genuine Letters of Paul

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2 Corinthians 2:9

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

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Abbreviations

NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
LXX	Septuagint
OT	Old Testament
NT	New Testament
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
EDNT	Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament
Gen	Genesis
Dan	Daniel
Lev	Leviticus
1Sam	1Samuel
Jer	Jeremiah
Rom	Romans
1Cor	1Corinthians
2Cor	2Corinthians
Phil	Philippians
Gal	Galatians
1Thess	1Thesalonians
2Thess	2Thessalonians
V	Verse
Vv	Verses

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Introduction

The life and works of the Apostle Paul continue to intrigue me. Paul, even after his so-called “conversion” or “calling,” remained a faithful Jew. Encountering the risen Lord did not make him abandon and denounce his Jewish faith. He was no renegade Jew. Thus, all his life after the Damascus story, Paul wrestled with the issue on “how to reconcile living as a Jew with living in and among the rest of the non-Jewish world.”¹ While maintaining the particularity of his ethnic² or religious identity, Paul was at the same time not denying the validity of his encounter with the risen Lord. Remaining a Jew, Paul, borrowing the words of Krister Stendahl, was “called rather than converted.”³ He was called by God to fulfill a particular mission, i.e., to bring knowledge of the one God to all the nations of the world.

What further intrigues me as a student of Scriptures is how the Jewish and monotheist Paul understood Jesus. How does he view Jesus vis-à-vis his monotheistic faith? How does he portray Jesus in his letters? This is the main concern of this humble paper. It is undeniable that Jesus is at the heart of Paul’s life and thought. To achieve this goal, the genuine letters of Paul will be examined. I recognize the fact Paul’s letters are *occasional* in nature, i.e., they are written to address particular issues, situations, and

¹ Pamela Eisenbrauns, *Paul was not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009), 3.

³ Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among the Jews* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 7-23.

problems arising from the different communities he founded. “They are not treatises or essays on abstract theological topics.”⁴

The thesis paper is divided into three Chapters. In the first chapter the author will provide a historical background of Paul by showing his multi-ethnic worlds. By looking at Paul’s social and religious historical background, we will be able to explore his place in history and understand the influence of cultures in his writing.

The second chapter proceeds with Paul’s portrayal of Jesus in his genuine letters. Representative passages from Paul’s letters will be examined (e.g. 1 Cor 8:4-6, Phil 2:6-11), Christological titles will likewise be identified (e.g. Son of God, Messiah Last/New Adam).

The third chapter looks at the message of Paul from hermeneutical perspectives. It is concerned with how Christians today can appropriate Paul’s message/teaching about Jesus in their day-to-day contemporary lives. Paul invites us to be an imitator of Christ as he is. As Christians, to believe in Jesus Christ means to follow his ways. Paul teaches us how to live in both personal and communitarian ways as good Christians.

For the sources of this thesis paper, the Bible (NRSV), Biblical commentaries and dictionaries books, e-books, journal articles and some pdf files from the USJ’s and E-brary and from Supervisor’s book collections and some online books also will be consulted.

⁴ Eisenbrauns, *Paul was not a Christian*, 172; See also Calvin J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*, 4th edition (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1998).

Chapter One: The Multi-Ethnic World of Paul

Introduction

The apostle Paul (Παυλος) is a very interesting person because he was a product of a multi-ethnic world. He was a Pharisaic Jew from the tribe of Benjamin who was born in Tarsus (Modern day Syria) sometime during the first decade of the first century at a time when Roman Empire ruled the known world. Having experience different “worlds” make Paul different from ordinary Jews of his time. He would serve as the bridge between the different worlds. He brought the universal message of Christianity out of its Jewish confines to the world of the non-Jews. He was a man open to other cultures and respectful of other people’s ideas and ways of living. He was a man comfortable in both worlds – the world of the Jews and the world of the non-Jews.⁵ Being a product of a multi-ethnic world, he would certainly have repercussions in his message and ministry as an Apostle of Christ.

1. Worlds of Paul

By entering the three worlds of Paul we will discover his social and education and religion background.

⁵ Bernardita Dianzon, FSP, *Glimpse of Paul and His Message* (Pasay City: Paulines, 2007), 14.

A. The Jewish World of Paul

Paul affirmed in his own letters and even in the Acts of the Apostles that he was a Jew through and through. Even when he became a Christian, he remained a Jew. Thus, when opponents questioned his Jewish heritage thinking that he had become a renegade Jew, Paul took pains to assert his true identity. Warning about the influence of some dangerous opponents discrediting him in Philippi, Paul present his own story: Circumcised on the eight day, of the house of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the Church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless (Phil 3:5-6).

In the Letter to the Romans, Paul insists, “I myself am an Israelite, a descendent of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin” (11:1). Against the attack of his opponents in 2 Corinthians, Paul never faltered to defend his Jewishness: “Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelite? So, am I. Are they descendant of Abraham? So am I” (11:22). The Acts of Apostles narrates that in defending himself after being arrested in the Temple, Paul told the tribune, “ I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia a citizen of no mean city” (12:39a). Luke not only portrayed Paul as the Jew but the Tarsian and Roman who showed himself to be comfortable in the company of high and mighty of the first century Greco-Roman world and also the high social status and moral virtue of Paul.⁶

The fact that Paul was a Diaspora Jew made him different from ordinary Jew of his day. He was born in the important city of Tarsus, the capital of the Roman province of

⁶ John Clayton Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2-3.

Cilicia. Tarsus was a large prosperous port, a commercial center with trades coming from all over the known world of that time, a known center of learning that produced a good number of framed scholars and philosophers. It was in such a dynamic environment of trade, commerce, culture, and education that Paul was reared as a child who would soon be a great missionary to the world. This cosmopolitan, pluralistic, and multi-ethnic city of Tarsus became his home. It was in such a milieu in Tarsus that Paul had his first connections with non-Jews.

Indeed, Paul whose Jewish name was Saul in honor of the most famous Benjamite in history, King Saul, came from a wealthy family of Pharisees.⁷ His father was known as a master tentmaker, although nothing was mentioned about his mother. He was said to have one sister. His family became his first informal training background in learning the Torah. His formal education would have started in the synagogue very young at around the age of five.⁸ In Paul's day rabbis were the teachers and exegetes of the sacred writings found in the Torah. It is said that Paul was educated fewer than one of the greatest rabbinical scholars of all time in the Hillel school of thought, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).⁹ His knowledge and proficiency in Hebrews scriptures was undeniable. Trained as

⁷ It was not uncommon practice for Jews living in Diaspora in the first century to have two names. See Marion L. Soards, *The Apostle Paul: An Introduction to His writings and Teaching* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 10. Also John Pollock, and Heyborne Kirby, *The Apostle: A Life of Paul* (San Diego, CA, 2012)18.
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=422027>

⁸ The Jewish *Mishnah*, *Aboth* 5:21 states: “ At five years old one is fit for the Scripture, at ten years for the Mishnah, at thirteen for the fulfilling of the commandments, at fifteen for the Talmud, at eighteen for the bride chamber, at twenty for pursuing a calling, at thirty for authority, at forty for discernment, at fifty for counsel, at sixty for special strength, at ninety for bowed back, and at a hundred a man is as one that has already died and pass away and ceased from the world.”

⁹ Acts 22:3 are not clear whether Paul is saying he was brought up in Tarsus or Jerusalem. Although Acts 23:16 implies the latter.

an orthodox Jew, Paul learned how to debate using the question and answer style known to the ancients as diatribe. As a rabbi he was not only trained as preacher but also a lawyer, ready to prosecute those accused of breaking the sacred law. Paul learned likewise the tent-making trade of his family. As Stanley E. Porter states, “Paul was ethically and religiously a Jew, more than that, he was one who in many ways had advanced within the Jewish culture of the time.”¹⁰ Even after becoming a Christian, Paul remained a Jew. He disclaimed that he was a renegade Jew because “the God that he worshiped as a Jew was the same God that he worshipped as a Christian.”¹¹

B. Hellenistic World of Paul

Although Jew by descent, Paul was raised in Hellenistic society in Tarsus, i.e., Greek thought, influence and customs. The Greco-Roman trade city of Tarsus was multi-ethnic. In a description of Quency E. Wallace,

The general population of Tarsus in Paul’s day was over a quarter of a million people. People came to Tarsus from all over the Roman Empire to live and work in this prosperous city. Tarsus had become a rich city mainly because of trade. Merchants from Tarsus were well known throughout the Roman Empire.¹²

It is said that throughout the Roman world, the people from Tarsus were known for the good quality of their tents. John Pollock had this to say about the popularity of

¹⁰ Stanley E. Porter, *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 2.

¹¹ Dianzon, *Glimpses of Paul and His message*, 27.

¹² Quency E. Wallace, “*The Early life and Background of Paul the Apostles*,” see <http://www.biblicaltheology.com/Research/WallaceQ01.html>, accessed on January 23, 2015.

tents from Tarsian craftsmen: “The black tents of Tarsus were used by caravans, nomads, and armies all over Asia Minor and Syria.”¹³ It is no wonder, and then, that Paul likewise learned the trade of tent making from his forefathers.

Paul, as a Diaspora Jew, experienced from young age how to live harmoniously with Gentiles and heathens. The market places were dominated with pagan temples. Living in a pluralistic city like Tarsus known as the center of Greek learning because of its philosophical and educational traditions, it is impossible not to be influenced by the dominant Hellenistic culture and way of life.¹⁴ Besides, Koinē Greek, Paul was able to speak in Classical Greek, which was in Paul’s day, the language of the educated class. Stanley E. Porter speaks of Paul’s linguistic ability:

Though Jew, he lived much of his life within the larger Greco-Roman world, one influenced in various ways and to various levels by Hellenistic and Roman and practices. We see this influence upon Paul in many ways. His letters are written in Greek (whether written by a scribe or by himself; he “signs” them in Greek, he sites the Greek Bible widely in his letters, and he expands upon the Greco-Roman letter form.¹⁵

Having lived in a society heavily influenced by Hellenism he became familiar with “the language and imagery of pagan moralists while constantly infusing it with fresh content and he is accommodating to another culture.”¹⁶ One obvious proof of the influence of the Hellenistic education in Paul is all genuine letters were all written in

¹³ John Charles Pollock, *The Apostle: A life of Paul* (Wheaton, III: Victor Publishing, 1972), 5; cited by Wallace, “*The Early Life and Background of Paul the Apostle*,” Ibid.

¹⁴ Porter, *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, 2. Also John Pollock, *The Apostle: A life of Paul* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969), 18.

¹⁵ Porter, *Paul: Jew, Greek and Roman*, 2.

¹⁶ N. T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2005), 4.

Greek. Paul's "mastery of the skills of reading, thinking, argumentation, and expression in writings are the hallmarks of Hellenistic education."¹⁷ As he can be gleaned in his letters, Paul borrowed heavily his knowledge from Stoic philosophy and used Stoic terms and metaphors to assist his new Gentile converts in their understanding of the revealed word of God.¹⁸ Again, Soards explains, "Paul's letters show familiarity with both *rabbinic* method for interpretation of scripture and *popular Hellenistic Philosophy* to a degree that makes it likely he had formal education in both areas."¹⁹

C. The Roman World of Paul

Although Paul was a Jew by descent raised in a Hellenistic culture, he was at the same time a Roman citizen. There are occasions in the Acts of Apostles where Paul expressed his Roman citizenship. In Acts 16:37 Paul complained against the magistrates and jailer that "they have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison..." In the presence of Roman Tribune who ordered that Paul be brought into barracks, scourged, the Apostle argued to the centurion, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen, and uncondemned?" (Acts 22:25). Summoned by the tribune, he asked Paul, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" (v.26). And Paul retorted, "Yes, I was born a citizen" (v.27).

¹⁷ Soards, *The Apostle Paul*, 20.

¹⁸ See the article of Wallace, "*The Early life and Background of Paul the Apostle.*"

¹⁹ Soards, *The Apostle Paul*, 10.

How did Paul and his family obtain their citizenship? There are some explanations of why the family of Paul held the title of Citizens of Rome. It was because Pompey or Cicero who probably helped Paul's grandfather to obtain Roman citizenship because of their tent-making trade. Tents were very important for the Roman's military campaigns. It is highly probable that through these close business relationship with the Roman military generals, and the family's contribution to the military that the grandfather of Paul was awarded Roman citizenship. It was an honor rarely conferred upon Jews. Thus, Paul inherited his Roman citizenship from his father who likewise obtained from his father.²⁰

Roman citizenship had many advantages. It conferred upon the citizen local distinction and hereditary privileges, which facilitates the citizen's mobility throughout the empire.²¹ If local authorities arrested a Roman citizen, the latter was automatically entitled to a fair trial. If he felt the outcome was not fair, he could appeal directly to the emperor for judgment.²² Paul's Roman citizenship allowed him to travel anywhere in the Roman Empire to proclaim the good news and granted automatically a claim on the privilege and protection of ruling power.²³ Did Paul lose his Jewish identity while being a Roma citizen? Never! While Paul insisted on his Roman citizenship, he remained

²⁰ See G. Ernest Wright, *Great People of the Bible and How They Live* (Pleasantville, New York: The Reader's Digest Associations, 1974), 404.

²¹ Soards, *The Apostle Paul*, 10.

²² William Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 204.

²³ E.A Judge and James R. Harrison, *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 555.

firmly rooted in his Jewish tradition.²⁴ He did not turn back on his treasured heritage. In fact, Paul relied heavily upon the rabbinic training received concerning the law and the prophets, utilizing this knowledge to convince his Jewish countrymen of the fulfillment of past OT prophecy and covenants in the person and revelation of Jesus Christ.

In sum, we have seen that the unique and rich background of Paul had provided him to be multi-ethnic and multi-cultural person. Being so, Paul had become a bridge between two worlds, the “bridge” through which the good news of Jesus would cross from the world of Jews to the non-Jews.²⁵ As Paul declares, “I had been set apart before I was born, and called through God’s grace”(Gal 1:15). Indeed, the former persecutor of Christians was called by God to become the great apostle to the Gentiles.

2. Paul, a man of the Second Temple Period

The best way to understand Paul’s teachings and writings is to situate him within the context of the Second Temple Period (538 BCE – 70 CE). The Judaism of the Second Temple Period is the key to understanding Paul’s teachings. In Jewish history the first Temple (the Temple built by Solomon) was destroyed in 586 by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The second Temple period started from the time of the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple after return from the Babylon exile (538 BCE) till the time the Temple

²⁴ Wright, *Paul*, 5.

²⁵ Dianzon, *Glimpse of Paul and His Message*, 14.

was destroyed again by the Romans in 70 CE.²⁶ It was known as a period of the birth of both Judaism and Christianity. Both religions came from the same root and believing in the one God.

The religious belief of the people of Israel was shaped by daily life experiences and nation's history. Although freed from the shackles of the Babylonians, they were once again under the Persian rule. After the defeat of the Persians by the Greeks, Israel was once again under a new foreign rule. There was a short period of independence under the Hasmoneans, but it did not stay long because the Romans came in 63 BCE. Again, the Jews had new masters. Thus, the Jews were always under foreign yoke. Their exile had not yet ended.

These historical circumstances gave rise to some key marks that characterize Second Temple Period: (1) The reaffirmation of the Jewish monotheistic faith. This marked the Jews from the other nations. "With the belief on one true god went a rejection of the worship of other gods – in particular, of the worship of idols, which were physical representations of people, animals or plants treated as objects of prayer and religious devotion."²⁷

(2) Fervent longing for the Messiah. The Second Temple Period contained both the belief in a messianic King and an eschatological hope, which is a fertile ground for a

²⁶ David Wenham and Steve Walton, *Exploring the New Testament, Vol.1: The Gospel and Acts* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2001), 25; also Dianzon, *Glimpses of Paul and His Message*, 17.

²⁷ Wenham & Walton, *Exploring the New Testament*, 26.

messianic hope for political redemption.²⁸ The OT prophets in their prophecies anticipated the coming of the Messiah. This awaited Messiah will deliver them up from oppression. The expectation would be like the story of exodus from Egypt, which was so grand and magnificent, and they wished it would happen soon. This made the Jews to have an apocalyptic perspective. They long for God's intervention in time and space to end this evil corrupt generation and inaugurate the reign of God in our midst.

(3) Another characteristic mark was the belief that Israel was the chosen people of the creator God, known as *election*. Israel retells the great stories of God's election every year to celebrate and reinforce this status. N.T. Wright says "this whole Theology of election was stated classically in the Exodus story, and reinforced by regular repetition and multiple subsequent allusions. It is put to the test in the event of exile, but again and again reaffirmed through that tragedy."²⁹ Election was closely bound up with Eschatology: because Israel was the one people of the one creator God, this God would soon vindicate Israel by liberating its people from their enemies.³⁰

4. Salvation brought about by God through his Messiah is not only particularly for the Jews but would include the Gentiles. The nations of the world would abandon idolatry and come to believe in the one God. Jewish tradition of the "pilgrimage of the

²⁸ David Flusser, *Judaism of the Second Temple Period* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2007) 29-30.

²⁹ Wright, *Paul*, 110.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

nations” is the expectation of the time of eschatological deliverance of Israel where Gentiles would come to share in the blessings.³¹

5. The observance of the Torah (Law or Instruction) is strictly emphasized. It is the written document of the covenant of love between God and Israel. They were given the Law to instruct them on how to live a life expected by God, even on difficult circumstances when they were under foreign yoke. Israel is God’s chosen people with the law. As Soards concludes Jewish religion was “Election with the as the nominative response to God’s choice and reward for obedience and *punishment* for disobedience; and atonement through *repentance* and accompanying acts of contrition, bringing *forgiveness*.”³² For the Jews of the Second Temple period the observance of the Law was so important.

Conclusion

Though Paul was influenced by both Greek and Roman culture and way of life, he spent half of his life as a Pharisee. The Pharisees were known to be strict observers of the Jewish oral traditions and the written law. Paul clearly mentions that he was extremely zealous for the traditions of his forefathers (Gal. 1:14). That was the reason he persecuted the Christians of his day because in his mind they were violating and transgressing the Jewish law. Belonging to the Shammai tradition, the more radical wing

³¹Terence L Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 4.

³² Soards, *The Apostle Paul*, 17.

of Pharisaism, Paul felt justified to use violence against the Christians who confessed that Jesus is Lord.³³ Dianzon explains that:

Shammaites were not contented to just await the intervention of God's history. They had to bring it about through zeal for the Law and the traditions of Israel. This "zeal" meant not only personally abiding by everything written in the Torah, but also compelling others to a similar obedience. It meant, moreover, guarding against any infidelity and stamping out even the slightest flicker of apostasy. And thus we read in the Acts of the Apostles the story of Paul, the Pharisee, persecuting the followers of the "New way" obtaining letters of authorization from the high priest to, arrest and bring the apostatizing Jews to Jerusalem (cf. 9:1-2, 22: 4-5; 26:10-12).³⁴

Everything changed in Paul after the Damascus road incident where the risen and glorious Christ appeared to him. Captured by Christ he became his great apostle and great preacher of the Good News (Acts 22:6-10). Remaining to be a Jew, he embraced the newfound Christian faith that he used to persecute. Now he has come to believe that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah, which the Jews had been longing for. He has been called by God "to be the 'bridge' through which the good news would cross from the world of the Jews to the world of the non-Jews."³⁵

³³ Soards, *The Apostle Paul*, 26.

³⁴ Dianzon, *Glimpses of Paul and His Message*, 18.

³⁵ Dianzon, *Glimpses of Paul and His Message*, 14.

Chapter Two: Jesus in the Genuine Letters of Paul

Introduction

In the previous chapter we have identified the multi-ethnic world of Paul. At the same time, we have situated Paul as a man of the Second Temple Period. These two elements are important in understanding Paul's writings and teachings. We have also mentioned in the previous chapter that one of the distinguishing marks that characterize the Second Temple Period is the reaffirmation of the Jewish monotheistic faith.³⁶ The Jews best expressed this fact in their daily prayer called *Shema* found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." James Barr affirms that "[i]n the New Testament the monotheistic convictions of Judaism are taken for granted."³⁷ Paul, like the other NT writers, makes no attempt to prove the existence of God. Paul, faithful to his Jewish heritage, believes in "one (and only one), personal, all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving God, who is the creator and Lord of everyone and everything and yet exists distinct from and beyond the whole universe."³⁸ This one God is never far from the mind of Paul. In fact, the apostle "uses the word God so frequently

³⁶ According to James Barr, "It is not clear how Israel's monotheism originated" ("Monotheism," in *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, gen. ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985): 652. By the sixth century B.C.E., Israel's monotheism clearly entailed rejecting the reality of any other gods (see Isa 41:21-24; 43:10-13; 44:8).

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ See Gerald O'Collins and Edward Farrugia, *A Concise Dictionary of Theology* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 148.

that his use has forty percent of all the NT references.”³⁹ In brief, E. P. Sanders aptly states, “Paul inherited from Judaism two principal theological views: there is one God; God controls the world.”⁴⁰ The question that is of interest for us is: How does Paul portray Jesus in the context of his monotheistic faith that holds that there is only One God? Who, then, is Jesus for Paul? This is the concern of this present chapter.

1. Sources of Paul’s Christology

Pharisaic Paul. Any study about Paul’s teachings and ministry must consider the “major phases of his theological development.”⁴¹ Before becoming the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul was a zealous Jew, an Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin, a “Hebrew of Hebrews” circumcised on the eighth day of his life (2 Cor 11:22; Phil 3:5). Moreover, Paul was a member of the Pharisaic sect, most probably a disciple of the School of Shammai⁴² (Phil 3:5; Acts 23:6; 26:5). Consequently, he was so devoted to upholding “the traditions of the forefathers” (Gal 1:14). Paul’s “primary concern as a Pharisee was Torah and righteousness.”⁴³ As regards Torah, Paul stood blameless (Phil 3:6). His zealotry to the Law brought him further by persecuting the Jewish Christians of

³⁹ D. Guthrie and R. P. Martin, “God,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL/Leicester, England: Inter Varsity Press, 1993): 354-369, here 354.

⁴⁰ E. P. Sanders, *Paul: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 41.

⁴¹ Hans Dieter Betz, “Paul,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992): 186-201, here 193.

⁴² K. Haacker, “War Paulus Hillelit, advanced that Paul was a Shammaite? in *Das Institutum Judaicum der Universität Tübingen in der Jahren 1971-72* (Tübingen, 1972): 106-120.

⁴³ Betz, “Paul,” 193.

Damascus. Paul was an extremist as Pharisee⁴⁴ for he treated Christians with violence for Christians are considered as who did not submit to God's righteousness (Rom 10:2-3) These Jewish Christians from the perspective of Pharisaic Jews are regarded as "apostates" (Gal 1:13; 1 Cor 15:9; Phil 3:6). These apostates are perceived to be discontinuing "the tradition of the forefathers" which Pharisaic Jews like Paul so zealously enforced. In short, the Pharisaic Paul "had focused his theological concerns on the Torah and circumcision, and other ancestral traditions."⁴⁵

Christian Paul. Being a zealous member of the Pharisaic party, he was authorized by Jewish authorities in Jerusalem to persecute Jewish Christians in Damascus. The Book of Acts narrates that while Paul was on the road to Damascus he had a vision of Christ (Acts 9:1-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-18). This Damascus vision brought about the greatest change in Paul's thinking. Scholars, according to J. M. Everts, "have often disagreed about whether this experience of Paul is best understood as a conversion or call to a specific mission as apostle to the Gentiles."⁴⁶ There are valid justifications for both. Whatever it may be, the obvious thing about Paul's encounter with the exalted Jesus was the reversal that happened in his life. In that vision, Christ commissioned him to "preach the gospel to the Gentiles." Paul gladly accepted the call and dedicated himself to the task. "Paul's experience of conversion /call has resulted in a total transformation of his

⁴⁴ Alan F. Segal, "Paul's Jewish presuppositions" in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*. Dunn, James D. G. ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 159-172, esp. 170.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ J. M. Everts, "Conversion and Call of Paul," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL/Leicester, England: Inter Varsity Press, 1993): 156-163, esp. 156. NT references to Paul's conversion / call experience are found in Galatians 1, Philippians 3, Acts 9, Acts 22, and Acts 26.

life.”⁴⁷ His commitment to Pharisaism came to an abrupt end, as he switched “from Pharisaic to Christian Judaism.”⁴⁸ Albeit remaining a devout Jew, his perspectives on Christ Jesus changed. Moreover, “following Jesus did not change Paul’s view of God as much as it changed—radically changed —his understanding of how God operates on behalf of humanity and brings people to receive God’s blessings.”⁴⁹

From being an avid persecutor of Jesus and his believers, Paul became an ardent believer of the exalted Christ. That transforming Damascus experience had set Paul apart for the Gospel of God (Rom 1:1). In Gal 1:11, Paul states, “the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not human origin ...but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.” Paul’s apostleship was not due to “human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead” (Gal 1:1). But to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles “first meant that he joined the missionary enterprises of the Damascus church, from which he must have also received his first instruction in Christian theology.”⁵⁰ Paul did not know Jesus in the flesh.⁵¹ He

⁴⁷ J. M. Everts, “Conversion and Call of Paul,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 158.

⁴⁸ Betz, “Paul,” 194.

⁴⁹ Matthew L Skinner, “What every Christian should know about Paul’s letters.” *Word & World*30, no. 4 (September 2010): 371-379, here, 372. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 15, 2015).

⁵⁰ Ibid. 194.

⁵¹ Hans Joachim Schoeps, Harold Knight, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (Cambridge, England: Casemate Publishers, 2002) 57, According to Schoeps “it should be clear that Paul never saw the historical Jesus and was somewhat of shy of Palestinian traditions of the earthly life of Jesus.” But Paul’s letter show a little trace of earthly life of Jesus: Jesus was born under the Law Gal.4: 4, was of Davidic descent Rom 1:3, was betrayed 1Cor 11:23, and was crucified Gal 3:1, 1Cor 2:2, Phil 2:8 etc. and was buried and rose again 1Cor 15:4, Rom 6:4.

knew the historical Jesus “through the Apostles and the nascent Church Paul certainly must have come to know the details of Jesus' earthly life.”⁵² Did he ever know of the life and teaching of Jesus? Although our knowledge of this old church is limited, it could be surmised that Paul received his first “catechism,” so to say, from the leaders of this church. Paul would later hand on to others what he himself received: “For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn received” (1Cor 15:3). In other words, he became faithful to the Christian tradition that he received.

Paul the Letter-Writer. Paul left us his letters that were all written before the four Gospels. As one scholar has rightly affirmed, Paul’s letters are the “oldest testimonies of Christianity.”⁵³ Traditionally, thirteen letters have been attributed to Paul. Today, it is acknowledged by scholars that Paul did not actually write all of these letters. The prevailing consensus among scholars is that there are only seven letters undisputedly attributed to Paul (Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1Thessalonians, and Philemon). The six other letters are considered Deutero-Pauline letters, that is, they were written long after Paul’s death by his disciples and admirers (2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral letters Titus, 1-2 Timothy). The genuine letters of Paul are all *ad hoc* letters. They were Paul’s particular responses to specific situations and problems of his communities. Thus, the content of the individual letter is tailored to the needs of the Christian community or person to whom Paul is writing. His genuine

⁵² Benedict XVI, *Saint Paul* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 44.

⁵³ J. Becker, *Paul Apostle to the Gentiles* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 8. Cf. H. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982), 1-2. See also Mark Harding, “Disputed and Undisputed Letters of Paul,” in *The Pauline Canon*, Pauline Studies 1, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 129-168, esp. 129.

letters show that Paul was not interested about the early life and public ministry of Jesus; rather he centered on the so-called Christ-event, i.e., the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus and the workings of the Holy Spirit among the believers. As can be gleaned from his letters, the Apostle employs several Christological titles to Jesus: the Last/New Adam, Lord, Son of God and the Messiah. Moreover, the salvific Christ-event and the merits he gained for humanity entails the believer's participation and incorporation in him. Paul best expresses this participation in the phrase "in Christ" (ejn Cristw`/). What do these different honorific titles mean to Paul?

Paul and the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament. The writings of Paul reveal a person immersed in the content and teaching of the Old Testament. After a study of Paul's religious terminology, H. A. A. Kennedy found that practically every leading conception in Paul's thought had its roots in the Old Testament.⁵⁴ By examining how Paul used the Old Testament in his teaching and writing, we can likewise see that he highlighted the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and expectations. But beyond simply showing fulfillment, he selected phrases from many contexts to weave into his teachings and lend support to his ideas. Thus, Paul's Jewish training on the Hebrew Scriptures gave him provision for understanding his newfound faith in Jesus.

To sum, the possible sources of Paul's Christology, we quote from Warren Dicharry and Cardinal Edward Clancy:

⁵⁴ See H.A.A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions* (New York/London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), 154-60.

The source of Paul theology was not Greek Philosophy but a combination of his own experience of Christ, beginning with his own conversion encounter on the Damascus Road, his careful study of Hebrew Scriptures in the light of Christ, especially his quite years in Arabia and Tarsus, his missionary and pastoral experiences, and the ongoing guidance of the Holy Spirit, illuminating him with supernatural wisdom he describes as in 1 Cor 2: 6-16.⁵⁵

After his conversion human sources of information were, of course, much more readily available, and now it was knowledge from within a believing community of which he was a fellow member. Paul must have learned much from his fellow Christians about life and teaching of Jesus during his years in Damascus. He would have learned even more on the occasion of his visit to Peter....⁵⁶

2. The Place of Jesus in Paul's Monotheistic faith

Picking up what has been previously said, Jewish monotheism asserted that the one true God, the God of Israel, was the only God of the world.⁵⁷ Paul as a Jew never abandoned this belief. He was not a renegade Jew. He remained a monotheist. The question is, when Paul became a Christian Jew, what did he think about Jesus? Did he think of him as divine? Let us examine a few passages.

1 Cor 8:4-6. One passage in the Pauline letters that gives us indication of how Paul sees Jesus in relation to the one true God of Israel is found in 1 Cor 8:4-6. The larger context is Paul's discussion of meat sacrificed to idols in 1 Cor 8-11, a problem which most probably the Corinthian community wrote to him for clarification.⁵⁸ Food

⁵⁵ Warren Dicharry, *Paul and John, Human Authors of the New Testament*, Vol.2, 45.

⁵⁶ Cardinal Edward Clancy, *Walk Worthy of Your Vocation: A Spiritual Journey with Saint Paul* (Bandra, Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2005), 17.

⁵⁷ See N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/ Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1997), 63.

⁵⁸ The passage begins with the topical marker *peri de* ("now concerning"), which appears for the first time, in 1 Cor 7:1, "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote."

offered to idols means meat sacrificed to rival gods. Should Corinthian Christian believers buy such meat being sold in the market or eat it when served by pagan neighbors knowing that they were earlier sacrificed to idols in pagan temples? Dianzon nicely puts, “This is not a petty issue since almost all meat sold in the market has first been offered in a pagan temple.”⁵⁹ Some Corinthian believers who think they were spiritually superior affirm that idols do not actually exist (“no idol in the world really exists,” v. 4). “But their behavior has become a stumbling block for those who do not yet share this understanding, defiling their weaker consciences and destroying their faith.”⁶⁰ Paul considers such disregard and pastoral insensitivity to the weaker members in the faith to be a sin not only against them but also against Christ himself. It is in this regard that Paul responded: Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth – as in fact there are many gods and many lords – yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist (1 Cor 8:5-6).

In the passage just cited, Paul denies the existence of idols while reiterating that there is but *one God*, a belief based on the traditional Jewish *Shema*. In an astonishing adaptation of the *Shema*, Paul “introduces into the *Shema* the person of Jesus

⁵⁹ Dianzon, *Glimpses of Paul and His Message*, 37.

⁶⁰ S. J. Hafemann, “Letters to the Corinthians,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL/Leicester, England: Inter Varsity Press, 1993): 164-179, here 166.

Christ. He redefines the very meaning of the words Jews use in their daily prayer to denote the one true God. He takes the word ‘God’ and fills it with new content.”⁶¹

<p>The Shema</p> <p>(Deut 6:4)</p>	<p>Paul’s Redefinition of the Shema(1 Cor 8:6)</p>
<p>The Lord our God</p> <p>The Lord is One</p>	<p>One God – the Father...</p> <p>One Lord – Jesus Christ...</p>

Paul, having quoted “the most central and holy confession of that monotheism” has “placed Jesus firmly in the middle of it.”⁶² Paul has attributed the lordship of the one God to Jesus Christ. Yet his confession of God as one is still affirmed. If *no God but one* is a traditional Jewish concept; *one God... one Lord*, the source of all things, is an early Christian concept. Paul believes that the one and only God are now known in terms, at

⁶¹ Dianzon, *Glimpses of Paul and His Message*, 38; see also Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 67.

⁶² Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 67. According to Wright, “One of the most striking things about Pauline Christology – Paul’s statements about Jesus – is this: at the very moment when he is giving Jesus the highest titles and honors, he is emphasizing that he, Paul, a good Jewish-style monotheist... that when he put Jesus and God in the same bracket he was not intending that Jesus as retaining to add a second god to the pantheon, as in paganism. Nor was he intending Jesus be seen as some how absorbed into the being of the one God, without remainder. He was inviting his readers to see Jesus as retaining his full identity as the man Jesus of Nazareth, but within the inner being of the one God, the God of Jewish monotheism.” (p. 65).

least, of ‘father’ and ‘lord’.⁶³ As Dunn says, “For Paul the risen Christ was quite simply *the* Lord. And he was personally convinced that this lordship would eventually be acknowledged by all.”⁶⁴ What Paul says in 1 Cor 8:5-6 implies his belief in the uniqueness of Christ in consequence of his resurrection. “Jesus is the *one* Lord just as, and indeed just because, God is the *one* God.”⁶⁵ Paul does not see Jesus as another god in addition to Yahweh. In the many occurrences that Paul calls Jesus “Lord” (κύριος), the term actually represents the Hebrew name of God – *Yahweh*.⁶⁶ His use of the term κύριος for Jesus lies in the fact that “(the) Lord” was already a customary way of speaking of God in Jewish circles.⁶⁷ Does Paul’s recognition of Jesus compromise his monotheistic faith? Dianzon nicely explains,

Paul’s reverence for Jesus certainly does not represent any weakening of his devotion to Yahweh – the one God of his ancestors. But he also does not represent Jesus as absorbed into the being of the one God, without an identity of his own. Paul defines Jesus Christ consistently with reference to God, and also defines God with reference to Jesus Christ. He invites his readers to see Jesus as retaining his full identity as the man of Nazareth, but within the inner being of Yahweh, the one true God of Jewish monotheism.⁶⁸

In sum, Paul shows no sense of tension in talking of Christ’s lordship and of God as one in one breath. “The lordship of Christ was not thought of as any usurpation or

⁶³ Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 67.

⁶⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI/ Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1998), 248.

⁶⁵ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 248.

⁶⁶ Dianzon, *Glimpses of Paul*, 38

⁶⁷ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 249.

⁶⁸ Dianzon, *Glimpses of Paul*, 38-39.

replacement of God's authority, but expressive of it. The one Lord attests the one God."⁶⁹

Phil 2:5-11. Another Pauline passage that elegantly sums up Paul's teaching about the person of Jesus Christ and of the nature of God is in Phil. 2:6-11.⁷⁰ Because of the poetic qualities of the Greek text, the passage is generally regarded as a hymn or part of an early church confession about Christ, either composed by Paul himself or cited by him from a pre-Pauline liturgical material.⁷¹ In Ralph Martin's opinion, the so-called "Christ hymn" in Phil 2:5-11 was both pre-Pauline and a product of a Jewish-Christian community because of the linguistic and stylistic evidence. It was composed first in Semitic tongue and later translated into Greek by using the words and expressions, which were drawn directly from the Old Testament.⁷² Anyhow, for G. F. Hawthorne, "whether or not Paul composed this hymn, it undoubtedly was an integral part of the letter and not a later interpolation because by it Paul provides the Philippians with the basis of his ethical appeal."⁷³

⁶⁹ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 253.

⁷⁰ According to N. T. Wright, Phil 2:5-11 is "one of the most notoriously complex passages in all of Paul" (*What Saint Paul Really Said*, 68). Another scholar states that this passage "has been the object of intense and extensive theological debate and reflection across two millennia." It "has pride of place in virtually every treatment of NT Christology." See Manfred T. Brauch, *Abusing Scripture: The Consequences of Misreading the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 111.

⁷¹ See Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 191-94, for a thorough discussion on this matter.

⁷² Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation & in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2009), 27.

⁷³ G. F. Hawthorne, "Letter to the Philippians," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL/Leicester, England: IVP Press, 1993): 707-713, here 712. According to Edwin Freed, "there are in Phil 2:6-11 many words, phrases, and ideas that do not occur elsewhere in Paul, and some, indeed, occur nowhere else in the NT. This could mean, as

The “hymn” is packed with Christology as it talks about Christ’s condescension – from “the form of God” and “equality with God” (Phil 2:6) into “human form” by emptying himself (Phil 2:7) and humbling himself to the point of death on a cross (Phil 2:8).⁷⁴ This is particularly interesting because at an early stage the Christians had already some notion of incarnation before any of the Gospels were written.”⁷⁵ And if Paul is here quoting from liturgical materials already in existence by this time, then the idea is even earlier. In the words of Martin, Phil 2:5-11 “represents a Christological hymn set in rhythmical form and composed as a confession of faith in the Church’s Lord in three ‘states’ of His pre-existence, incarnation, and exaltation.”⁷⁶

<i>First</i> , he was in “the form of God” ⁷⁷ (2:6);	Pre-existence
<i>Second</i> , he was born in human likeness, and he lived and died as a human being (2:7-8);	Incarnation
<i>Third</i> , he was exalted by God to be Lord of all (2:9-11).	Exaltation

many argue, that Paul himself inserted these verses, possibly from a pre-Pauline hymn of Jewish origin.” (*The New Testament: A Critical Introduction*, Third Edition [Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomas Learning, 2001], 302).

⁷⁴ Manfred T. Brauch, *Abusing Scripture: The Consequences of Misreading the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 111-112.

⁷⁵ Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 349.

⁷⁶ Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ*: 42.

⁷⁷ Verse 6 refers to a time before the incarnation when Christ had form (μορφή) and status equal to God’s (see John 1:1-18; Col 1:15-20). Of course, the passage does not explain on the meaning of the ambiguous word “form”.

The hymn contains one of the earliest references in Christian literature about the concept of *pre-existence* – that is, “the idea that Christ existed (in the form of God) before he became the man Jesus who lived and died on earth.”⁷⁸ “In the form of God” means Jesus was equal with God.⁷⁹ The concept of incarnation would naturally raise questions about the nature of Christ and of God: “How can there be only one God if Jesus has ‘the form of God’ and ‘equality with God’ (2:6)? Why do Christians worship Jesus and say that he is their Lord (2:10-11)?”⁸⁰ These questions would only be resolved hundreds of years later, finally reaching tentative agreements at the Councils of Nicea in 325 and Chalcedon in 451. Obviously, the main point of Paul in the passage (which is filled with interpretive difficulties) was not to teach the Philippians Christology, but to show that “Christ’s self-emptying and humiliation functions as an example that the believers in Philippi are to emulate in their relations with one another...Confessions about the person and work of Christ are ultimately empty and powerless if not embodied in Christian praxis.”⁸¹

Philippians ought not to do anything out of selfish ambition but rather to place the interests of others ahead of their own. And this self-effacing attitude is called humility (Phil 2:3). The all-time best example of humility is Jesus Christ who did not exploit his prerogatives as one who was equal with God but rather “emptied himself” and “humbled

⁷⁸ Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*, 349.

⁷⁹ Wright, *What Paul Really Said*, 68.

⁸⁰ Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*, 351.

⁸¹ Brauch, *Abusing Scripture*, 112.

himself” by becoming human. This is radically described as assuming the status of a slave, the lowest possible human status. He did not just become human: he became obedient to death. But not just any ordinary way of dying: he became obedient unto death on a humiliating cross (2:6-8). Jesus accepted the death prescribed for slaves: crucifixion. Because of this God highly exalted Christ and given the name *kuvrio~* (“Lord”, 2:9-11).⁸² Humiliation is replaced with exaltation. Why was Jesus exalted and given the name Lord? “Because ...he has done what only the one true God can do.”⁸³ For Paul, God is revealed supremely on the cross. God is fully and personally involved in the death of Jesus Christ.

3. Christological Titles in Paul

One of the major immediate shifts of Paul from being a Pharisaic Jew to Jewish Christian after the Damascus encounter was his recognition and confession of Jesus Christ as “lord” (*κύριος*) “son of God” (*υἱός τοῦ θεοῦ*) [see Gal 1:16; 1 Cor 9:1; Phil 3:8].⁸⁴ Besides these two Christological titles, Paul attributed to Paul other significant title. To these Christological titles we now turn our attention.

⁸² In vv. 10-11 (“so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”), according to Wright, “Paul is quoting a monotheistic text from the Old Testament ...This comes from Isaiah 40-55, where we find the clearest and most sustained scriptural exposition and exaltation of the one true God.” (*What Paul Really Said*, 68).

⁸³ Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 68.

⁸⁴ Betz, “Paul,” 194.

A. Jesus as Lord (κύριος)

As seen in our treatment of 1 Cor 8:5-6 and Phil 2:5-11, the most significant Christological title employed by Paul is calling Jesus “Lord” (κύριος). “The noun appears 189 times in the seven undisputed letters of Paul,” according to J. A. Fitzmyer.⁸⁵ κύριος could refer to a “master, owner, or lord,” a person who has control or mastery over someone or something, with the power to dispose.⁸⁶

Κύριος is used of Yahweh in many passages of the NT. In some of these instances the sense of κύριος may pass from OT Yahweh to NT Jesus of Nazareth. It occurs as a title for him in all books except Titus and 1-3 John. It is normally used of the *risen* Christ. The title κύριος used absolutely “forms the climax to the pre-Pauline Christian hymn to Christ in Phil 2:6-11, where it is ‘the name that is above every name,’ is applied to the exalted Jesus, and gives the reason that he is entitled to the same adoration that Isa 45:23 accords to Yahweh itself.”⁸⁷ The early confession “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor 12:3; Rom 10:9) is a pre-Pauline usage which can be traced in pre-Christian Palestinian Judaism. It is Paul's favorite title to describe Jesus is κύριος, “Lord” (cf. Phil 2: 9-11), which suggests Jesus' divinity. The Lord Jesus, with this title, appears in the full light of the Resurrection.⁸⁸ According to Fitzmayer, “the title implies that the exalted

⁸⁵ J. A. Fitzmayer, Κύριος in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Dictionary*, Vol. 2, Eds. Horst Balz & Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991): 328-331, here 329. Κύριος appears 104 in the Gospel of Luke and 107 in Acts. Mark uses it 18 times, John 53, Matthew 80. See also *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 563.

⁸⁶ Fitzmyer, Κύριος in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Dictionary*, Vol. 2, 329.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 330.

⁸⁸ Benedict XVI, *Saint Paul*, 45.

Jesus is on a par with Yahweh, yet he is not identified with him – he is not 'abbā'!
Κύριος does not immediately mean θεός.”⁸⁹

B. Jesus as the Son of God

For many Christians, the affirmation ‘Jesus is the Son of God’ constitutes the center of Christian faith. The phrase “Son of God” became the title for Christ in classic creeds (God the Son).⁹⁰ At the time of Jesus, the title denotes someone highly favored by God.⁹¹ In Hebrew Scripture, the term “son of God” could be referred to different things: the heavenly hosts (e.g., Gen 6:2-4; Deut 32:8; Job 1:6; 2:1; Pss 29:1; 89:6); kings (2 Sam 7:14; Pss 2:7, 89:26-27); a righteous individual (Wisd of Sol 2:18; 5:5; Sir 4:10; Pss Sol 13:9; 18:4); and Israel collectively as son and first born of God (e.g., Exod 4:22; Deut 14:1; Isa 1:2; Jer. 3:22; Hos 1:10; 11:1; Wisd of Sol 12:21; 16:10, 26:18:4, 13).⁹² The Christological titles “Son” and “Son of God” involve three fundamental conceptions: “1) Jesus’ sonship is established in his relationship to God as father; 2) the position of the Son of God is, in the messianic sense, the appointment to the office of savior; 3) divine sonship is a statement concerning the supernatural divine essence.”⁹³

⁸⁹ Fitzmyer, Κύριος in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 329.

⁹⁰ James D. G. Dunn, “Christology (NT),” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol.1, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992): 979-991, esp. 981.

⁹¹ Dunn, “Christology (NT),” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol.1, 981.

⁹² Ibid and also in L Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans), 2003,103.

⁹³ F. Hahn, “υἱός” in *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (EDNT)*, Vol.3, Eds. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B Eerdmans Publishing, 1993), 381-392, esp. 383.

A check with the *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (EDNT)* shows that “in the seven indisputably authentic Pauline Epistles “ Son of God” occurs only 15 times (7 times in Romans, 2 in 1 Corinthians, 1 in 2 Corinthians, 4 in Galatians, 1 in 1 Thessalonians).”⁹⁴ In Judaism, the phrase “Son of God” refers either to Israel or more specifically to the king but it does not concern with the very being of God himself.⁹⁵ In Paul understanding the phrase “Son of God” still carries the overtones of royal messiahship and of Israel’s identity as YAHWH’s true Son.⁹⁶

Among the letters “Paul’s references to Jesus as God’s Son are concentrated in Romans and Galatians (eleven references), where Paul is in most intense and sustained dialogue with the Jewish tradition.”⁹⁷ Rom 1:3-4 associates divine sonship with the installation into the heavenly office of the Messiah on the basis of his resurrection.⁹⁸ Dunn analyzes that Paul “seems to envisage a divine sonship which embraced the whole Jesus’ life (as Son of David) but a sonship which was also enhanced by the resurrection.”⁹⁹ In Gal 1:16 Paul starts the series with the description of his own vocation, with God revealing “his Son” to him. Paul lives by faith in the Son of God (Gal

⁹⁴ Hahn, “υἱός” *EDNT*, 385.

⁹⁵ N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of...*, 78.

⁹⁶ Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 78.

⁹⁷ L. W. Hurtado, Paul’s Christology in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, James D. G. Dunn, ed., (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 185-198, here 191.

⁹⁸ Hahn, *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (EDNT)*, 385. The gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit [a] of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 1:3-4).

⁹⁹ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 243, also Sanders, *Paul: A very Short Introduction*, 96.

2:20). Gal 4:4f is the sending of the Son of God establishes the acceptance of human being into divine sonship.¹⁰⁰ In Gal: 4:6, Paul identifies the spirit of God in our heart as the one who actually addresses God as ‘Abba.’¹⁰¹ We participate in the sonship of Christ through the spirit in our heart.

What is Jesus’ relation to God? Paul calls Jesus as the Son of God that is “the most explicit and direct way that Paul links Jesus with God.”¹⁰² Calling Jesus as the Son of God denotes the divinity of Jesus. Jesus as the Son of God in all his power is proclaimed after the resurrection from the dead. The death of Jesus is central precisely to be called as the Son of God (as in Rom 5; 10, 8:3, 8:32, Gal2: 20) expresses more clearly than anything else the love of God. This can only be so if Jesus is understood as the very embodiment of the one God.¹⁰³

C. Jesus as Messiah (Χριστός)

In the LXX the word “Messiah” comes from Hebrew (מָשִׁיחַ) and means, “anointed one”. It is translated into Greek as Χριστός and in English “Christ”. It is a title designating an anointed agent sent by God for the benefit or welfare of his people.¹⁰⁴ In

¹⁰⁰ F. Hahn, “υἱός” in *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (EDNT), 385.

¹⁰¹ Vincent P. Branick, *Understanding Paul and His Letters* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2009), 230.

¹⁰² Hurtado, Paul’s Christology in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, 191.

¹⁰³ Wright, *Paul*, 95.

¹⁰⁴ John F. Craghan, *The Dictionary of Theology*, Eds. Joseph A. Komonchak, Marry Collins and Dermot A.Lane, (Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, 1990), 654-655, esp.654.

early Judaism and Christianity, the word “Χριστός” in Greek (used as noun) or Messiah in Hebrews are terms which refer to an anointed person set apart for a special task and, in particular, to a royal and/or messianic figures.¹⁰⁵ It is a title often used for historical kings of Israel (1Sam 16:6; 24:7, 11; 26:160, rarely for a high priest (Lev 4:5,16), and once for a pagan king (Cyrus, Isa 45:1). The title denoted an anointed agent of Yahweh awaited by the people for their deliverance. This expectation of a coming Messiah developed further among the Essenes of Qumran: “until the coming of a prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel” (1QS 9:11, Apocrypha, 67:29, 114-17). The title was applied to Jesus of Nazareth very quickly after his death and resurrection, evoked among his followers undoubtedly by the title that Pilate had affixed to his cross, “King of the Jews” (Mk 14:26).¹⁰⁶

In secular usage the term “Χριστός” simply means an ointment or cosmetic, but apparently it never referred to the one anointed. The Greek word for an anointed person is “*ēleimmenos*”.¹⁰⁷ Paul used “Χριστός” 270 times out of a total of 531 in the NT, which used it as a name for Jesus instead of a title or descriptive term.¹⁰⁸ “Χριστός” functions as a way of speaking of Jesus, as a proper name for Jesus (1Cor 15:3).¹⁰⁹ Since Χριστός

¹⁰⁵ B. Witherington III, Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph p. Martin, Daniel G.Reid, Eds. *Dictionary of Paul and his letters: a Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, Illinois, Intervarsity press, 1993), 95.

¹⁰⁶ Raymond Edward Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmayer, and Roland E. Murphy, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall), 1990. 1394.

¹⁰⁷ B. Witherington III, *Dictionary of Paul and his letters*, 95.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. See also in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary: What is striking about the Pauline use of “Χριστός” is not its frequency (266 times in his uncontested letters, 81 in the Deutero-Paulines; 32 in the Pastorals), but its having practically become Jesus’ second name: “Jesus Christ”. Counting the word Christov~ is different.*

¹⁰⁹ B. Witherington III, *Dictionary of Paul and his letters*, 95.

plays a decisive role in Paul, Ferdinand Hahn assured that “the usual opinion that in his letters it only appears as a proper name is certainly incorrect.”¹¹⁰ Hahn quoted Gunther Bornkamm’s statement that Paul “uses *Christos* — obviously following tradition — almost always in following kerygmatic expressions, where it is a question of the death and resurrection of Christ in their saving significance.”¹¹¹ And also it can be affirmed that “Paul’s writing already presupposes a thorough *interpretatio Christiana*: the ideas derive its content from what Jesus is and their effect, for which reasons “*Christos*” is not a title separable from the person and the work of Jesus.”¹¹²

In the lines of Messianic designation Χριστός become a name, for Χριστός is Jesus.¹¹³ Paul uses Χριστός without article or ὁ Χριστός with articles it mean the same.¹¹⁴ Paul uses the term Χριστός in a daring phrase meant to characterize his preaching (*Christos estaurōmenos*) “Christ crucified”.¹¹⁵ The term Χριστός functions to assert the messianic significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection.¹¹⁶ Paul uses the term in varying combinations with others: “Christ Jesus”, “Jesus Christ”, “Jesus Christ our

¹¹⁰ Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, England: James Clarke & Co., 2002) 186.

¹¹¹ Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*, 186.

¹¹² Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*, 186.

¹¹³ Walter Grundmann, “Χριστός” in the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. IX* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: WM.B Eerdmans, 1988), 527-580, esp., 540.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 541.

¹¹⁵ B. Witherington III, *Dictionary of Paul and his letters*, 95

¹¹⁶ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 101.

Lord”, and “in Christ”, referring to Christian fellowship.¹¹⁷ For Paul, the content of the term Χριστός was mainly derived from the Christ-event and his experience of that event. This led to three elements in his preaching about Christ that were without precedent in early Judaism: that the Messiah is called God, that the Messiah is said to have been crucified and his death is seen as redemptive, and that the Messiah is expected to come to earth again.¹¹⁸

One of the Messianic expectations in the Second Temple period was that “the Messiah will thus bring Israel’s history to its climax, fulfilling the biblical texts regarded in this period as messianic prophecies, and usher in the new world of which prophets and others had spoken.”¹¹⁹ In the first century it is hard to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah because Jesus did not exactly match the image of the long-awaited ‘Messiah.’ Wright says Jesus of Nazareth was not able to rebuild the Temple nor did he lead a successful revolution against the Romans. It was not easy to claim Jesus as the Messiah for two reasons; first, “to announce a movement as messianic was to court trouble, both from the Romans authorities (for whom the Caesar was the only true King) and as we have seen, from the other claimants to the title “King of the Jews” (the Herodian Family). Second, a messianic movement without physically present Messiah posed something of an

¹¹⁷ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 99.

¹¹⁸ Ben Witherington, III, *Paul’s Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 136, also J.D.G Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 43.

¹¹⁹ Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, 43.

anomaly, all the more so when the Messiah in question had died the death of a failed revolutionary leader.¹²⁰

It is undeniable that the post-paschal community gave Jesus the titles of Christ, *Messiah*. Proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah was a scandal to Jews, and incomprehensible to Gentiles. Why then do Christians still claim that? It was, as Wright points out, the resurrection and only the resurrection that launched the messianic claim. The evidence is in Roman 1:4 as a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.¹²¹ *Romans 9-11*: Paul narrated the salvation history of Israel from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through Moses and the Exodus to the prophets and the exile...and then until it reaches the climax of the coming and achievement of the Messiah. Paul surely understands the story of Israel to be reaching its climax with the coming and achievement of Messiah. It is an exposition of how the one God has been faithful, in Jesus Christ, to the promises he made to Abraham: and this expositions must of necessity reach its climax in the historical survey of how these promises have worked out in Jesus Christ.¹²²

The Easter event has plainly related Israel's Messianic expectation to Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth is the promised and expected Messiah.¹²³ This messianic expectations is

¹²⁰ N.T Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 486-487.

¹²¹ N.T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the real Founder of Christianity?*, 35.

¹²² N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1992), 234. eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), EBSCOhost (accessed May 27, 2015).

¹²³ Grundmann, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. IX*, 555.

fulfilled in Romans 9:5 that ‘of their race, according to the flesh, is ó Χριστός.¹²⁴ It is Pauline doxology “God blessed” which does not express a wish that God be blessed forever, but that the Messiah, who is God, is by nature blessed forever.¹²⁵ The universal pattern for doxologies in Hebrew and LXX is ‘Blessed be God’. B. Witherington III concludes that “Paul calls Christ God, thus demonstrating the extent to which Paul’s experience of the risen Lord had caused him to qualify or transform his Jewish monotheism.”¹²⁶ Jesus is entitled to be named the Christ for which Paul sees Israel’s messianic expectations as exactly fulfilled in the person of risen Jesus. Paul describes Jesus Christ as the means by which God fulfills his great promises made long ago (for example, 2 Cor 1:18-20; Gal 3:29).

D. Jesus as the Last Adam/New Adam

Paul relates Christ to David (Rom 1:3) as well as to Adam. Paul sees Christ Jesus as the second or last Adam who is the bringer of salvation and the author of the new humanity (1Cor 15:47).¹²⁷ Jesus as the new Adam/Last Adam is one of the distinct ideas of Paul concerning the significance of Jesus. It is characteristically Pauline as Ralph P. Martin describes “the conception of Christ as the Second Adam was probably introduced

¹²⁴ Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, 43.

¹²⁵ B. Witherington III, *Dictionary of Paul, and His Letters*, 106.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmayer, and Roland E. Murphy, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 1394.

into the Church by Paul himself.”¹²⁸ Paul made a comparison between Paul and Christ. Paul drew his theology from Gen 1-3, that means, Paul uses this OT text in a new way. James D. G. Dunn notes that the word “Adam is widely used throughout Hebrew scripture in the sense of humankind, human beings.”¹²⁹ Stephen Hultgren suggests that the origin of Paul’s doctrine of two Adams is due to two factors; first, the influence of two major historical religion-related backgrounds namely Philo and Gnosticism; the second is Paul’s own religious experience of his encounter with the risen Christ.¹³⁰ The two passages, which explicitly treat Jesus as the new/last Adam are: Rom 5:12-14 and 1Cor 15:22, 45-49.

Romans 5:12-21: This passage shows the universality of disobedience in Adam through whom sin and death came upon the human race, and the new Adam (Christ) who is the one who restored life and grace to humanity.¹³¹ In Romans 1:18-32 Paul sums up the plight of humankind by speaking of “one man” Adam and the action of one man. The consequence of Adams’s decisions and actions become humankind’s. What happened to Adam as a result of his failure in Genesis 3 is what happened to humankind as a whole.¹³² Through Christ, the possibility is open for all of the dead to be risen, just like death

¹²⁸ Ralph P Martin, *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation & in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2009) 58.

¹²⁹ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 82.

¹³⁰ Stephen J Hultgren, "The origin of Paul's doctrine of the two Adams in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 25, no. 3 (March 1, 2003): 343-370, esp.343. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed June 8, 2015).

¹³¹ J. Jeremias, Adavma, ed. Gerhard Kittel, *TDNT Vol.1*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.M.B Eerdmans, 1987), 141-143, here,141.

¹³² James D. G. Dunn, *Adam and Christ in Reading Paul's Letter to the Romans*, ed. Jerry L. Sumney (*Atlanta*: SBL Press, 2012), Ebook Collection (EBSCOhost), EBSCOhost (accessed June 4, 2015).

entered the world through Adam, and it affected all people. And if Christ rose from the dead, then the time will come for all those who have died in Christ to be raised from the dead as well.¹³³ The significance of Christ as the new Adam has changed the situation of all human beings. As Arland J. Hultgren says “The situation of humanity under the wrath of God has been altered in the new *aeon*, which was dawned upon the world through the advent of the ‘one who was to come’ (5:14) and who brings justification and life for humanity.”¹³⁴ Jesus is called “the Second Adam” which signifies the redeemed humanity whereas “the first Adam” signifies the sinful humanity in need of redemption. Paul gives emphasis on Christ as the new Adam who is not only the true Israel but at the same time the renewed humanity.¹³⁵

Paul’s understanding of the universal salvation story draws a dramatic comparison between Adam and Jesus Christ as described in the following:

<i>Adam</i>	<i>New/last Adam</i>
Became a living being	became a life giving spirit
Natural being	Spiritual being
Earthly being	Heavenly being
We bear his earthly image	we bear his heavenly image
Brought sin into the world	Brought salvation into the world by grace

¹³³ Ivan Karadža, *Paul’s Understanding of Death According to 1Corinthians 15*, 171, *Kairos: Evangelical Journal Of Theology* 8, no. 2 (July 2014): 163-174, esp.171, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed May 22, 2015).

¹³⁴ Hultgren Arland J., *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2011), 220.

¹³⁵ Bernardita Dianzon, *Glimpses of Paul and His message*, 70.

was disobedient

was obedient

Brought death into the world

brought resurrected life into the world

All shall die

All shall have life ¹³⁶

Adam represents the prototype of a human being who failed to obey God's law and transgresses against God. Jesus as the new/last Adam represents the prototype of an obedient human being. Those who follow the example of Christ will receive eternal life and those who follow the model of Adam will fail. Adam and Christ are not equal opposites, because, Christ is much more (v.16) in saving than was Adam in being condemned. ¹³⁷ The grace given by God is greater than the sin committed.

1Cor 15:22, 45-49: In this passage the significance of Jesus as the Last Adam is to establish the certainty of the resurrection, ¹³⁸ 'for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ' (1Cor 15:22). 1Cor 15:45-49 demonstrates the certainty of the spiritual resurrection body and at the resurrection of Christians the image of Adam (Physical body) will be transformed into that of Christ (the spiritual body). ¹³⁹ Paul, instead of calling Jesus as the son of man, calls Jesus as the Last Adam (1Cor. 15:45). ¹⁴⁰ It is also to examine Jesus as the human beings. ¹⁴¹ The similarity between the first Adam and the

¹³⁶ Ronald D. Witherup, *101 Questions and Answers* (Mawah, NJ: Paulist, 2008),137.

¹³⁷ James R. Edwards, *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, Walter J Harrelson ed. (Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon, 2003), 2017.

¹³⁸ J. Jeremias, *Adavm*, Gerhard Kittel, ed.*TDNT Vol.1*, 141-143.

¹³⁹ J. Jeremias, *Adavm*, Gerhard Kittel, ed.*TDNT Vol.1*, 141-143.

¹⁴⁰ B. Witherington III, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 110.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* 101.

Last Adam is that they both are “representative heads of race and both had dramatic affect on their physical/spiritual progeny.”¹⁴²

According to Dunn “When Paul uses Adam language explicitly of Christ he is referring primarily to Christ risen and exalted.”¹⁴³ In other words, the title of Jesus as the Second Adam is assumed to the exalted Christ, at the time of the resurrection, to be the one who, only after completing his designated task.¹⁴⁴ As Adam stands for the fallen man, so Christ stands for man risen from the death (1 Cor. 15.21f), and while “Adam denotes life leading to death; Christ denotes life from the dead”.¹⁴⁵ Adam as the recipient of the breath of life which constitutes him a living being, and Christ the giver of life of the age to come, the life of the Spirit - a role which became Christ’s only with resurrection and exaltation.¹⁴⁶ The first man came into existence at creation, the beginning of the old age, so the last Adam came into existence at resurrection, the beginning of the age to come. Dunn explains that Christ’s role as second man, or as last Adam, does not begin either in some pre-existential state, or at incarnation, but at his resurrection. For Paul, the resurrection marks the beginning of the representative humanity of the last Adam.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Ibid, 111.

¹⁴³ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 82. See also James D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2011), 107.

¹⁴⁴ Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 108.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 107-108.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

In vv. 45-49, the new type of resurrected physically that has come to birth with Jesus' resurrection is contrasted with what was said about Adam in Gen 2:7. Adam was from the earth, and earthly whereas the new body which Jesus now possesses is a fresh gift from heaven. The end result is the creation of a new type of people of human beings, once more in the image of God but now, more specifically, in the image of the risen Messiah: as we have been born in the image of earthly human being, we shall bear the image of the heavenly one.¹⁴⁸ It shows how "God's fulfillment of the covenant promises has established creation's renewal"¹⁴⁹ in the person of Jesus and we too participate in creation's renewal.

Conclusion

Paul was able to perceive Jesus as divine based on his knowledge of Jewish Scriptures, his mystical experience at Damascus, and a transformed life through the power of the Spirit. Paul holds a strong monotheistic faith as Jew and yet he is an ardent follower of the new Adam Jesus Christ as a Christian. Without turning back to his monotheistic faith, Hurtado describes Paul's understanding of Christ:

Paul consistently referred to and defined Jesus with reference to the one God of the Bible. For Paul, Jesus is God's Son whom God gave over for the redemption of the elect (e.g. Rom. 8:32) and raised from death to heavenly glory for their salvation (e.g. Rom. 4:24-5; 8:34). God has put all things in subjection to Jesus (1 Cor. 15:27-8), who nevertheless will demonstrate his subordination to God in the eschatological consummation (1 Cor. 15:28). God has given Jesus a uniquely

¹⁴⁸ Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspectives*, 28.

¹⁴⁹ Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspectives*, 28.

high status as *Kyrios* that requires universal acknowledgement and which at the same time redounds to the glory of God (Phil. 2:9–11).¹⁵⁰

Jesus is attributed with different Christological titles after his death and resurrection, as Lord, Son of God, Messiah, and Last/New Adam. This is based on the power of God raising Jesus from dead and we too participate in this power of Christ's resurrection as Christians following Jesus Christ.

¹⁵⁰ Hurtado, Paul's Christology in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, 186.

Chapter Three: Paul's Challenge of Imitating Christ: "For me, to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21)

Introduction

Christian theologians refer to the Sacred Scripture as the *norma normans non normata* or "the norm which is the standard for all other norms but is not itself subject to a higher norm."¹⁵¹ It is for this reason that Christians consider the Sacred Scripture as authoritative and normative guide for faith and life. But because the written word of God has been spoken among us through the medium of *human* words, care and attention must be given to the human factor that helped brought us the sacred text. Hence, historical and literary analyses are employed to understanding and appreciating the author's intended message. From understanding the text in its original context, we have to move to its hermeneutical perspectives today. This implies that interpretation involves dialogue between the text and the interpreter or contemporary reader. The Scripture as word of God becomes meaningful only when it is properly appropriated in the concrete lives of Christian believers.

This third and last chapter is concerned about how we could meaningfully appropriate Paul's teachings about Jesus in our day-to-day living. As a pastor, Paul is highly concerned with how believers ought to live their faith.¹⁵² What does Paul tell us about how we should live Christ our lives? Clearly, Paul reminds us, "For me, to live is

¹⁵¹ Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers), 1981.

¹⁵² Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 626.

Christ.” (Phil 1:21). Again, Paul says, “be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1, 1Cor 4:16).

1. Paul and the Christ-event

One important dimension of Paul’s ministry was his commitment to found and nurture Christian communities. His concern was not merely to proclaim the good news of salvation but community formation. This made Paul different from other religious propagandists of mystery religions of his time who were only devoted to proclamation but not to sustain nurturance. Paul was not merely contented in converting individuals; his larger goal was to forming communities of believers. According to the Paulist priest, Gil Alinsangan, “Only when these communities were formed, nurtured, and thus firmly established, could Paul say that his mission was in the fullest sense completed.”¹⁵³ No wonder that part of the missionary strategy of Paul was to revisit the Christian communities he had founded. This missionary fervor of Paul was the result of his personal encounter with the Risen Christ: “But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles...” (Gal 1:15).

What did Paul consistently proclaim everywhere he went in the Mediterranean world? Paul’s primary task was to proclaim the Christ-event. The “Christ-event,” according to Fr. Joseph Fitzmyer, refers to “what Jesus accomplished for humanity in his person, death, burial, resurrection, exaltation and heavenly intercession.” The “Christ-

¹⁵³ Fr. Gil Alinsangan, SSP, “*Getting to Know St. Paul Part II*” (Bi-Millennium of the Birth of St. Paul the Apostle, Kune 28, 2008-June 29, 2009).

event” is particularly St. Paul’s dominant interest. It is the heart of the Apostle’s message. Paul employs several abstract nouns to interpret the Christ-event: (1) “justification” [dikaiosunh): Gal 2:16; Rom 3:26; 4:25; (2) “salvation” [swthria]: 2 Cor 7:10; Rom 1:16; 10:10; (3) “expiation” [iJlasthrion]: Rom 3:25; (4) “ransom”/“redemption” [ajpolutrwsĩ~]: 1 Cor 1:30; Rom 3:24; (5) “sanctification” [aJgiasmo~]: 1 Cor 1:2, 20; 6:11); (6) “freedom” [ejleuqeria]: Gal 5:1, 13; Rom 8:1-2, 21; (7) “transformation” [metamorfwsĩ~]: 2 Cor 3:18; Rom 12:2; (8) “reconciliation” [katallagh]: 2 Cor 5:18-20; Rom 5:10-11; (9) “new creation” [kainh ktisi~): Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17.

2. Imitation of Christ

Paul thinks the Christians’ response to the Christ-event is to live a life of new creatures in their daily living and to live according to the will of God in our present world. Ronald D. Whiterup describes, “Paul taught that one of the main effects of the Christ-event was that it totally transformed individuals, as well as the world.”¹⁵⁴ It is Paul who “calls on Christians believers to focus their whole attention on Jesus Christ and to make him the supreme model for both their overall attitude towards life and their conduct in day-to-day living.”¹⁵⁵

Paul exhorts his converts to imitate him (1Cor 4:16, 11:1, Phil 3:17). Linda L. Belleville states “it is noteworthy that Paul does not command direct imitation of Christ,

¹⁵⁴ Witherup, *101 Questions and Answers*, 138.

¹⁵⁵ Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, Richard N. Longenecker, ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 167.

but, instead, asks for an act of imitation. That mirrors his own conformity to Christ.”¹⁵⁶ Imitation since the time of Paul was quite widespread. Belleville says “Paul’s request was by no means unique in the ancient world,”¹⁵⁷ for “the origin of the idea of the imitation of Christ has been variously traced to Judaism, Gnosticism, the mystery of religions and Greek Philosophy.”¹⁵⁸ It can be the imitation in relation of sons to their fathers (1 Macc. 2.51), that is the imitation of the father extended to the imitations of the fathers, relations of subjects and rulers that is good subjects imitate their rulers and the imitation of the students to their teachers, etc.¹⁵⁹ We can imitate the people who are the model for human living in their way of life such as Saints, Pope and peace makers. Jesus is the best model in our Christian way of living.

Paul calls for imitation of him to his Churches, which he evangelized because “whatever his converts learned, received, heard, and saw in him, they, in turn, were expected to do (cf. Phil 4:9).”¹⁶⁰ Paul claimed himself to imitate him because he lives in Christ as he says “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal 2:20). We can imitate Christ in many ways. When we are living in Christ and with Christ we can imitate him best that is to live a life of a new

¹⁵⁶ Linda L. Belleville, “Imitate me, Just as I imitate Christ”: Discipleship in the Corinthian Correspondence” in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, 121.

¹⁵⁷ Belleville, “Imitate me, Just as I imitate Christ”, 121.

¹⁵⁸ Ernest Best, *Paul and His Converts* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 59.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 61.

¹⁶⁰ Belleville, “Imitate me, Just as I imitate Christ”, 124.

creature, to live a life in the Spirit, to be part of the body of Christ, the Church, and continually to imitate the selfless way of Christ.

A. To live a Life of a new Creation

To live a life of a new creation is a call to live a change of life style, a transformed life in Christ. We enter into a new creation with Christ through baptism in which we were baptized into Christ's death and resurrection. Hulitt Gloer elaborates, "It is only as we participate in his death and resurrection that we are able to share in this new creation."¹⁶¹ The phrases "new creation" and "new things" (5:17) recall what God promised through his prophets to do for his people Israel. The new exodus from exile and renewal of Jerusalem (Isa 40:1-5; 42:9; 43:18-19) manifests God's love for Israel and completely transforms heaven and earth (Isa 65:17; 66:22).¹⁶² For Paul this new creation has been inaugurated in the death of Christ into this world (2Cor 5:14-16). In Paul's letters the "new creation" refers to the newness of the person in Christ.¹⁶³ In Christ Christians are a new creation and all humans are called to experience in that new creation as in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

¹⁶¹ Hulitt Gloer, "2Corinthians 5:14-21." *Review & Expositor* 86, no. 3 (1989): 397-405, esp.399. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 15, 2015).

¹⁶² Timothy Milinovich, *Now is the Day of Salvation* (Cambridge, GBR: Lutterworth Press, 2012.), 133. Accessed July 14, 2015) proQuest ebrary.

¹⁶³ Keith Kettenring, *The Sanctification Connection: An Exploration of Human Participation in Spiritual Growth* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2007), 88.

The phrase “*En Christos*” means “in relation to the event, the reception, and the work of salvation, and also the saved community.”¹⁶⁴ All who are in Christ form a corporate unity or the Body of Christ.¹⁶⁵ We no longer live for ourselves but we live for Christ who died and was raised for us because we believe that Christ died for all. (2Cor 5:12-14). As our death was buried with Christ in his death, our newness of life also was born and raised at Christ’s resurrection (Rom 6:4).

We cannot escape from sins. Though we are still living in a sinful world and hold on to sin but we are given a new life in order not to become a slave of sin. Because we are now free from sin and sin no longer has power over us (Rom 6:6-7). We have the freedom to choose for ourselves to live “dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom 6:11-12). To live a new life is to respond to “a call for the new interior reality of the Christian invitation to be optimistic, not to look back on the sins of the past life but look forward and be guided by hope in the risen Christ (2Cor 5:14-17).”¹⁶⁶ Viewing oneself, as a new creation in Christ seems to provide the perspective that one has the capability to grow spiritually.¹⁶⁷ When we are totally reborn in Christ we can live a holy life as Christians. As Keith Kettenring expresses, “Christians are capable of living sanctified lives due to the inherent provisions entailed in their union with Christ including the power of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Grundmann, “Cristov~” in the New Testament *TDND IX*, 551.

¹⁶⁵ Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1988), 176.

¹⁶⁶ Fr. Dennis G. Tamayo, *From Daily Gospel Reflection*, 2015.

¹⁶⁷ Keith Kettenring, *The Sanctification Connection: An Exploration of Human Participation in Spiritual Growth*, 88-89.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 90.

Paul urges the believers towards the transformation of life as a repentant sinner who becomes a new creation to be united by Faith in Christ (2Corinthians 5:17). The believer, who has received the Spirit in their hearts and has been incorporated into Christ, is part of the “new things” that have arrived. As a “new creation” or “new creature” we should live our lives toward the spiritual union and no longer based on worldly standards.¹⁶⁹

Paul experienced the newness of life in Christ himself at his way to Damascus and confirmed it in his acceptance of baptism and lived this radical newness of life the whole rest of his life for Christ till his death. Paul lived a transformed life in Christ as he writes himself, “it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20). It is a challenge for us to live in Christ as a new creature due to our pride, love of sin, reliance on works, bad habits and so on. In contrast, most importantly, Paul teaches us that there are ways to imitate Christ through total surrendering ourselves to Christ and sharing in his sufferings. Truly, we are fragile beings, yet molded as new creature in the risen Christ.

B. To live a Life in the Spirit

To be worthy to live as a new creature we are given the Holy Spirit to guide us in our lives. The Spirit is very important in Paul’s letters regarding the transformation of our life. Edwin D. Freed writes that “the new life that converts live after their baptism

¹⁶⁹ Timothy Milinovich, *Now is the Day of Salvation* (Cambridge, GBR: Lutterworth Press, 2012), 132-133. Accessed June 14, 2015. ProQuest ebrary.

is life in the Spirit, and such life discharges them from the Law (Rom. 7. 1-6).”¹⁷⁰ When we possess the Spirit we are transformed into Christ. Albert Schweitzer denotes that “The possession of the spirit proves to believers that they are already removed out of the natural state of existence and transferred into the supernatural. For being in the spirit means a form of transformation of the being-in-Christ.”¹⁷¹ Brendan Byrne explains that “to ‘live according to the Spirit’ means to allow one’s life to be transformed and ruled by the dynamic power of the new age, released by God’s act in Christ, and in fact, tantamount for Paul to the influence of the risen Lord. (Cf. 1Cor 15, 45).”¹⁷²

The reception of the Spirit is at the moment of Christian initiation (Baptism) (Gal 3: 1-5). Continually, God grants each believer with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is Baptism, which empowers a person to live a new life of freedom under God’s grace (Rom 7, 1-6). In Baptism, we have been given a new heart, as it were, in fulfillment of God’s promise through the prophet Ezekiel, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh (Ezek 36, 26).”¹⁷³ Through our Baptism we are called to change our life into a life in the

¹⁷⁰ Edwin D. Freed, *The Apostle Paul and His Letters* (NY, USA: Routledge, 2014), 126 <<http://alltitles.ebrary.com/Doc?id=10997533>>.

¹⁷¹ Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (Baltimore and London: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 167.

¹⁷² Byrne, *Romans, Romans*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 1996), 238.

¹⁷³ Carolyn Thomas, *Reading the Letters of Saint Paul: Study, Reflection, and Prayer* (Mahwah, New Jersey, Paulist Press, 2002), 135.

Spirit, a life of righteousness and that righteousness is “the passport to salvation, the essential condition for the entrance into eternal life.”¹⁷⁴

Paul describes the two ways of living that is living in the life of flesh and living in the life of the Spirit. Paul uses the term “flesh” to represent all that is corruptible, fleeting, and infinite in this world. Flesh represents the true weakness of human existence, especially when contrasted with the divine existence.¹⁷⁵ Consequently, flesh is “being bound to sin, adhering to the law, and holding on to finite realities that will pass away.”¹⁷⁶ Spirit is the inner core of one’s being and it represents “living according to God’s will, living out Jesus’ commend to love one another, living according to the Holy Spirit and the setting one’s heart on the kingdom that is to come.”¹⁷⁷ Byrne explains, “ ‘Flesh’ and ‘Spirit’ do not denote separate elements in the make-up of human individuals (body and soul) but rather two possibilities of human existence — the one self-enclosed and self-regarding and hostile to God, the other open to God and to life.”¹⁷⁸. We are called to live according the Holy Spirit rather than according to the flesh (Rom 8:5).

The one who lives in the flesh will not belong to the kingdom of God because the acts of the flesh are sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions

¹⁷⁴ Brendan Byrne, , 240.

¹⁷⁵ Ronald D. Witherup, *101 Questions & Answers on Paul* (Mahwah, NJ, St. Pauls, 2008), 177.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Witherup, *101 Questions & Answers on Paul*, 178.

¹⁷⁸ Byrne, *Romans*, 238.

and envy; drunkenness, orgies (Gal 8: 19-21). To those who live in the spirit possess the fruits of the Spirit that are love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 8: 22-23). For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom 14:17).

To conclude, life in the Spirit leads to a life of peace and joy and will enable to do righteous works in life. Though our human nature is inclined to sin always if we are aware of the guidance of the Spirit in us we will not become the slaves of sin. Our world is destroying with the desires of the flesh that leads to greed, corruptions, loss of lives and crimes. Keep in our heart the desire of the Spirit and we will able create a better world through love of God and neighbors and we will participate in the Kingdom of God, which was inaugurated by Christ.

C. To be part of the body of Christ, the Church

We are in Christ also means we belong to Christ's Body, the Church. We are part of the body of Christ because "by one spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1Cor. 12:13). Paul uses the metaphor "the body of Christ" to bring forth the idea of unity of the Church among his temporary Christians facing factions within Christian communities. Paul wrote letters to them to urge for unity that is to dwell and live as one body of Christ. For Paul "the body was not a city or a state but the whole Church, the people. His emphasis was that Christ is the head of the body on whom the whole Church thereby depends and that no member is dispensable or worthless because each has a vital role.

The evident diversity among the members of the body makes clear that the aim is not uniformity but dynamic unity.”¹⁷⁹

In the Church there are many divisions and quarrels among the members because of lack of internal unity. The letters of Paul provide an excellent reflection on how to promote deeper, more lasting Christian unity. We are called to be united in the Body of Christ. Brain Rosner considers that “for Paul, Christian living is no private matter; God saves and transforms a people, the body of Christ, not autonomous individuals. Paul’s overriding concern is the edification of the community, and much of his energy is spent restoring unity to the church.”¹⁸⁰ As part of the body of Christ we need each other to build up the body of Christ and there should be no factions among members through self-centeredness, self-righteousness, greed, and discrimination. The Spirit provides us with different gifts to function well in the body (1 Cor 12:1-11). Each one has a different gift, charisma and talent to build up the body. True humility recognizes God’s gifts as gifts and uses them in his service.

Paul says we should not think of ourselves higher than about others rather. We should do well and use our gifts well which we have received. We have to give humble service to the needy of the body of Christ. If am a prophet, my duty is to prophesy in proportion to faith, if my job is in ministry I have to be good in ministering, if I am a teacher, I need to teach well, if I am a giver, I have to give with generosity, if I am a

¹⁷⁹ John J. Bradley, "THE BODY OF CHRIST IS IMPAIRED BY DIVISION," *One In Christ* 47, no. 2 (December 2013): 237-244, here, 237. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed April 30, 2015).

¹⁸⁰ Brain Rosner, “Paul’s ethics” in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, James D. G. Dunn, ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003) (212-223), esp.217.

leader, I have to lead in diligence, if I am compassionate, I should do it in cheerfulness (Rom 12:6 -8). As in 1Corinthians 12:12, the body of Christ is described much like the human body - with head, feet, eyes, ears, etc. Each section has a specific function. All are important, but they do not do all the same job. They function in unity, much like our physical body does, but each part faithfully performs its own duties. The eyes see and the ears hear.

Paul appeals to each one of us as he appealed to Roman Christians to present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Paul tells us “do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by renewing our minds, that we can discern what is the will of God - which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12: 1-2). We are living in darkness if we do not enter the transformation. It is the transformation for the renewal of our mind and heart, to get ready for service, for the sacrifice to the needs of others. We worship God not only through our words but also through our sacrificial actions in our daily lives.

Paul’s vision of the Church comes from his spiritual development in the context of his Damascus experience as expressed in Acts 9:4-5, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” “Who are you, sir?” “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.” In fact persecuting the Church or the followers of Christ means the same as persecuting Jesus himself. Since the Church begins with Jesus Christ, for Paul Christ can never be separated from the Church. Throughout the centuries, Christians suffered persecutions. Today in present times we remember those who are persecuted for the sake of Christ in many parts of the world, especially in the Middle East and in Africa, but also in parts of

Asia. Christ too suffers as the head of the body when the other members are sufferings. We too suffer with them in our soul. Even though Christians are being persecuted we are called to bless those who persecute us, to bless and not to curse them (Rom 12: 14). We have to care for other members of the body of Christ who are sufferings with discouragement, depression, anger, and other mental, emotional, or physical troubles.

In sum, we are not just belonging to the body of Christ through baptism but we have the duty to live a Christian life that is to follow the pattern of Jesus Christ. We are given the gifts of the Spirit which are to be used for the good of others and for the glory of God. As part of the body of Christ we are given the responsibility for building up the body of Christ, the Church.

D. To Imitate the Selfless Way of Christ

As we have heard belief follows actions, our belief and faith in the person of Jesus Christ is not merely a proclamation with words but works by imitating the way of Christ's life. We are worthy to be called Christians if we imitate the ways of Christ especially his selfless love and humility. The ultimate act of loving self-sacrifice and obedience of Christ is the evidence of his death on the cross as expressed in Phil 2:1-13. According to Brain Rosner "for Paul, the cross is not just the way of salvation and the supreme demonstration of God's righteousness and love, but the pattern for the life of Christians."¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ Brain Rosner, "Paul's ethics" in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, 217.

Paul, the apostle of Christ, reminds us to avoid certain attitudes and behaviors and teaches us how to imitate the selfless ways of Christ. In Philippians 2:3-5 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than you. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.” Being selfish is not good at all because it is centered on searching and wanting for our own glory and forgets or even despises others. The selfish person wants more possessions, money, higher status and recognition by others. Our selfishness is flowing from our sinful nature of a life in the flesh (Gal 5:19-20).

The selfless way of Christ comes from his obedience to the will of God and from his love of all humanity. Christ submits his life to God the Father in humility, love and obedience. We are called to submit our lives to Christ in humility, love and obedience. Paul took the challenge of imitating Christ after encountering Christ and by living a new life in the Spirit. Paul becomes the best imitator of Christ that he allowed himself to let Christ dwell in him and he in Christ as he proclaimed, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Paul is the best imitator of Jesus Christ. He is convinced in his faith and he lived in Christ and for Christ alone. He shared his experience of the risen Christ to the Christian communities both Jews and Gentiles alike.

An authentic Christian existence is to live in humility. The selfish Christian is living against the way of Christ. Humility is formed when we are in an intimate relationship with the God of love. Love is more important than knowledge “Knowledge

puffs up, but love builds up” (1Cor 8:1). Thomas à Kempis defines that “Love, not knowledge, is the ultimate goal that is the self-giving love of Jesus. Humility, true self-knowledge is the highest and most profitable discovery in life.”¹⁸² Love is the most important thing in our lives that we need for each other.

If we are seeking to imitate Christ’s humility we should treasure in our heart a genuine love and concern for the interests of others. Humility with love is a call to be slave to one another, that is to serve one another in love (Gal 5:13) and also to be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves (Romans 12:10). Yet it is not an easy task. Sometimes our pride and selfishness blocks out the way. Only when we are selfless we are able to be concerned properly with the lives of others. How can we be involved in the interests of others? Around the world there are people who are facing failures, disappointments, sickness, death and poverty. Sharing the good we have in the time of good prosperity and to be present and helpful in time of need of our brothers and sisters that is what we have to learn to do in our society.

In pride there is no a genuine love. The pride gives us hatred, envy, anger, malice and any other evil kinds. The humble people seek to find peace and work for peace. We do not need to be afraid nor hesitate to do good humble works because God loves and saves the humble spirited person and will always guide in time of trial and temptations. For it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure (Phil 2:13). Only when we carry in our heart the selfless attitudes and actions of Christ we can become a true imitator of Jesus Christ.

¹⁸² Thomas à Kempis, Paul Wesley Chilcote, and John Wesley, *The Imitation of Christ: Selections Annotated & Explained* (Woodstock, Vt: SkyLight Paths Pub, 2012),2.

The marks of the true Christian and imitator of Christ is to sum up in Rom 12: 9-10 “Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.” The one who practices the selfless way of Christ is the one who gives glory to God and lives the fullness of life in Christ in actions.

Conclusion

Since Christ is the model of authentic living we ought to imitate Christ. It is the imitation in of our words, actions and thoughts. We hear Christ’s teaching through the readings of Sacred Scriptures and through the preachers. Imitation of the love of Christ is the most basic and the highest of all things. His love culminated in giving himself up on the cross for the love of all humanity. Christ’s crucifixion, as Belleville says, “is not Christ’s obedience even to death, as might be expected, but his self-effacing love that is the formative ideas: ‘the love of Christ compels us’ (2Cor 5:14).”¹⁸³ We listen to the Words of God and put them into practice. This is a big challenge but we can do it because “the call to imitate Christ is made possible by the power of the living, exalted Christ, who is present and at work within the live of the believers through the works of the Holy Spirit (cf. Phil 1:11, 19, and 2:2b-13).”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Linda L. Belleville, “Imitate me, Just as I am of Christ”: Discipleship in the Corinthian Correspondence in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, Richard N. Longenecker, ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 120-141, here 130.

¹⁸⁴ Gerald F. Hawthorne, “Imitation of Christ: Philippians” in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, Richard N. Longenecker, ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 178.

Conclusion

We have seen in this humble paper that the essence of Paul's mission as Apostle to the Gentiles was to preach the gospel, the core content of which is the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ.¹⁸⁵ The Jesus that Paul encountered on the road to Damascus was the glorified Christ. The coming of Christ and the merits of his death and resurrection means the final, triumphant reign of God, marking the climax of history and the inauguration of the messianic age.¹⁸⁶ The Damascus experience of Paul made him realize that God has already fulfilled all his promises in the person of Jesus Christ. For Paul, Jesus is the "representative of Israel, in whose cross God metes out judgment on the forces of evil that oppose the establishment of his kingdom."¹⁸⁷ God has vindicated his son Jesus "by raising him from the dead and turning his cross from an emblem of shame to that of victory."¹⁸⁸ Consequently, through the merits of the Christ-event and through faith in Jesus, all peoples have equal access to God.

We have also seen in Paul's letters that Christ is at the heart of his life and thought. One can say that Christ is the goal of Paul's mission as Apostle to the Gentiles. For Paul, Jesus is clearly a divine figure of unique status. His "letters provide the earliest extant evidence of the way devotion to Jesus arose within the context of Jewish

¹⁸⁵ The "gospel" is Paul's personal way of summing up the significance of the Christ-event.

¹⁸⁶ Johannes Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 17.

¹⁸⁷ Dianzon, *Glimpses of Paul and His Message*, 35.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

monotheism.”¹⁸⁹ Larry Hurtado lists four convictions held by early followers of Jesus, all of which are well attested in Paul’s letters. These convictions, according to Hurtado, represent the common “Christian” tradition of the earliest strata.¹⁹⁰

(1) that God had released Jesus from death, so that it really is Jesus, not merely his memory or influence, who lives again;

(2) that God bestowed on Jesus uniquely a glorious new form of existence, immortal and eschatological bodily life;

(3) that Jesus has also been exalted to a unique heavenly status, thus presiding by God’s appointment over the redemptive program; and

(4) that those who were given these special encounters with the risen Jesus were divinely commissioned to proclaim Jesus’ exalted status and to summon people to recognize in his resurrection/ exaltation the signal that the eschatological moment of redemption has arrived.¹⁹¹

Did Paul believe in Jesus to be God? Without turning his back on his Jewish monotheistic belief in the one true God of Israel, Paul declares, “Jesus Christ is Lord.” It is Paul who attached to the name Jesus the title “Christ,” the translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*. Paul never compromises the singularity and universality of God by his devotion to Christ. It is “within the framework of Judaism that Paul discovers the significance of the person of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah – Yahweh’s ‘Amen’ to all his covenant-promises.”¹⁹² Paul does not see Jesus as another god in addition to Yahweh, for there is only one God, the Father (1 Cor 8:6).

¹⁸⁹ Eisenbaum, *Paul was not a Christian*, 178.

¹⁹⁰ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 72.

¹⁹¹ Cited in Eisenbaum, *Paul was not a Christian*, 179.

¹⁹² Dianzon, *Glimpses of Paul*, 37.

Moreover, according to Eisenbaum, “while it was the Son of God who has been revealed ‘in’ and ‘through’ Paul, it is clearly God who called Paul and gave him his commission as an apostle (see Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:15). Paul’s words of prayer and worship are exclusively directed to God. Paul makes it clear that the exalted Christ performs a mediating function between humans and God: “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 7:25). Rom 8:34 states: “It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who intercedes for us.”

Of the many titles of Jesus in Paul’s letters, his favorite title for Jesus is κύριος (“Lord”). This title appears in the epistolary greetings, prayers, hymns, and confessions. Κύριος is the one title that “denotes the Lord Jesus Christ’s special status and dignity.”¹⁹³ Paul’s another significant title for Jesus is “Last/New Adam” (Romans 5:12-21). The first man Adam became a living being, while the last Adam (Christ) became a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:22, 45). Pope Benedict XVI writes,

With Romans 5:12-21, the comparison between Christ and Adam became more articulate and illuminating: Paul traces the history of salvation from Adam to the Law and from the latter to Christ. At the center of the scene it is not so much Adam, with the consequences of his sin for humanity, who is found as much as it is Jesus Christ and the grace, which was poured out on humanity in abundance through him.¹⁹⁴

It is through Christ that the universality of grace is bestowed on all human beings.

The last chapter of this paper posed the challenge for us Christians to imitate the way of Christ as lived and taught by Paul. As Paul says, “For me, to live is Christ” (Phil 1:21). To live in Christ means to know the power of Christ’s resurrection, to share in the

¹⁹³ Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 245.

¹⁹⁴ Benedict XVI, *Saint Paul*, 89-90.

sufferings of Christ and to die in his death. What our contemporary world is attracting us is to look for comfort zones devoid of sufferings and engrossing in self interests. The effects of humanity's selfishness, pride, apathy, and loss of universal values are injustice, violence, inequality, human-made disasters, poverty, and promiscuity. We may not be able to fight for all the miseries and sufferings of the world, but surely we can lessen sufferings and pains and live better lives by imitating the selfless way of Christ and to serve one another in love in community. St Paul presents to us Christ as the Supreme Model to be imitated. Phil 2:5-11 is the strongest possible appeal of the apostle to his readers to shape their lives as Christians (i.e., those "in Christ Jesus") according to the pattern left behind for them by Christ Jesus himself.¹⁹⁵

There are many things still left to learn from the letters of Paul. This paper is just a part of it. Further researches can be done on different Pauline teachings/concepts such as Paul understanding of the Law, sin, justification and Christ-event. The teachings of Paul never run out of relevance throughout the Church lives both in our contemporary times and his own. We can as a source to consult for our spiritual and community life since it is one the purposes of Paul's letters.

¹⁹⁵ Hawthorne, "The Imitation of Christ: Discipleship in Philippians in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, 163-178, here, 167.

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