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**True Pauline Worship is Trinitarian:
A Look at Paul's Trinitarian Presuppositions**

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by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to show that true Pauline worship is Trinitarian. Thus, proper Christian worship must be Trinitarian. This work begins by examining the *Shema* and exploring the unique identity of God presented in the Old Testament and the literature of Second Temple Judaism. Building on this foundation, this work evaluates statements found in Paul's letters in which Paul reformulates the *Shema* to include Christ and the Spirit in the divine identity of God. The goal is to understand how the first Christians, who were Jews committed to the exclusive worship of Yahweh, moved from monotheistic worship to Trinitarian worship that included Christ and the Spirit. Finally, this work closes with a discussion of Paul's presentation of worship in the early church, as it maintained faithfulness to the Jewish confession of faith while including Jesus and the Spirit. If the *Shema* encompasses the belief and practice of exclusive worship required by the one true God, and if Paul rightly reformulates the *Shema* to include Christ and the Spirit, then the declaration of allegiance to the one true God and exclusive worship of him must now include a declaration of allegiance to and exclusive worship of God as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for all three belong within the unique identity of God.

Keywords: monotheism, prayer, Paul, *Shema*, Trinity, worship

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In his book *On the Trinity*, Augustine stressed the importance of seeking an understanding of the Trinity and noted “in no other subject is error more dangerous, or inquiry more laborious, or the discovery of truth more profitable.”¹ To avoid dangerous error and to persevere in the pursuit of knowledge even when things seemed difficult, I relied on the help of a multitude of people to whom I owe much gratitude. Without their prayers and guidance, the discovery of truth would have been far less profitable.

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Above all, I give thanks to God, the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, who enabled me by means of his Holy Spirit to complete this project. All praise, glory, and honor belong to you, O Lord.

¹ Augustine of Hippo, “On the Trinity,” in *St. Augustin: On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Arthur West Haddan, vol. 3, *NPNF*¹ (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 19.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	The Anchor Bible
ApOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BTC	Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>ChrCent</i>	<i>The Christian Century</i>
<i>CTQ</i>	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>DBL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)</i>
<i>DPL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i>
ECB	Eerdmans Commentary of the Bible
HNTC	Harper's New Testament Commentaries
HolNTC	Holman New Testament Commentary
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IJST</i>	<i>International Journal of Systemic Theology</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>

IVPNTC	The IVP New Testament Commentary
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JTISup</i>	<i>Journal to Theological Interpretation Supplement</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series</i>
KCC	Kidner Classic Commentaries
LBT	Library of Biblical Theology
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i>
LXX	Septuagint
NAC	New American Commentary
<i>NDBT</i>	<i>New Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>
NCCS	New Covenant Commentary Series
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
<i>NJBC</i>	<i>The New Jerome Biblical Commentary</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NPNF</i>	A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library

PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
SBLSPS	Society of Biblical Literature, Seminar Papers
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature, Symposium Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>SR</i>	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TENTS	Texts and Editions for New Testament Study
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TPINTC	TPI New Testament Commentaries
UBC	Understanding the Bible Commentary Series
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

According to Ligonier Ministries' most recent State of Theology survey, which was commissioned in partnership with Lifeway Research, 91% of evangelicals affirm that the Bible is completely accurate in all that it teaches.² However, when specific questions were posed, inconsistencies of belief became evident. Almost one-third of professing evangelicals believe Jesus is a great teacher but not God, and 65% believe Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God. In addition, almost half believe the Holy Spirit is a force rather than a personal being. These results are surprising, especially when one considers that 96% of evangelicals agree with the statement that there is one true God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Evidently, there is a pressing need for clear Biblical teaching, for the results reveal that there is some confusion among evangelicals as to who Jesus and the Holy Spirit are in relation to God.

Part of the reason for the confusion concerning the Trinity may be due to the absence of a clear statement in Scripture that God is one in essence and three in divine persons.³ In the wake of this absence, questions abound. How is it possible that monotheistic Jews, who worshiped the one true God of Israel, included Jesus in their worship of Yahweh? Is Jesus really God or simply

² Ligonier Ministries and LifeWay Research, *2020 State of American Theology Study: Research Report* (LifeWay Research, 2020), 7-14, <http://lifewayresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Ligonier-State-of-Theology-2020-White-Paper.pdf>. All statistics in this paragraph have been drawn from this research report.

³ "One in essence and three in divine persons" is not language found in Scripture. Rather, it is Nicene language developed to define the nature of God as Father, Son, and Spirit, co-equal and co-eternal divine persons.

a man who claimed he was God? Who or what is the Spirit? How much, if at all, does it really matter if a person believes in the Trinity?

Though the word “Trinity” does not occur in Scripture, and the formal statement of the doctrine of the Trinity was not solidified until the fifth century, the pattern of the Trinity is woven into the story of God by means of his self-revelation. The God of history, the sovereign Creator of the universe, revealed himself to the nation of Israel through his Word and through his actions. Ultimately, he revealed himself in the incarnation of Jesus. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the authors of Scripture preserved the mystery of God revealed for his people. The word “Trinity” is an application of ordinary language to convey the unity and diversity of God as expressed in the Bible. God is one and three. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one in essence yet distinct in person and function.

The Bible presents Yahweh as a triune God, one God in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Scripture is clear that all three persons of the divine Trinity are intimately involved in a person’s salvation. Therefore, though understanding the Trinity is not necessary for receiving Jesus Christ and being saved (Acts 16:30-32), growing and developing in the knowledge of the Trinity is vital for maintaining and moving deeper into relationship with God and others, for all prayer and worship is also Trinitarian. Understanding the Trinity is essential for all believers.

Statement of the Problem

The doctrine of the Trinity is foundational to the Christian faith, yet many believers, though they formally believe God is triune and may state that God is a Trinity, are unable to explain the concept and fail to recognize its importance. While understanding and articulating the doctrine of the Trinity is not necessary for a person to be saved, accepting the Trinity and

pursuing an understanding of it is necessary for appreciating the nature of God and grasping the full significance of his redemptive work. What sets Christianity apart from every other religion is the identity of the God Christians worship and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Foundational to Christian faith is the worship of the Creator of the universe who has revealed himself and brought about the redemption of humanity as the triune God.

As mentioned above, there is a disconnect between the statement that there is one true God in three divine persons and the statements that Jesus is a created being rather than God and the Holy Spirit is an active force rather than a person. Misconceptions of what it means to say that God is Trinity abound. Logically, it seems like a contradiction to say that three and one are equal. Thus, various ideas have been presented, which may, at first glance, sound like a solution to the logical problem of Trinity. However, when these explanations are examined closely under the microscope of Scripture, they are found to be either inadequate or completely false.

Some of these attempts, though motivated by a sincere desire to explain God in an easily accessible manner, are unsatisfactory. Concrete analogies used as an attempt to simplify God are not necessarily harmful but are insufficient comparisons that fall short of truthfully depicting the infinite God of the universe. God is not like an egg and its three parts, nor is he like water in its three different states. He is not like a shamrock or Cerberus, the three-headed dog of Greek mythology. The Creator is an infinite, eternal God, and there are no human analogies that can sufficiently explain his divinity.

Other attempts fall under the category of heresy. Modalism, for instance, states that God is one, but he appears in different roles or modes.⁴ Arianism asserts that Jesus was God's first

⁴ Cf. Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 6th ed. (Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 308-10.

and greatest creation.⁵ Tritheism claims that there are three Gods who work so closely together that they seem to be one.⁶ Though the intent of these doctrines is to remain faithful to biblical monotheism, they cannot be supported by Scripture and have been proven time and again to be false teachings that lead one away from worshiping the true God of the Bible.

Insufficient comparisons and theories that do not align with Scripture and the fact that the word “Trinity” is never mentioned in the Bible lead some to chalk up the Trinity as a mystery that was never meant to be understood. Though it is true that a person will never exhaust his or her knowledge of God and never completely comprehend the God of the universe, the believer is called to search the Scriptures to develop his or her relationship with God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Bible presents the narrative of a God who has revealed himself in his Word and in his acts in history, and in doing so, he has revealed himself as an eternal and personal triune God. He wants to be known. To know the Trinity is to know God, and to know God is to know the Trinity. Knowledge of the triune God is found on the pages of the inspired writings of Scripture, which preserve God’s self-revelation for anyone who wishes to know the one true God.

As a distinguishing feature that sets Christianity apart from every other religion, belief in the Triune God is no small thing. Confessing belief in the Trinity must be underscored by an understanding of God’s Trinitarian nature and the way the Trinity actively works in a believer’s life. Confession and worship must align with what Scripture reveals. Thus, an active pursuit of knowledge that comes from the inspired Word of God is needed to clear up the confusion of who Jesus and the Holy Spirit are in relation to the Father.

⁵ Cf. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 15-17.

⁶ Cf. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 310.

Statement of Purpose

Ultimately, a proper understanding of the Trinity leads to God's glory. As a Christian grows in his or her knowledge of God and grasps the full significance of the triune God's redemptive work in his or her life, the believer fulfills the purpose of God by worshiping the one and only true God, reflecting the image of the Trinity, and living in such a way as to draw others into the kingdom. The purpose of this study is to present Paul's Trinitarian writing and to show that Paul and early Christians remained faithful to strict Jewish monotheism even as they included Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the divine identity of God. Their habits of worship of the one true God exhibit a Trinitarian framework and present the reality that true worship is Trinitarian. This will be accomplished through an examination of early Jewish monotheism, the foundation of Jewish belief from which Paul's theology is derived. The thesis will then trace Paul's Trinitarian writing through his letters to show that the early Christians understood Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to be included in the divine identity of God. This expanded understanding of God led Paul to reformulate the *Shema*, which makes a statement about God's identity and pledges covenantal love to God as Father, Son, and Spirit. In addition, it will be shown that *true Pauline worship, worship which reflected the earliest Christian practices, is Trinitarian. Thus, all true worship for Christians must be Trinitarian.*

Statement of Importance of the Problem

The word "Trinity" is not found in Scripture. However, God has revealed himself as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in his redemptive work, especially in the incarnation of God the Son. To know Jesus is to know the Trinity, and to understand the Trinity leads to a deeper appreciation of the nature of God and a fuller grasp of the significance of his redemptive work. Understanding the Trinity comes by understanding that the history of God in

Scripture is revealed by “three enactors of that history.”⁷ God is one God in three divine persons who are coequal and coeternal. Grasping this concept deepens the faith of a believer and impacts the way he or she worships, prays, and lives in community with God and others. As a distinguishing mark of Christianity, the doctrine of Trinity needs to be understood and affirmed by followers of Christ, for failure to understand the Trinity results in failure to properly understand the gospel. On a much more serious level, denial of the Trinity is denial of the deity of Jesus Christ and the person of the Holy Spirit. Ignoring the doctrine of the Trinity is not an option for one who wants to know God fully and to glorify God in the way he or she lives.

Statement of Position on the Problem

It is the position of this thesis that Paul reveals Trinitarian presuppositions in his letters to the first-century Christians, many of whom were Jewish. Paul’s natural progression from the monotheistic faith, in which he was steeped and rigorously practiced, to a Trinitarian theology was derived from his knowledge of and experience with the resurrected and exalted Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Paul writes to encourage his brothers and sisters in Christ to know the true nature of God. This in turn leads believers to worship the triune God appropriately, aids them in fostering unity within the body of Christ, and enables them to live holy and pure lives in the world. Thus, the position of this paper is to establish that the *Shema*, which encompasses the belief and practice of exclusive worship required by the one true God, is rightly reformulated by Paul to include Christ and the Spirit. Thus, Christian prayer and worship must include the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That true worship is Trinitarian will be shown through the use of Paul’s letters, for it is within these epistles that Paul wrestles with the convergence of Jewish

⁷ Robert W. Jenson, “The Trinity in the Bible.” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 68.3–4 (July 2004): 195–206, here 199.

thought and the revelation of Jesus, who is God. What underlies Paul's teaching on practical issues of how the church should live in light of Jesus' death, resurrection, and exaltation and the reality of the indwelling Holy Spirit in believers are the theological assumptions that God the Father sent God the Son in the power of God the Holy Spirit. So, as Paul addresses how the church should live faithfully and obediently as members of the body of Christ, he reminds believers that the lordship of God and Christ affect the entirety of a life lived in allegiance to the one true God, who enables believers to live faithfully and obediently under his lordship by imparting to them the Holy Spirit. Thus, in his teaching and exhortation, Paul reveals God as Trinity while remaining faithful to his belief that God is one, and he alone deserves exclusive worship.

Limitations/Delimitations

The doctrine of the Trinity is a wide subject. Though there are traces of Trinitarian patterns throughout the New Testament in more than just Paul's letters, and at times these may be referred to in this thesis, the study is limited primarily to Paul's epistles. On the topic of monotheism, the study is limited to an explanation of early Jewish monotheistic thought to lay the foundation of Paul's theology and undergird the development of his Trinitarian presuppositions. In regard to the practical implications of understanding the doctrine of the Trinity, the study cannot possibly exhaust all of the intricacies of being a follower of Jesus Christ, and so the study will be limited to a broad sweep of prayer and worship for the individual believer and the body of Christ as it relates to the Trinity. In addition, the history of the development of the doctrine of the Trinity is beyond the scope of this study.⁸

⁸ For an examination of the development of the doctrine Trinity from the Apostolic Fathers to John Calvin see Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2019), 87-292.

The author presupposes that the sovereign Creator of all things is triune, and he deserves all worship, glory, and honor. This paper does not defend the Trinity. Rather, the author assumes the Trinity is true and shows how Paul and the early Christians understood God as Father, Son, and Spirit. The God of the Bible is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The three divine persons are coequal and coeternal, meaning one in essence yet distinct in person and function. In addition, the author presupposes that the Bible in its final form is the divinely inspired and authoritative word of God. Further, the author adheres to the belief that all thirteen of the letters in the New Testament attributed to Paul authentically belong to Paul, though it is not within the scope of this study to argue for such a position.

Method and Literature Review

The method for this study includes bibliographical research and exegesis of key Scripture passages in Deuteronomy and several of Paul's letters. The exegesis for this study relies heavily on commentaries for the books of Deuteronomy,⁹ Romans,¹⁰ 1 Corinthians,¹¹ Philippians,¹²

⁹ Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012); Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976); J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, ApOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002); Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1991); Christopher J. H. Wright, *Deuteronomy*, NIBCOT (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996).

¹⁰ C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1957); C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1975-79); James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, WBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988); Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980); Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998).

¹¹ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, SP (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

¹² Gordon D. Fee, *Philippians*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999); Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); Frank S. Thielman, *Philippians*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

Ephesians,¹³ and Colossians.¹⁴ Other literature chosen for research are books and articles specifically focused on early Jewish monotheism and the *Shema*, Paul's Christology and pneumatology, and Trinitarian prayer and worship. The literature reveals that the doctrine of the Trinity is of central importance for Christianity. There is much literature on the history of the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, studies exegeting triadic passages in Scripture, and books explaining the Trinity.

Concerning Jewish monotheism and the *Shema*, Richard Bauckham's work shows that the worship of Second Temple Judaism was exclusively given to the one and only true God, who revealed himself to Israel as the Creator of and ruler over all things. Remaining faithful to strict Jewish monotheism, early Christians included Jesus in the divine identity of God.¹⁵ In agreement with Bauckham, Larry Hurtado defends the view that worship of Jesus Christ emerged soon after the death and resurrection of Jesus. However, Hurtado focuses on the early worship practices of the first Christians to present a binitarian view of God.¹⁶ The work of Old Testament scholars

¹³ Darrell L. Bock, *Ephesians*, TNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2019); Lynn H. Cohick, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020); Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians*, TNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989); Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002); Frank S. Thielman, *Ephesians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

¹⁴ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984); David E. Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, (NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998); Dick Lucas, *The Message of Colossians and Philemon: Fullness and Freedom*, rev. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2020); Christopher R. Seitz, *Colossians*, BTC (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2014); N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, TNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986).

¹⁵ Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

¹⁶ Larry W. Hurtado, *God in New Testament Theology*, LBT (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010); *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, 3rd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); "What Do We Mean by 'First-Century Jewish Monotheism'?" *Society of Biblical Literature 1993 Seminar Papers*, SBLSPS 32 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 348-68.

Daniel I. Block¹⁷ and S. Dean McBride¹⁸ affirms the notion that the *Shema* is not a mathematical declaration of God's nature but a declaration of his uniqueness as the one and only true God.

In New Testament Scholarship, Gordon D. Fee has shown how Paul's letters support the deity of Christ and present the person of the Holy Spirit as God's empowering presence.¹⁹ Fee presents the triadic structure of passages in the Pauline epistles and shows how Paul's Trinitarian presuppositions are grounded in the work of Christ and the indwelling Spirit. From all thirteen of the letters attributed to Paul, Fee presents an extensive look at Paul's Christology and pneumatology. Through detailed analysis, Fee shows that Paul understood Jesus to be the Son of God, the divine Savior, and the exalted Lord.²⁰ Fee also comprehensively analyzes all of the passages in Paul's letters that refer to the Holy Spirit.²¹ He shows that Paul understood the Spirit to be the eschatological fulfillment of the Jewish expectations, the third person of the Trinity, and the evidence and guarantee of Christian salvation.

While Fee's work is exegetical, Wesley Hill's approach to the Trinity combines the Trinitarian theology developed by the Fathers with exegesis of Paul's texts.²² For Hill, the Trinity is better understood by relational categories, for Paul presents an "asymmetrical mutuality" between the Father, Son, and Spirit. Robert Letham presents a Trinitarian theology

¹⁷ Daniel I. Block, "How Many Is God? An Investigation into the Meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4-5," *JETS* 47.2 (June 2004): 193–212.

¹⁸ S. Dean McBride, "Yoke of the Kingdom: An Exposition of Deuteronomy 6:4-5," *Int* 27.3 (July 1973): 273–306.

¹⁹ Gordon D. Fee, *Jesus the Lord According to Paul the Apostle: A Concise Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018); *To What End Exegesis? Essays Textual, Exegetical, and Theological* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

²⁰ Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007).

²¹ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994).

²² Wesley Hill, *Paul and the Trinity: Persons, Relations, and the Pauline Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

that is both historical and exegetical before applying a solid understanding of God as Father, Son, and Spirit to the life of the believer in the assembly of God's people.²³

Chapter Summaries

Understanding the unique nature of God is vital for a Christian. For this reason, following the introduction, chapter two begins with God's revelation of himself in the Old Testament as the sovereign Creator of the universe who requires and inspires exclusive worship. Important to this understanding is the concept of monotheism as practiced in ancient Judaism and early Christianity, for it is from the roots of monotheism that Trinitarian thinking grew. An essential component for gaining insight into monotheistic thinking is the *Shema* (Deut 6:4), the Jewish theological statement about the unique nature of God and the exclusivity of whole-souled worship. Thus, the chapter includes a close look at the *Shema* to establish that monotheism was not simply a matter of serving one God among the many, but a matter of exclusive devotion to the covenant God, the sovereign Creator of the universe.²⁴ Additionally, it will be shown how the Angel of the Lord and the personified divine aspects of God's identity, Word and Wisdom, allowed for the expansion of monotheism to include a plurality of persons.

After establishing the view that monotheism allows for a plurality of persons while remaining faithful to the worship of Yahweh alone, the third chapter presents Paul's Christology and shows that the early Christians included Jesus in the divine identity of God. In addressing the needs of early Christian communities, Paul appeals to a reformulated *Shema* (1 Cor 8:5-6) and early christological statements (Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20) to encourage his fellow believers to

²³ Letham, *Holy Trinity*.

²⁴ Block, "How Many Is God?" 193–212, here 201. Rather than retaining the common translation "The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (ESV), Block offers "Yahweh our God! Yahweh alone!" or "Our God is Yahweh! Yahweh alone!" as a fresh translation that helps convey this meaning.

live out their allegiance to God properly. Ascribing divinity to Jesus can be seen in Paul's use of the title "Lord," the Greek word used for the covenant name of God in the Old Testament, for Jesus. Additionally, Paul attributes divine activities such as creating, ruling, and judging to Jesus.

Chapter four presents Paul's pneumatology and the understanding that the presence of the Holy Spirit is the key to salvation and the presence of God within and among Christians. Though the self-revelation of the Spirit is less direct than that of the Father and the Son, Paul includes the Holy Spirit in the identity of the God of Israel by showing the close link between the Spirit and the Son. The Spirit is "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom 8:9), and "the Spirit of [God's] Son" (Gal 4:6). All three—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—are linked together in triadic statements woven throughout Paul's epistles. The chapter examines Paul's presuppositional statements found in Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; and Ephesians 4:4-6 as an exploration of some of the explicit triadic patterns found in Paul's letters. Such triadic patterns highlight Paul's Trinitarian presuppositions that arise from the soteriological experience of every believer.

The chapter prior to the summary and conclusion shows how Paul rightly reformulates the *Shema* and presents a Trinitarian framework for Christian prayer and worship. The *Shema* is a proclamation of the unique identity of Yahweh and a commitment to whole-souled allegiance to the one true God who rescued his covenant people out of slavery in Egypt. In the same way, the confession, "Jesus is Lord," is a statement of allegiance to the one true God, who redeemed humanity from sin and death (Rom 10:9). Additionally, just as the covenant people of Israel were called to practice exclusive worship of and obedience to Yahweh in every sphere of their lives, so too are the new covenant people of God called to practice exclusive worship of and obedience to God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in every sphere of their lives (Rom 12:1-2). The chapter

ends with a survey of Paul's presentation of worship as practiced by first-century Christians and an explanation of the Trinitarian framework of proper prayer and worship accorded to the one and only true God, who deserves exclusive devotion. Christian salvation comes from the Trinity and through the Trinity, and the believer is brought into relationship with the Trinity. Thus, the believer is already immersed in the Trinitarian reality.²⁵ Christian worship and prayer are inherently Trinitarian because they are rooted in the Trinity. Worship and prayer move to the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit. Paul presents prayer and worship as Trinitarian because the one true God, who deserves exclusive worship, is Trinitarian. Thus, true prayer and worship are Trinitarian. To arrive at this conclusion, this paper must begin with a look at the nature of God as understood by his covenant people and expressed in the *Shema*.

²⁵ Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 34.

CHAPTER 2

THE UNIQUE IDENTITY OF GOD

From the time God called Abraham out of Haran to follow him, Jews have been worshipping the Creator God who revealed himself in his words to and in his interactions with his elect people. The focus on the exclusive worship of this one God for both Jews and early Christians was centered in the *Shema*: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut 6:4). Though these six words (שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד) have been translated in various ways, they concisely articulate the fundamental notion of the identity of God’s people. For Jews and Christians alike, the *Shema* is an expression of allegiance to God and his eternal kingdom. It encapsulates monotheism and asserts God’s universal sovereignty and uniqueness.²⁶ Though both Judaism and Christianity claim to be monotheistic and claim to worship the same God, they are very different religions. While remaining faithful to the monotheism of Judaism, early Christians included Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the boundaries of Jewish faith and redefined the *Shema*. How was it possible that the apostle Paul and others, who were faithful Jews, came to understand that monotheism allows for worship of Jesus while remaining faithful to the worship of Yahweh alone?

A close look at the *Shema* will establish that monotheism was not a matter of God’s unitarian nature but a matter of serving the transcendent covenant God, the sovereign Creator of the universe, who revealed himself in various ways. Not only did God reveal himself by his personal name, Yahweh, in his acts in history and in his character, but he also appeared to his people as the Angel of the Lord and in the personified divine aspects of his identity: Word and Wisdom. In their interpretation of Old Testament history, early Christians recognized the hints of

²⁶ Hurtado, “What Do We Mean,” 359-60.

the plurality of God that were later revealed in their fulnesses in the person of Jesus Christ, and they understood these personified divine attributes and powers of Yahweh as part of his unique identity and attributed these to God's self-revelation in Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The *Shema*

The Jewish confession of faith and the most important prayer in Judaism is the *Shema*. This symbol of worship, which gets its name from the initial Hebrew word שמע ("hear") makes a theological statement about the nature of God.²⁷ The *Shema* consists of Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Numbers 15:37-41; and other benedictions. In addition, there is evidence that, during the period of late Second Temple Judaism, recitation of the *Shema* also included the Decalogue.²⁸ Following ancient Israelite tradition, the *Shema* is prayed twice daily, in the morning and the evening, by all faithful Jews. The practice of reciting the *Shema* is not for piety's sake or as a mere intellectual practice but as a reminder of their covenant relationship with the true God and their allegiance to him alone.²⁹ By proclaiming exclusive devotion to God in the recitation of the *Shema* and reflecting upon its meaning before proceeding with the reading of additional texts, the Mishnah states that one is accepting "upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven" and "the yoke of the commandments" (Berakhot 2:2).³⁰ In accepting the yoke of the Kingdom, the faithful place themselves under the sovereignty and kingship of the one true God.³¹ Routine recitation of the *Shema* reminds the people of God of their belief and

²⁷ Malcolm B. Yarnell III, *God the Trinity: Biblical Portraits* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 58.

²⁸ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 6.

²⁹ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 6; S. Dean McBride, "Yoke of the Kingdom," 273–306, here 275.

³⁰ Cf. McBride, "Yoke of the Kingdom," 275.

³¹ Block, "How Many Is God?" 193–212, here 195. Cf. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 352-54.

practice of exclusive worship of and obedience to the Creator of all things.³² The *Shema* is both a personal and a cosmic declaration. It is deeply personal in its response to prayer, love, and allegiance, and, at the same time, it is cosmic in its embrace of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.³³ A close look of the *Shema* will show that it is not a response to the question “How many is Yahweh?” Rather, it is a response to “Who is Yahweh whom the Israelites worship?”

The first verse of the *Shema* has been difficult to translate. Block presents the main possible translations:

- “Hear, O Israel, Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one.”
- “Hear, O Israel, Yahweh our God is one Yahweh.”
- “Hear, O Israel, Yahweh is our God; Yahweh is one.”
- “Hear, O Israel, Yahweh is our God; Yahweh is One/Unique.”
- “Hear, O Israel, Yahweh is our God; Yahweh alone.”³⁴

Following the imperative “Hear, O Israel!” the unique syntax of יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד poses both grammatical and theological problems for the translator, and, as Block rightly cautions, all translations should be held tentatively.³⁵ The first colon can be translated “Our God is Yahweh” or “Yahweh our God,” with the latter being the traditional form. The translation of the second colon poses more difficulty, for how one renders אחד (*echad*)³⁶ determines whether the clause is read as a declaration of Yahweh’s indivisibility of his person or a declaration of

³² Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 6.

³³ N. T. Wright, “One God, One Lord: How Paul Redefines Monotheism,” *ChrCent* 130.24 (November 27, 2013): 22-25, 27, here 22.

³⁴ Block, “How Many Is God?” 196. Cf. Nathan MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of “Monotheism,”* 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 67-70.

³⁵ The following summary of the grammatical and theological problems is in conversation with and indebted to Daniel Block and S. Dean McBride. For a more in depth look at the debates concerning how יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד should be translated see Block, “How Many Is God?” 195-201; McBride, “Yoke of the Kingdom,” 291-97. Cf. MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of “Monotheism,”* 62-75.

³⁶ Following the introduction of some Hebrew words and phrases, the transliteration will be used in keeping with the form of the dialogue partners included in this thesis.

Israel's exclusive allegiance to Yahweh in the midst of the pagan polytheism of the surrounding nations.

The two main interpretations of the Hebrew word *echad* are “one” and “alone.” Those who favor a translation of “one” argue that *echad* follows the normal use of the cardinal number,³⁷ and if the writer had intended to mean “alone,” he would have used the Hebrew word לְבַדּוֹ (*lebaddo*). However, in the context of the nominal clauses of the *Shema*, *lebaddo* does not work, for it functions as an adverb.³⁸ Further, there is evidence found in other Old Testament texts for translating *echad* as “unique,” “only,” or “alone”³⁹ and evidence of *echad* and cognate forms used as “only” and “alone” in early Northwest Semitic and Akkadian.

Believing the *Shema* is a proclamation of Israel's monotheism, Brichto points out the absurdity of translating *echad* as “one”:

A translation affirming that a person known by a proper name “is one” is as meaningless of a deity as it would be of a human being. A discrete entity is not normally in danger of being taken for more than one or less than one. The assumption that the Hebrew word *'ehad* means “one” in its every appearance is an example of the folly of literalness. This folly would appear obvious to every speaker of English were he to remember that *only* is “one-ly” and *alone* is “all-one.” The endurance of this mistaken rendering is a tribute to the mischief that has been done to biblical meanings by the substitution of a common noun *lord*, rendered as a proper noun *the Lord*, for the ineffable name YHWH and also to

³⁷ Janzen argues for an interpretation of “one,” not as a numerical adjective, but as a term identifying Yahweh's integrity or moral unity. Yahweh has shown himself faithful in all points of history past and present, and he will show himself faithful in the future. Allegiance to Yahweh is grounded in his covenant faithfulness, for he is consistent in all of his dealings. Understood in this manner, translating *echad* as “one” is in alignment with the translation “alone,” for Yahweh's covenant faithfulness requires exclusive devotion. J. Gerald Janzen, “On the Most Important Word in the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).” *VT* 37.3 (Jul 1987): 280–300.

³⁸ BDB, s.v. “בַּד”; DBL, s.v. “בַּד.” Had the author used the adverb לבד, the clause would speak to Yahweh's state of being, a state of separation, alone, by himself. While it is true that Yahweh is in a class of his own, the context does not support a statement about his state of being. Rather, the immediate context of the verse, especially the command to love Yahweh wholeheartedly, supports the clause as a statement about Israel's exclusive allegiance to Yahweh and not a statement about Yahweh's state of separation.

³⁹ E.g., Achan did not perish “alone” for his iniquity (Josh 22:20); Israel is a “unique” nation in her relationship with Yahweh (2 Sam 7:23; 1 Chr 17:21); God chose David's son Solomon “alone” (2 Chr 29:1); God is “unique” (Job 23:13); he “alone” fashions children in the womb (Job 31:15).

an anachronistic assumption by theists of the biblical persuasion that Moses anticipated the unitarian-versus-trinitarian division.⁴⁰

The *Shema* is a reminder to God's people that, unlike their pagan neighbors, they are to acknowledge one God, Yahweh, and to worship him exclusively.

Rather than a strict monotheistic text, in its context following the Decalogue, Block sees the *Shema* as a cry of allegiance to the unique God of Israel.⁴¹ Prior to the *Shema*, Moses had already pointed out that Yahweh alone is God, and there is no other besides him (4:35, 39).⁴² He alone is the one true God whom Israel worshiped. The question is not "How many is God?" Rather, the *Shema* affirms commitment in a unified and uncompromising response to the question, "Who is Yahweh?" to which the faithful emphatically answer, "Our God is Yahweh, Yahweh alone!"⁴³ Rather than making a mathematical statement, Yahweh *echad* is a declaration about the uniqueness of God. Yahweh alone, the God whom the Israelites served, was uniquely their God, and though he is transcendent, he is also uniquely personal and intimate. It was his unprecedented love toward Israel, demonstrated in his election and redemption of his people out of slavery to Egypt, that called the Israelites to unwavering commitment to him. Thus, Yarnell also sees *echad* as serving a relational function.⁴⁴ Yahweh is not a lifeless or an aloof God. He is unique in his relationship with his covenant people.

⁴⁰ Herbert Chanan Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 232-33.

⁴¹ Block, "How Many Is God?" 211. Cf. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 338.

⁴² MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of "Monotheism,"* 79-85; Graham H. Twelftree, "Spiritual Powers," in *NDBT*, eds. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 796-82, here 796. While Twelftree views Deuteronomy 4:35 and 39 as a denial of the reality of other gods, MacDonald argues that the statements are not a denial of the existence of other deities. Rather, Yahweh is the unique God of Israel, the only god who is truly God, and Israel was called to recognize him as their only God. No other deities were to be worshiped by Yahweh's covenant people.

⁴³ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 182; Block, "How Many Is God?" 211.

⁴⁴ Yarnell III, *God the Trinity*, 67-8.

The covenant community's single-minded devotion to Yahweh called for participation in a response, which followed their declaration of allegiance to Him. The Israelites were called to reciprocate the covenant love Yahweh had shown them in choosing them from among the nations and rescuing them out of Egypt (4:37). The boundaries of absolute and undivided devotion to the God of Israel were to be demonstrated by loving the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, and might (6:5). As a people chosen to be in covenant relationship with Yahweh, the Israelites had a responsibility to commit to Yahweh every part of their being on every level.⁴⁵ This response of love is not meant to be merely a feeling. Rather, it is the steadfast covenant love which a vassal is obligated to maintain faithfully toward his suzerain.⁴⁶ In more concrete terms, God's people were commanded "to fear" the Lord their God (10:12), "to serve" him (10:12; 11:13), to "walk in all his ways" (10:12; 11:22; 19:9:30:16), to hold fast to him (11:22; 30:20), and to obey his voice (30:20). Loyalty to Yahweh must be absolute. His people were called to "be as vigorous in protecting itself from potential threat to the covenant as Yahweh will be in guarding his exclusive claim upon Israel's loyalty."⁴⁷ Monotheism for the people of God goes beyond intellectual belief. It is belief and practice involving exclusive worship of and obedience to Yahweh, the transcendent, sovereign God who revealed himself by his name, by his acts in history, and by his character.⁴⁸ Such covenant commitment, which is rooted in the heart and

⁴⁵ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 182-84; McBride, "Yoke of the Kingdom," 304. Reference to heart, soul, and might should be semantically seen as concentric circles, from the inner person to the outer, thereby representing the entire sphere of human existence. The Hebrew word לבב, "heart," metaphorically refers to the seat of emotions, will, and mind representing the inner person. The Hebrew word נפש, "soul," refers to the whole self, the unity of flesh and will. The Hebrew word אומ, "might," connotes "muchness, force, abundance," and refers to physical and economic resources, including physical strength. It evokes one's fullest capacity. Thus, the *Shema* calls for total commitment without reservation or qualification to Yahweh.

⁴⁶ McBride, "Yoke of the Kingdom," 298-300.

⁴⁷ McBride, "Yoke of the Kingdom," 294.

⁴⁸ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 6.

permeates every aspect of a person's being and resources, is the yoke of the Kingdom under which the nation would thrive if they obeyed the yoke of the commandments.

Yahweh's Revelation

The *Shema* encapsulates the exclusiveness of Jewish monotheism and the commitment to the universal sovereignty of the one true God, Yahweh. It includes both a belief in God and the practice of worshiping and obeying him. Declaring, "Our God is Yahweh, Yahweh alone!" reminds God's people of his unique nature and the exclusive devotion and display of allegiance required within the covenant. What makes Yahweh distinct from all other gods is his unique identity. No other gods are worthy of worship. The uniqueness of God, which requires the worship of everyone and inspires the worship of those in covenant relationship with Him, is found in Yahweh's revelation of himself to his people.

God's Unique Name

In the ancient Near East, naming "denoted the sovereignty of the one who named over the one named."⁴⁹ Thus, Adam, who was given dominion over creation, was given the task of naming the animals (Gen 1:28-30; 2:19-20). However, only God, as Creator and sovereign, has the right to name himself. It was to Moses at Mount Horeb that God first revealed himself by his name Yahweh when he manifested himself as *malak Yahweh*, the Angel of the Lord, appearing in the form of a flame of fire in a bush (Exod 3:1-4:17). After revealing himself as "the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (3:6), the name of the God of Israel's Patriarchs, God explains that he has seen and heard the suffering of his people in

⁴⁹ Robert Letham, "The Trinity and Worship," in *The Essential Trinity: New Testament Foundations and Practical Relevance*, eds. Brandon D. Crowe and Carl R. Trueman (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2017), 264-88, here 266.

Egypt, and he has come down to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians. When God tells Moses he is sending him to Pharaoh to bring the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses expresses his own inadequacy and unworthiness. In response, God provides a two-fold promise: he will be with Moses, and Moses and the Israelites will worship Yahweh (3:12). The sign of worship was a future promise, one that would require both faith and action on Moses' part. God will express his identity by working through Moses to deliver the Israelites from the Egyptians, and the Israelites will exclusively worship their covenant God as a recognition of and response to Yahweh's unique identity expressed in his saving acts in history, especially the Exodus.⁵⁰

Prior to this event, in the days of the Patriarchs, when God revealed himself, he was called by a new title or name to express the new revelation (cf. Gen 16:13), and when God revealed himself to the Patriarchs, he appeared directly to them. This encounter with Moses was something new, for it marked the beginning of God sending Moses and future prophets to communicate with his people and accomplish his will,⁵¹ and because of the newness, Moses asks what he should tell the people of Israel when he tells them God has sent him, and they ask, "What is his name?" In essence, Moses was asking, "Under what new title has God appeared to you? What new revelation have you received from God?"⁵² Moses expected a title, but he received much more.

God answered Moses' question with a tri-layered response: a shortened form of the name (3:14a), the name tied to Moses' commission (3:14b), and the name tied to the God of their

⁵⁰ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 14. From this point, Yahweh identifies himself to his people as "the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (e.g., Exod 20:2; Lev 19:36; Deut 5:6; Ps 81:10).

⁵¹ Andrea D. Saner, "*Too Much to Grasp*": *Exodus 3:13-15 and the Reality of God*, *JTISup* 11 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 121.

⁵² R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, TOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 76.

fathers (3:15).⁵³ His first response is to the point: אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (*eyeh asher eyeh*, “I am who I am” or possibly, “I will be who/what I will be.”) This is a form of paronomasia, a wordplay, involving the root הָיָה (*haya*, “to be”) and suggesting something about God’s nature, which cannot be fully described in human terms.⁵⁴ It is “both a revelation and a comment on the impossibility of offering a revelation,” for Yahweh cannot be explained or summed up by a list of attributes.⁵⁵ The term *eyeh* is a first person imperfect of *haya* and can be translated “I was,” “I am,” and “I will be.” Thus, God’s being and his actions in the past, present, and future are intertwined with his identity. Hence, the name “Yahweh” implies more than existence or ontology.⁵⁶ The principal idea of his name is dynamic presence.⁵⁷ In all times and in all places, Yahweh has been and will faithfully be with and for his people in covenant relationship,⁵⁸ while at the same time retaining his “own freedom to be and act according to his will.”⁵⁹ God is transcendent and sovereign, but he is also personal and intimate.

In the third layer of God’s self-revelation, he gives the full form of the divine name, which looks backwards to the Patriarchs: “The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of

⁵³ Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, IBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 65.

⁵⁴ Saner, “*Too Much to Grasp*,” 229; Ben Witherington III and Laura M. Ice, *The Shadow of the Almighty: Father, Son, and Spirit in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 11.

⁵⁵ John Goldingay, *Israel’s Gospel*, vol. 1, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003) 337. Cf. Arnold Huijgen, “Traces of the Trinity in the Old Testament: From Individual Texts to the Nature of Revelation.” *IJST* 19.3 (July 2017): 251–70, here 267.

⁵⁶ Saner, “*Too Much to Grasp*,” 112. Saner notes that if this were a story of etymology, it would follow the Old Testament pattern and possibly read, “And God said, ‘I am who I am.’ Therefore God was called ‘YHWH’ for he said, ‘I am who I am.’”

⁵⁷ Cole, *Exodus*, 25; Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 66.

⁵⁸ Fretheim, *Exodus*, 63.

⁵⁹ Saner, “*Too Much to Grasp*,” 229.

Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you” (3:15a). In the past, Elohim was the title by which God was called, but here, God reveals his personal name YHWH,⁶⁰ a special covenant name given exclusively to Israel and associated with his promises to them. For the Hebrew, character is revealed in a name, for by a name one may be known, distinguished, and remembered.⁶¹ To know God’s name is to know him, and “to call upon the name of the Lord” is to appeal to him by his known and revealed nature (e.g., Gen 4:26; Ps 99:6; Joel 2:32). To “proclaim the name of the Lord” is to describe his character, from which flows all of his acts of creation, revelation, and redemption,⁶² and to make him known (e.g., Exod 33:19; Deut 32:3). God’s revelation of his name to his people created a bond in which the name YHWH is intertwined with his chosen people. God’s reputation is bound up with Israel’s.⁶³ From this time forth, the name YHWH would “serve as Israel’s primary identity symbol,”⁶⁴ for God’s covenantal name YHWH sums up all past revelation and anticipates all future redemption and salvation for his people.⁶⁵ This is God’s name forever, the name by which he will be remembered throughout all generations (3:15b). At the same time God’s name is concrete, it is also indeterminate. Though God’s self-revelation will gradually shed more light on who he is, human knowledge is limited and cannot fully grasp the holy unseen Creator, for “the being of God

⁶⁰ Cole, *Exodus*, 76-7. Alluded to in verse 14, YHWH is possibly the shortened form of “YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

⁶¹ Cole, *Exodus*, 24; Petrus van Mastricht, *Faith in the Triune God*, vol. 2, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, ed. Joel R. Beeke, trans. Todd M. Rester (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 97-8.

⁶² Mark S. Gignilliat, “The Trinity and the Old Testament: Real Presence or Imposition?” in *The Essential Trinity: New Testament Foundations and Practical Relevance*, eds. Brandon D. Crowe and Carl R. Trueman (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2017), 195-209, here 198.

⁶³ Cole, *Exodus*, 24.

⁶⁴ Fee, *Jesus the Lord*, 129.

⁶⁵ Cole, *Exodus*, 24.

resists domestication of any sort.”⁶⁶ What can be known about God is only what he graciously reveals.

Moses asked to know another title of God to pass on to the Israelites and to prove he was being sent to God’s people, but what he received was the personal covenant name of the Creator and sovereign of the universe. Though God revealed his personal name, the name YHWH, which “truly refers to God, God nevertheless exceeds this reference.”⁶⁷ Moses received “not a label but a theology.”⁶⁸ Hamilton explains:

God will always be there for his people . . . even if that divine presence is questioned and imperceptible. He will always be whatever his people need him to be in any given moment, in any given place. If they need a deliverer, that’s YHWH. If they need grace and mercy and forgiveness, that’s YHWH. If they need purifying and empowerment, that’s YHWH. If they need rebuke and chastisement, that’s YHWH. If they need guidance, that’s YHWH. For God is a “I-will-be-what-I-will-be” God and a “I-will-be-what-I-need-to-be-for-you” God.⁶⁹

The transcendent, sovereign God is a God of revelation. With each divine act, more of his nature and character is revealed, and his name progressively takes on a deeper, richer meaning. With each revelation, Yahweh becomes more personal and intimate. Knowing the personal name of God gives insight into Yahweh’s nature and character, but the revelation is not merely for the sake of knowledge. Knowing God’s name is also a call to faith and action. Moses was required to act upon his belief, to go to Pharaoh as Yahweh’s representative and lead God’s people out of bondage to Egypt. As God entrusts his people with his name and the covenant relationship tied to it, he calls his people to unwavering, whole-souled commitment. “Our God is Yahweh, Yahweh alone!”

⁶⁶ Gignilliat, “Trinity and the Old Testament,” 202.

⁶⁷ Saner, “*Too Much to Grasp*,” 228.

⁶⁸ Goldingay, *Israel's Gospel*, 335.

⁶⁹ Hamilton, *Exodus*, 66.

God's Absolute Uniqueness

The religious practice of exclusive worship of one God set the Israelites apart from their polytheistic neighbors. In their practice of monotheism, Jews, especially in Second Temple Judaism, focused on two aspects of Yahweh's unique identity, that which distinguished him as unique from all other reality: Yahweh is the one and only Creator of all things⁷⁰ and the one and only ruler of all things.⁷¹ Exclusive worship and these two ways of characterizing the unique identity of God "correlated with and reinforced each other."⁷² Worship is required and can only rightfully be given to the one true God. As the sole Creator and sovereign, Yahweh belongs in an absolutely unique category, what Bauckham calls "transcendent uniqueness."⁷³ As the only true God, Yahweh is in a class of his own, distinct from all other reality. Thus, there is a binary view of reality in which there is God, the lone Creator and sovereign, and all other reality, created by God and subject to his sovereign will.⁷⁴ While these are not the only characteristics that identify Yahweh as the rightful recipient of exclusive worship, these are the characteristics that most readily distinguish him absolutely from all other reality.⁷⁵ To worship other gods was to give what only the one true Creator and ruler ought to receive, for worship signals, "the distinction

⁷⁰ The Old Testament and the literature of Second Temple Judaism is replete with references of God alone as Creator. These include Isa 40:25-26, 28; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12, 18; 48:13; 51:16; Neh 9:6; Hos 13:4 LXX; Add Esth 13:10-11; Wis 9:1; Sir 18:1; 43:33; Bel 5; 2 Macc 1:24; 3 Macc 2:2-3; Jub. 12:3-5, 19; Sib. Or. 3:11-34; Frag. 1:5-6; Frag. 3:1-23; Frag. 5; 1 En. 9:5; 84:3; 2 En. 47:3-4; 66:4; 2 Bar. 54:13; Apoc. Ab. 7:10; Jos. Asen. 12:2-3; Josephus, *Ant.* 1:155.

⁷¹ The Old Testament and the literature of Second Temple Judaism refer to Yahweh as the one and only ruler in passages such as the following: Dan 4:34-35; Bel 5; Add Esth 13:9-11; 16:18, 21; 3 Macc 2:2-3; 6:2; Wis 12:13-14; Sir 18:1-3; Sib. Or. 3:14-17, 20-25; 1 En. 9:5; 84:3; 2 En. 33:8; 2 Bar. 54:13; Josephus, *Ant.* 1:155-156.

⁷² Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 15.

⁷³ Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 86-7.

⁷⁴ Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 109.

⁷⁵ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 10-1.

between God and every creature, however exalted.”⁷⁶ Worship, then, is an acknowledgment of the unique identity of Yahweh as the only Creator and ruler. To rightfully receive worship, a being would have to demonstrate participation in the unique identity of God, the Creator and sovereign of all things.

There is Yahweh, and there is everything else. While God, in his sovereignty, employs servants, such as angels or humans, to accomplish his will and purposes, as the only eternal God,⁷⁷ he acted alone in creation. This is especially clear in Second Temple Judaism.⁷⁸ Yahweh “alone stretched out the heavens” and “spread out the earth by [himself]” (Isa 44:24). No counselor helped him (Philo *Opif.* 23). All things were made through him without help or assistance (4 Ezra 3:4; 6:6; Sir 42:21; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.192). He alone is Creator, and as Creator, Yahweh is the rightful ruler over all creation. His glorious throne is established in the heavens and his kingdom reigns over all (Ps 103:19; Jer 17:12).

Yahweh’s sovereignty is manifested through what Hurtado calls “divine agents.”⁷⁹ These various figures are chief agents in representing Yahweh and participating with him in divine roles such as creating and ordering the world (e.g., Wis 7:22; 8:1, 4), bringing eschatological judgment upon the wicked and mercy upon the elect (e.g., 1 En. 46:1-8; 48:4-10; 52:4-9; 11QMelch), or representing God in terms of general authority and power (e.g., T. Ab. 1:4; 2:1; Apoc. Ab. 10:1-14).⁸⁰ In this operation of the divine, there is a plurality, yet what distinguishes

⁷⁶ Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 83-4, 153.

⁷⁷ e.g., Deut 33:27; Ps 90:2; Isa 40:28; Hab 1:12; Tob 13:1; Sir 18:1; 2 Macc 1:25; T. Mos. 10:7; 1 En. 5:1; Sib. Or. 3:20; Frag. 3:23, 60.

⁷⁸ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 12.

⁷⁹ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 8-9.

⁸⁰ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 19-21.

Yahweh's divine agents from Yahweh himself is that it is required of God's people to worship Yahweh and prohibited to offer worship to any other thing or being.⁸¹ Though monotheism may recognize the existence of other "gods," either members of Yahweh's heavenly court or impotent nonentities, monotheism recognizes only one God worthy of worship, for he alone has supreme power.⁸² The existence of other "gods" is no threat to Jewish monotheism. What matters is how other beings are defined in relation to Yahweh. Distinguishing the true *Elohim* from other *elohim* is a matter of nature and status.⁸³ Yahweh is incomparable, in a class all his own. All other beings are created and cannot participate in the unique identity of God, the Creator and sovereign of all things. However, exclusive monotheism allows for a plurality in the essence of God. There are some divine intermediaries, such as the Angel of the Lord and the personified divine aspects of Yahweh, Wisdom and Word, which are not created beings. Rather they are identified with Yahweh and belong to his unique identity. The following survey will show how these divine intermediaries fit into Jewish monotheism.

Divine Intermediaries

Yahweh is uniquely transcendent, and at the same time, he is uniquely personal and intimate. To reveal his immanence without compromising his transcendence, Yahweh employed divine intermediaries to represent him. Included in ancient Israelite thinking, and especially evident in the literature of Second Temple Judaism, are the presence of heavenly figures, such as Michael, exalted Patriarchs, such as Enoch, Abraham, and Moses, and the personified divine

⁸¹ Hurtado, "First-Century Jewish Monotheism" 365.

⁸² Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 70, 88.

⁸³ Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 88-9. In the literature of later Second Temple Judaism, except in the works of the Qumran community and Philo, there was a reduction of the use of terms that could name *both* Yahweh and other heavenly beings. Words for "god" in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek almost entirely ceased to be used for Yahweh's heavenly servants.

attributes or powers of God, such as Wisdom and Word. These figures, designated “divine agents,” act as intermediaries between God and his covenant people.⁸⁴ Distinct from the prophets, priests, kings, and angelic host, they represent God in a unique capacity, they serve in a variety of roles, and they are second only to God himself in their participation with him in his rule of the world and redemption of the elect. Of special note for this study are the Angel of the Lord and the personified divine attributes of Yahweh, Wisdom and Word. Rather than posing a threat to Jewish monotheism and the commitment to one God, the presence of these divine agents highlights and underscores the immanence and omnipresence of the one true God.⁸⁵

The Angel of Yahweh

In the Old Testament, the Lord visibly manifested himself to his people as a theophany, “the appearance of the divine before a human audience.”⁸⁶ Though theophanies came in various forms,⁸⁷ the Lord visibly manifested himself most often as the Angel of the Lord, *malak Yahweh*, the only messenger who bears God’s name.⁸⁸ In the Old Testament narratives, the Angel of the Lord appears to God’s people and is identified as both Yahweh himself and distinct from Yahweh. The Angel of the Lord is sometimes a mere angel, sometimes Yahweh himself, and

⁸⁴ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 8-9.

⁸⁵ Peter Toon, *Our Triune God: A Biblical Portrayal of the Trinity* (Wheaton: BridgePoint, 1996), 76.

⁸⁶ George W. Savran, *Encountering the Divine: Theophany in Biblical Narrative*, JSOTSup 420 (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 6.

⁸⁷ In the OT, Yahweh manifested himself in various ways, such as a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire (Exod 13:17-22), a whisper (e.g., 1 Kgs 19:9-18), and in dreams and visions (e.g., Gen 28:12; Dan 10-12; Zech 1:7-17).

⁸⁸ In the Hebrew text, the exact phrase “Angel of Yahweh” occurs 55 times in 52 verses (Gen 16:7, 9-11; 22:11, 15; Exod 3:2; Num 22:22-27, 31-32, 34-35; Judg 2:1, 4; 5:23; 6:11-12; 21-22; 13:3, 13, 15-18; 20-21; 2 Sam 24:16; 1 Kgs 19:7; 2 Kgs 1:3, 15; 19:35; 1 Chr 21:12, 15-16, 18, 30; Ps 34:7; 35:5-6; Isa 37:36; Zech 1:11-12; 3:1, 5-6, 8; 12:8), and the phrase “Angel of God” appears 10 times (Gen 21:17; 31:11; Exod 14:19; Jdg 6:20; 13:6, 9; 1 Sam 29:9; 2 Sam 14:17, 20; 19:27).

sometimes the direct presenter of the divine presence.⁸⁹ In meetings between the human and the divine, where there was simultaneously an overlap of identities and a distinction between the Angel of the Lord and Yahweh,⁹⁰ the recipient of the message often did not at first perceive the encounter as divine. In these instances, the Angel of the Lord would appear suddenly in human form, and gradually over the course of the theophany, and sometimes even after, the recipient would come to the realization that he or she was in conversation with Yahweh himself.

The Angel of the Lord's first appearance is to Hagar in the wilderness, where he relays an encouraging message: Hagar will bear a son and his descendants will be too numerous to count (Gen 16:7-14). Promises such as these were usually only expressed by Yahweh himself (e.g., Gen 26:2-5; 28:13-14). When it is revealed that it is the Lord who is speaking to Hagar, she replies to the Angel by calling "the name of the Lord who spoke to her" a "God of seeing," for she had "seen him who looks after [her]." Later, when God hears Hagar weeping over her plight, the Angel reassures her that God will make Ishmael into a great nation (Gen 21:17-19). The Angel of Yahweh is more than a messenger of God. As a visible manifestation of Yahweh, the Angel is both equated with Yahweh yet distinct from him. The Angel of the Lord is more of a representation of Yahweh than a representative.⁹¹

The Angel of the Lord also appeared to the Patriarchs. To Abraham, the Angel of the Lord appears immediately after Abraham offered Isaac on the altar (Gen 22:10-18). The Angel calls from heaven and reveals himself as the messenger of God when he says, "I know that you fear God." He also reveals himself to be God by saying, "seeing you have not withheld your son,

⁸⁹ Boris Bobrinskoy, *The Mystery of the Trinity: Trinitarian Experience and Vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition*, trans. Anthony P. Gythiel (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999), 18.

⁹⁰ Gignilliat, "Trinity and the Old Testament," 206.

⁹¹ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, NICOT, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 1:451.

your only son, *from me*” (22:12, emphasis mine), referring to God who commanded the sacrifice.⁹² The Angel also speaks words that are in line with the covenant and echoes the promises of the Lord’s words in Genesis 12:1-3. The wording in the biblical author’s account, and the additional accounts relayed in this section, was intentionally “*designed* to blur the two persons” of Yahweh and the Angel of Yahweh.⁹³

Later, when the Angel of the Lord appeared to Jacob in a dream, he identified himself with Yahweh saying, “I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me” (Gen 31:11-13). In another divine encounter, Jacob wrestles with a “man” until daybreak (Gen 32:22-30). In the Old Testament, when God appears as a “man,” he is usually called the Angel of the Lord.⁹⁴ Though the Angel refuses to tell Jacob his name, he reveals that Jacob has “striven with God.” Hosea corroborates the event with additional details: Jacob strove with God and with the Angel (Hos 12:2-3).⁹⁵ Jacob names the place Peniel, for he had seen God face to face and lived. Later, on his deathbed, when Jacob blesses Ephraim and Manasseh, he places God and the Angel in an unmistakable parallel position, not to say that Yahweh is an angel, but to affirm that this particular Angel is Yahweh (Gen 48:14-16).⁹⁶ Additionally, the verb “bless” is singular rather than plural, “thereby telegraphing a tight *fusion* of the two divine beings on the part of the author. In other words, the writer had a clear opportunity to distinguish the God of

⁹² Andrew E. Steinmann, *Genesis*, TOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 220.

⁹³ Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2015), 136, emphasis in original.

⁹⁴ Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, TOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 181.

⁹⁵ Kidner, *Genesis*, 180; Heiser notes that Jacob’s wrestling with the Angel occurred by the waters of the Jabbok, but Hosea identifies the Angel with Bethel. This is because “Hosea’s inspired commentary on the incident isn’t about geography . . . [Hosea’s] telling us that Jacob wrestled with God himself, physically embodied— and identifies God with the angel who said he was the God of Bethel.” Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, 139.

⁹⁶ Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, 140; Steinmann, *Genesis*, 446-47; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis*, WBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 2:465.

Israel from the angel, but instead *merges their identities*.”⁹⁷ Such a fusion of the two divine beings reveals that the God of Israel is more than one divine being.

Other instances of the Angel of the Lord as Yahweh himself are found in the book of Judges, where he both spoke in the name of Yahweh and identified himself as Yahweh (2:1-5; 6:12-24). In his appearance to Manoah and his wife, the Angel of the Lord appears as a man and, at the same time, is equated with God (13:3-23). On another occasion, Joshua receives the same instruction Moses received on Mount Horeb: “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” The man who issues the command identifies himself as the commander of the army of the Lord (Josh 5:13-15). The identical language, “with a drawn sword in his hand,” is found in only two other places, both of which refer to the Angel of the Lord (Num 22:23, 31; 1 Chr 21:16).⁹⁸ Of special note is that Joshua bows down in worship before the Angel and is not reproved. Again, as in the other appearances of the Angel of the Lord, the distinction between Yahweh and his commander is blurred.⁹⁹ For Joshua, the Angel of the Lord is the manifestation of the divine presence of Yahweh himself. Thus, Joshua includes the Angel in the exclusive worship that is to be reserved for the one true God.

In Exodus 3, recounted above, Fretheim notes that the focus of the theophany is not the Angel of the Lord but the word spoken.¹⁰⁰ However, God’s encounter with Moses when he revealed his personal covenant name is the strongest passage that identifies the Angel of the Lord with Yahweh. While Stuart points to the appositional construct to support a translation of “the

⁹⁷ Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, 140, emphasis in original.

⁹⁸ Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, 146; David M. Howard, *Joshua: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Homan, 1998), 156.

⁹⁹ Howard, *Joshua*, 159-60. Cf. Josh 6:2-5.

¹⁰⁰ Fretheim, *Exodus*, 54.

Angel that is Yahweh” or “the Angel Yahweh,”¹⁰¹ Cole prefers *malak* to be translated “messenger” rather than “angel,” for it was not until the apocalyptic books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah that advanced angelology appears. For Cole, the Angel of the Lord calling to Moses out of the bush is “only a reverential synonym for God’s own presence.”¹⁰² However, the presence of God is not found in a vision or a dream. Rather, these are physical manifestations of the Angel of the Lord, who not only speaks on behalf of the Lord, but also identifies himself with Yahweh in such a way that reveals that the Angel of Yahweh is Yahweh himself and at the same time different from Yahweh. Though the Angel of the Lord is not all there is to God, in Genesis 3 and the other aforementioned passages, the Angel represents Yahweh in a true and real manner.¹⁰³

Though the phrase “Angel of Yahweh” does not appear in Genesis 18, the account of Abraham’s hospitality towards three visitors, Yahweh does appear in a visible, embodied form. The narrative begins by noting that Yahweh appeared to Abraham (18:1). However, what Abraham perceives are three men, whose sudden appearance indicates that they are heavenly messengers (18:2).¹⁰⁴ Though all three travelers are called “men,” the narrator identifies one of the three as the Lord (18:10) and the other two as angels (19:1, 15). What is puzzling is the “lack of clarity regarding the visitors,” specifically Yahweh’s relationship to the three.¹⁰⁵ It is strange that all three together accept Abraham’s invitation, address Abraham’s wife by name, and have

¹⁰¹ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC 2 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 111.

¹⁰² Cole, *Exodus*, 70.

¹⁰³ Stuart, *Exodus*, 110-13.

¹⁰⁴ John E. Hartley, *Genesis*, UBC (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 177.

¹⁰⁵ Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, rev., trans. John H. Marks, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 204-5.

knowledge of Sarah's barrenness (18:9).¹⁰⁶ Taking into account that when Yahweh speaks it is in the singular, von Rad suggests that Yahweh appears in all three of the messengers.¹⁰⁷

In addition to being a messenger, the Angel of Yahweh shares in the identity of Yahweh, having both the character and authority of God. He has the authority to speak for God and the authority to forgive sins, for the name of Yahweh is in him (Exod 23:20-23). At the same time, the Angel is distinct from Yahweh. The Angel goes before the Israelites into the land of promise, but Yahweh himself will not go with them (Exod 32:34; 33:2-3), but later, Yahweh states that his presence will go with Israel (Exod 33:14). Literally, "My face will go with you." Rather than a reference to the Angel, the idiom assures the Israelites that Yahweh will accompany them in person.¹⁰⁸

Though these appearances are often believed to be Christophanies, preincarnate appearances of Jesus, this view requires an anachronistic reading of the Hebrew canon. The manifestation of the Son in the flesh and the sending of the Holy Spirit certainly illuminate the Old Testament and affirm that God is Triune. However, this is not the view ancient Judaism would have considered. Sanders cautions that the uniqueness of the personal, visible missions of the Son in the incarnation and of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost must be preserved. Such a view maintains the belief in the Trinitarian work of God in the Old Testament and in creation at large while rejecting the notion that the second person of the Trinity was manifested in visible form

¹⁰⁶ Hartley, *Genesis*, 178. This observation is important, for the event took place in a culture in which women may have been nearby but not found in the presence of male visitors and in which strangers did not address another's wife.

¹⁰⁷ von Rad, *Genesis*, 204. *Contra* Kidner who sees a clear distinction between the Lord and his two companions (cf. Gen 18:22; 19:1). Kidner, *Genesis*, 142.

¹⁰⁸ Hamilton, *Exodus*, 565; Howard, *Joshua*, 160. Cf. Deut 4:37 where Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt "with his own presence" and Isa 63:9 which states, "the angel of his presence saved them."

before or apart from the Incarnation.¹⁰⁹ Regardless of whether one views the Angel of the Lord as a theophany or a Christophany, though the Angel is distinct and separate from the Lord, his identity overlaps with the identity of Yahweh. Thus, the title “Angel of Yahweh” is synonymous with “God” or “the Lord.”¹¹⁰ The above narratives present the Angel of the Lord as God himself in human form, with the term “angel” meaning “messenger.” This “implies that God, made visible, is at the same time God *sent*.”¹¹¹ The Angel of the Lord is both Yahweh and yet distinct from Yahweh. Such a relationship allows for plurality in the Israelite concept of God, while at the same time remaining faithful to monotheistic worship of Yahweh as expressed in the *Shema*.

Wisdom

In Hebrew literature, personified Wisdom is also portrayed as one of Yahweh’s divine agents who participates in the unique identity of God. In the wisdom tradition of Judaism, wisdom is both a human attribute and a divine attribute. As a gift from God, in the book of Proverbs, wisdom is described as a guide (8:1-19), a partner of morality (8:6-13), the key to success (8:14-21), and a necessity of life (8:32-36).¹¹² As a divine agent, Wisdom personified is not merely an attribute of God. Wisdom is distinct from God in her relationship with Yahweh and her role in the creation of the world.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, in *New Studies in Dogmatics*, eds. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 224-26.

¹¹⁰ Kidner, *Genesis*, 36, 181. Cf. Gen 16:7-11, with verse 13; 18:1, with verses 2, 33 and with 19:1; 31:11, with verse 13; 32:24, 30, with Hos 12 : 3-6; and Gen 48:15, with verse 16.

¹¹¹ Kidner notes that the Old Testament makes nothing of this paradox, and the true meaning is only found in the revelation of Jesus. Kidner, *Genesis*, 36.

¹¹² Derek Kidner, *Proverbs*, TOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 72.

¹¹³ Ben Witherington III, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 50. Witherington notes the importance of the personification of Wisdom: “It is an idea that, once introduced into the

In the Hebrew canon, though there are hints of Wisdom personified in the book of Job (15:7-8; 28:12-28), the first clear picture of the personification of Wisdom is found in the Book of Proverbs, where Wisdom is portrayed as a female figure calling simple ones to heed her advice to avoid disaster and reminding those who choose wisdom of their blessedness (1:20-33; 3:13-18; 8:1-21, 32-36). Of special interest is Wisdom's role in the creation of the world as God's companion and chief representative (8:22-31). Here, Wisdom is begotten rather than created, existing before any other creation, and therefore, she has "precedence in rank and dignity over the rest of the creation" (8:22-26).¹¹⁴ She is both distinct from and "at home" with both Yahweh and his created order, thus, she is a mediator of divine wisdom to humanity.¹¹⁵ Having an existence of her own, Wisdom was beside Yahweh as his "master workman," celebrating his creative acts, especially delighting in the creation of humankind (8:30-31). Concerning Wisdom in Proverbs 8, Kidner asserts that Wisdom is not a hypostasis, an actual heavenly being.¹¹⁶ Rather, personifying Wisdom was "a powerful way of saying that if *we* must do nothing without wisdom, God himself has made and done nothing without it. The wisdom by which the world is rightly used is none other than the wisdom by which it exists."¹¹⁷ Personified

biblical Wisdom tradition, took on a life of its own and grew in importance, in complexity, and in depth as time went on."

¹¹⁴ Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 1:408.

¹¹⁵ Waltke, *Book of Proverbs*, 1:422-23.

¹¹⁶ Kidner, *Proverbs*, 74; similarly, F. W. Dillistone, "Wisdom, Word, and Spirit: Revelation in the Wisdom Literature." *Int* 2.3 (Jul 1948): 275-87, here 278-79. Cf. James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 176; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 41; Witherington notes that in later literature, the portrayal of Wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon reveals "the beginnings of a groping beyond just personification of an attribute of God to a hypostasis." He asserts that Wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon is expressed as a hypostasis, and the ambiguity on the part of the author may be a result of not wanting to compromise his monotheism. Witherington, *Jesus the Sage*, 109.

¹¹⁷ Kidner, *Proverbs*, 74, emphasis in original.

Wisdom has her origin in God. She was with Yahweh at the beginning of time and partnered with him in creation.

In the Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom is portrayed as having a more active role in creation.¹¹⁸ Present at the creation of the world (9:9), Wisdom is “the fashioner of all things” (7:22),¹¹⁹ “an associate in [God’s] works,” who affects all things and orders them well (8:1, 4-5). By Wisdom, God “formed man” (9:2). She sits by the throne of God as Yahweh’s advisor in the exercise of his sovereignty (9:4, 10) and is described as “a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty . . . a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness” (7:25-26). Hayman describes Wisdom as “the visible reflection of God’s presence in the universe, perceived in its order and beauty, as in God’s saving work of which Wisdom is the agent” (cf. Wis 10-19).¹²⁰ Wisdom is so closely connected to Yahweh that she knows his works and understands what is pleasing in his sight and what is right according to his commandments, for she was with him at the creation of the world, and “she knows and understands all things” (9:9, 11).

The book of Sirach also portrays Wisdom as eternal (24:9) and connects her with the creation of the earth and humanity (24:5-6).¹²¹ Wisdom sits on a throne in heaven, in an exalted position in Yahweh’s heavenly council (24:2-4). Commanded by Yahweh to make Israel her

¹¹⁸ For a broader discussion of the Wisdom of Solomon which goes beyond the scope of this thesis see Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 174-180; David A. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 127-52; Witherington, *Jesus the Sage*, 3-116.

¹¹⁹ Hayman points out that this verse probably alludes to the LXX reading of Proverbs 8:30, but unlike Proverbs 8:22-23, Wisdom “seems to be primordial, as in Bar 3:32, 36,” for she is not said to be “created/acquired/begot.” A. Peter Hayman, *Wisdom of Solomon*, ECB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 763-78, here 769.

¹²⁰ Hayman, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 770.

¹²¹ For a broader discussion of the Wisdom of Sirach which goes beyond the scope of this thesis see Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 147-73; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 153-97.

dwelling place and “inheritance” and to have “dominion” in Jerusalem (24:8, 10-12), Wisdom guides and cares for God’s elect people as his viceregent.¹²²

Personified Wisdom is portrayed in Hebrew literature as a divine agent and representative of Yahweh. Wisdom is distinct from God, and at the same time, she is closely related to him in sharing in the divine activities of creating and ruling. This portrait of Wisdom as one who shares in the unique identity of Yahweh allows for the concept of plurality in the one true God.

Word

Another divine attribute of God that reveals God’s transcendence and immanence and allows for divine plurality, while remaining faithful to monotheism as expressed in the *Shema*, is the Word. The primary means of God’s revelation is by his Word, and the Hebrew canon reveals the Word as a divine creative agent, closely related to Wisdom. In Jewish literature, the Word of God personified is a figurative way of expressing Yahweh’s personal involvement with his people.¹²³ It was by Yahweh’s Word that the cosmos was created (Gen 1:3, 6; Ps 33:6-9) and the covenant with Israel was established (Exod 19:5-6). By Yahweh’s Word, there is deliverance (Isa 55:1), healing (Ps 107:20), revelation (Jer 1:4; Isa 9:8; Ezek 33:7; Amos 3:1, 8), and judgment (Ps 29:3-9; Isa 55:11). God’s Word is “firmly fixed in the heavens” (Ps 119:89), and when Yahweh “sends out his command to the earth,” the Word “runs swiftly” (Ps 147:15).

The writers of subsequent Jewish literature maintained the personification of the Word of the Lord. Yahweh’s “all-powerful word” is portrayed as a warrior “carrying the sharp sword of [Yahweh’s] authentic command” (Wis 18:15-16). Everything is created by Yahweh’s Word as a

¹²² Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 44.

¹²³ Buist M. Fanning, “Word,” *NDBT*, eds. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 848-53, here 848.

perfect work (Wis 9:1; Jub 12:4; 4 Ezra 6:38). He calls into existence that which did not yet exist, and his Word brings life (2 Bar 21:4; 48:8). As he spoke, Yahweh's creation stood before him (2 Bar 14:17). All of God's works are accomplished by his words (Sir 42:15).

With over fourteen hundred uses of the term *logos* in his writings, Philo of Alexandria provides the most comprehensive look at Jewish thought when it comes to Word personified.¹²⁴ For Philo, Yahweh's Word plays the role of mediator or broker between God, who is the Patron, and Israel, who is the client.¹²⁵ Philo writes,

To His Word, His chief messenger, highest in age and honour, the Father of all has given the special prerogative, to stand on the border and separate the creature from the Creator. This same Word both pleads with the immortal as suppliant for afflicted mortality and acts as ambassador of the ruler to the subject. He glories in this prerogative and proudly describes it in these words 'and I stood between the Lord and you' (Deut. 5:5), that is neither uncreated as God, nor created as you, but midway between the two extremes, a surety to both sides.¹²⁶

Yahweh's Word is a divine mediating agent between Israel and God, an ambassador of unique status who intercedes for Israel and proclaims the mercy of the Creator. Like Wisdom, Word belongs to both worlds as an uncreated being who is identified with Yahweh.

In Hebrew Scripture and later Judaic literature, Bauckham notes, "Jewish writers envisage some form of real distinction within the unique identity of the one God."¹²⁷ Both Wisdom and Word are portrayed as separate and elevated divine representatives of Yahweh in their roles, yet they are not subordinate divine beings, nor are they non-divine creatures of God. They are portrayed in a variety of ways, as expressing God's mind and will in relation to the world. When Scripture notes the creation of the cosmos as an independent act of Yahweh alone

¹²⁴ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 45.

¹²⁵ Jerome H. Neyrey, "Was Jesus of Nazareth a Monotheist?" *BTB* 49.3 (2019): 132–145, here 135-6.

¹²⁶ Philo. *Heir* 205-206 (Colson, LCL).

¹²⁷ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 22.

(Isa 44:24), yet also notes that Wisdom and Word actively participated in creation, there is no discrepancy. Wisdom and Word are not separate, created beings or semi-divine entities. Rather, as aspects of God's own identity, Wisdom and Word are a part of Yahweh's unique identity.¹²⁸ Wisdom and Word are so closely related to Yahweh, they are unequivocally included within his unique divine identity. They are real distinctions within the unique identity of Yahweh.¹²⁹ This in no way compromises Jewish monotheism. Bauckham affirms this point by saying, "The Second Temple Jewish understanding of the divine uniqueness does not define it as unitariness and does not make distinctions within the divine identity inconceivable. Its perfectly clear distinction between God and all other reality is made in other terms."¹³⁰ The figures of Wisdom and Word, however, do not belong to all other reality. Rather, they are identified with Yahweh himself and belong to his unique divine identity.

A Foundation for Christian Thought

The Jewish confession of faith concisely articulated in the *Shema* expresses allegiance to Yahweh and his eternal kingdom. In belief, it is a statement of monotheism, and in practice, it is a statement of monolatry, the exclusive worship of the one true God. God's people who have been rescued and redeemed out of bondage to slavery are obligated to worship the one true God. Yahweh is the sole Creator and ruler of all things in heaven and earth and deserves all worship, glory, and honor. Nothing and no one else qualify in either nature or status. He is absolutely unique, and he reveals his identity in his name, by his acts in history, and by his character. He is one God, the only God worthy of worship.

¹²⁸ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 21.

¹²⁹ Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 159.

¹³⁰ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 22.

In his sovereignty, Yahweh employs servants to accomplish his will and purpose. Of all the servants he commissions, the Angel of the Lord and the personified divine attributes of Wisdom and Word reveal the uniqueness of God in his unity and plurality. They also reveal God's immanence without compromising his transcendence and were understood by Jews "as ways of asserting God's *nearness*, his involvement with the world, his concern for his people."¹³¹ These divine intermediaries are "basically vivid ways of speaking of God's own powers and activities."¹³² The Hebrew writers conveyed the complexity of God and his immanence and transcendence in a way that laid a foundation of concepts that would later be seen more clearly with the coming of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Thus, when first-century Christians engaged in exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures through the lens of Jesus Christ's life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and the arrival of the Spirit at Pentecost, they came to an understanding that the exclusive worship of Yahweh included worship of the Christ.

¹³¹ James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), 130, emphasis in original.

¹³² Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 41.

CHAPTER 3

PAUL'S TRINITARIAN WRITING, PART 1

The earliest attestations of the first Christians' beliefs and devotion are found in the letters of the apostle Paul, who had been a missionary for no fewer than fifteen years and had most likely worked out the crucial matters of his theology before putting pen to parchment.¹³³ After encountering the exalted Lord Jesus Christ, Paul saw in the sacred text of Scripture "a place where the long-awaited Christ could now be found everywhere."¹³⁴ Thus, Paul's letters are filled with quotes and allusions from the Old Testament, woven together to maintain the traditional monotheism of the people of Israel and include the reality of his experience with Christ and the Spirit.

Paul's encounter with the resurrected Lord Jesus radically changed his worldview in a way that enlarged his thinking about the God of Israel (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8), and his writing reveals a thoroughly Christocentric perspective in which,¹³⁵ by design, he mentions Christ sixty-three more times than God and freely interchanges the nouns *Theos* and *Christos* in varying ways when referring to divine activities such as creation, salvation, and judgment.¹³⁶ Though Paul does not present a systematic theology that includes the doctrine of the Trinity, in his occasional

¹³³ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 139. Cf. Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity*, trans. John Bowden (London: Fortress, 1983), 30-47.

¹³⁴ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 23.

¹³⁵ Hengel asserts that "all the essential features of Paul's Christology were already fully developed towards the end of the 40s." Evidence for this comes from the lack of a detectable development in Paul's basic christological views in his letters. What can be seen are Paul's presuppositions in the use of the christological titles, formulae, and conceptions which would have already been known in the communities to which he was writing. Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul*, 31.

¹³⁶ Fee, *Jesus the Lord*, 17; In *Pauline Christology*, Fee notes that even though Paul mentions Christ more than God, he remains consistently theocentric. After his encounter with Christ, there was no way for Paul to talk about God without talking about what God had accomplished in and through Jesus. "Thus, by reason of his

letters to churches and individuals, he spells out the implications of understanding the nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In a Trinitarian way, Paul presents his experiences and explains how believers are to live in light of the salvation they have received, a salvation that comes from being elected by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and indwelt by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through unexpected allusions, sudden exclamations, and explicit assertions, Paul reveals his presuppositions which became the raw material used to craft the doctrine of the Trinity.¹³⁷

Paul's Christology

To understand the formation of early Christian belief and the inclusion of Jesus Christ in the unique identity of Yahweh, portions of Paul's letters will be examined to show how Paul includes Jesus in the unique identity of Yahweh as Creator and sovereign by identifying Jesus with God's name and applying to Jesus the role of divine agent of creation. Paul uses language about Christ which complements language about God, thereby providing "the basis for a new (but not totally new) concept of God."¹³⁸

The twice-a-day recitation of the *Shema*, "Our God is Yahweh, Yahweh alone!" was thoroughly ingrained in the hearts and minds of the first Jewish Christians who remained faithful to the traditions of their forefathers, so Paul did not need to make a point to emphasize this basic

upbringing and continuing theological reflection, Paul can rightly be described as theocentric; but by experience and in proclamation he is utterly christocentric." Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 148. Cf. David M. Hay, "All the Fullness of God: Concepts of Deity in Colossians and Ephesians," in *The Forgotten God: Perspectives in Biblical Theology*, eds. A. Andrew Das and Frank J. Matera (Louisville: Westminster, 2002), 163-79, here 169. Hay writes, "Christology does not displace theology, but interprets it."

¹³⁷ Jules Lebreton, *History of the Dogma of the Trinity from its Origins to the Council of Nicæa* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1938), 286.

¹³⁸ Neil Richardson, *Paul's Language about God, JSNTSup 99* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 301.

Jewish concept that there is “one God.”¹³⁹ Even for Gentile converts, many of whom had been steeped in polytheism and to whom Paul wrote the majority of his letters, the reality that there was one sovereign and Creator God was assumed to be true. So, when Paul writes, he remains consistent with the Jewish tradition in which he had been taught and raised, and in doing so, he both affirms his monotheism and presents the oneness *and* plurality of God.

As was shown in the previous chapter, Yahweh revealed himself in the visible manifestation of the Angel of Yahweh and by his divine attributes, Wisdom and Word. Ultimately, Yahweh revealed himself in his incarnate Son, Jesus Christ. After experiencing a personal encounter with the resurrected Jesus Christ and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, Paul understood the exclusive devotion to one God to include worship of both the Father and the Son. From what Paul understood about Jesus, there was no other option than to include Christ in the exclusive devotion due to the one true God, for Paul’s experience with the exalted Lord, combined with his examination of the Scriptures, led to the belief that Jesus shared in the unique identity of Yahweh.

In Jewish thought, God is Creator of all things and sovereign of all things. The only way Paul and the early Christians would have included Jesus in their exclusive devotion is if they would have viewed the exalted Christ as participating in the divine identity of the one true God. Such devotion and worship of Jesus occurred within the first two decades of the birth of the church.¹⁴⁰ Thus, Paul could easily present a reformulated *Shema* without any explanation or opposition from the believers to whom he was writing. Paul’s writings are full of christological

¹³⁹ Cf. Fee, *Jesus the Lord*, 183. Paul uses the language of “one God” in six passages (1 Cor 8:4, 6; Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30; Eph 4:6; 1 Tim 2:5); implies such language with “the same God,” meaning “one and the same God” (1 Cor 12:6); and uses the phrase “only God” once (1 Tim 1:17). Five of the seven either present an equal emphasis on Christ (1 Cor 8:6; Gal 3:20; 1 Tim 2:5) or on Christ and the Spirit (1 Cor 12:6; Eph 4:6).

¹⁴⁰ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 12.

texts that portray the worship of Christ in conjunction with the worship of God. To know how to read Paul and to understand how he communicates with his Jewish audience, it is important to look at three of Paul's primary christological texts, which "have embedded in them all the key elements" of Paul's Christology.¹⁴¹

There is One God and One Lord: 1 Corinthians 8:5-6

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, his third argument in the appeal for unity within the church addresses the issue of eating food sacrificed to idols (1:10; 8:1-11:1). Paul begins his argument by quoting from the Corinthians' earlier letter, "all of us possess knowledge," which is a claim "based on an idiosyncratic interpretation" of the *Shema* that, in their thinking, supports the practice of eating food sacrificed to idols.¹⁴² Since there is only one true God and idols are non-gods, then food offered to idols is not contaminated and may be eaten.¹⁴³ Though the Corinthians are somewhat correct in their thinking, the larger principle at stake is how believers should live out their freedom in Christ in light of the fact that they exclusively serve the one true God.¹⁴⁴ Such worship must affect the way one not only relates to God but also to others.

Rather than attacking the Corinthians' peculiar logic, Paul affirms the truth by alluding to the end of Moses' first address (Deut 4:35, 39).¹⁴⁵ Idols have no real existence and "there is no God but one." Paul agrees with the believers in Corinth, and at the same time, he deliberately

¹⁴¹ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 20. The texts under consideration will be 1 Corinthians 8:6; Philippians 2:6-11; and Colossians 1:15-20.

¹⁴² Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, "1 Corinthians," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 695-752, here 717.

¹⁴³ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 340-41; Neyrey, "Was Jesus a Monotheist?" 140.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 382.

¹⁴⁵ Block, "How Many Is God?" 210.

enlarges their perspective of the one God whom they serve by shifting the focus from the existence of so-called gods and the right to eat food sacrificed to idols to the question of proper allegiance, devotion, and worship.¹⁴⁶ He does this by grounding his entire argument in a proper interpretation of the *Shema*, which requires whole-souled devotion, both in belief and praxis, not just for the individual but for the entire Christian community. Thus, Paul begins with an allusion to the *Shema* in his statement, “But if anyone loves God, he is known by God” (8:3).¹⁴⁷ The basis of all Christian behavior and the aim of faith must be love rather than knowledge. The *Shema* presents two choices: love and serve Yahweh exclusively (Deut 6:4; 11:13) or “turn aside and serve other gods and worship them” (Deut 11:16). Though there are “many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’” to whom the pagans pledge their allegiance and worship (8:5), for Christians, there is only one God and one Lord (8:6).

Paul’s wording of “many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’”¹⁴⁸ contrasts well with “one God” and “one Lord.”¹⁴⁹ In both cases, Paul makes no distinction between “θεός and κύριος as though

¹⁴⁶ Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 100; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 127.

¹⁴⁷ Here, 1 Corinthians 8:3 reflects the standard text. However, Clement and P⁴⁶, the earliest witnesses in Egypt, read, “If anyone loves, this one truly knows (or, is known).” Fee understands the earliest witnesses to be Paul’s original words, for the “shorter text brings Paul’s point home so powerfully.” Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 367-9, here 368. Thus, rather than establishing a relationship with God on the basis of knowledge and addressing the Corinthians’ love for God, Paul is concerned with the Corinthians’ failure to love those who are “weak” and do not have the same “knowledge.” On the other hand, Wright sees this verse as a reference to humans loving God, which he notes is rare when compared to references to God’s love for his people. Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 127. Thus, when Paul writes about humans loving God, it is possible that he wants to call to mind the Jewish confession of faith. Either way, the *Shema* calls believers to love God with their entire being, and in doing so, believers will also demonstrate love for others.

¹⁴⁸ Paul has already referred to idols worshiped as “so-called gods,” so the placing of “gods” and “lords” in quotation marks is appropriate and affirms that the entities which others may refer to as “gods” and “lords” are not really what idol worshipers suppose them to be. Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 381.

¹⁴⁹ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 633. Cf. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 100; Ciampa and Rosner, “1 Corinthians,” 718; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 314-15; Ron C. Fay, “Greco-Roman Concepts of Deity,” in *Paul’s World*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Pauline Studies, vol. 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2008) 51-79; Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 373; Gordon D. Fee, “Toward a Theology of 1 Corinthians,” in *Pauline Theology*,

κύριος were an intermediary god . . . κύριος is here a concept of relationship,” denoting dependence upon another.¹⁵⁰ For Christians, there is only one God on whom they are dependent, for he is the Creator and sovereign of all things, and there is one Lord on whom they are dependent, for through him are all things and through him Christians have their very being. Paul shows this dependence on both the Father and the Son by using the key words “God,” “Lord,” and “one” from the Greek wording of the *Shema*: κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστίν (“The Lord our God is one Lord,” or “The Lord our God, the Lord is one”). While maintaining allegiance to the one true God of Israel, Paul redefines traditional Jewish monotheism by dividing the wording between the Father and the Son, in a sense, splitting the *Shema*, to include Jesus in the unique identity of Yahweh.¹⁵¹ In this credal formula, Paul contrasts the God whom Christians worship as Father and Son with all other “so-called gods.”

Volume 2: 1 and 2 Corinthians, ed. David M. Hay, Society of Biblical Literature 2002 Symposium Series, SBLSymS 22 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 37-58, here 42-3; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 33-4, 331, 341-42; Murphy-O'Connor, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” *NJBC*, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 798-815, here 806; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 101-2; B. J. Oropeza, *1 Corinthians*, NCCS (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2017), 109. By “gods,” Paul is referring to traditional Greek and Roman deities and foreign gods, and by “lords,” he is referring to either deities of mystery cults or the divinization of Hellenistic and Roman emperors, such as Julius Caesar and Caesar Augustus. In his wording, Paul endorses the “strong” Corinthians’ ontological and existential monotheism. “So-called gods” may have power over some people’s lives, but they are not really gods, and they are not Yahweh. However, “*kyrios*-cults” truly existed, and new converts had long practiced allegiance, devotion, and worship to these “so-called gods,” who consequently still held existential, emotional, and psychological influence over the “weak” believers. In 1 Corinthians 10:14-22, Paul associates these “so-called gods” with demons. Thus, these “so-called gods” are subjectively real and represent some sort of reality, but the wording may also recall Moses’ words in Deuteronomy 10:17, the only other biblical reference where “gods” and “lords” appear in the same sentence: “the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords” (Deut 10:17).

¹⁵⁰ Werner Foerster, “Κύριος,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 1039-95, here 1091.

¹⁵¹ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 37-9; Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 102-3; Gordon D. Fee, *Jesus the Lord*, 31; Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 180; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 90; Gerald O’Collins, *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 55-6; Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 393; Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 129. *Contra* McGrath who argues for an expanded rather than a split *Shema*. The second clause including “one Lord” has been “added on the outside, alongside the *Shema*, rather than on the inside, into the definition of the nature of God himself.” Christ is “one agent and mediator,” who rules over all creation on behalf of

Paul glosses “God” with “Father” and “Lord” with “Jesus Christ,” adding an explanatory phrase to each one.¹⁵² In calling God “the Father,” Paul uses language Jesus himself used and gifted to his followers. Describing God as Father was not a new concept, for as Creator and Redeemer, God is the Father of Israel (e.g., Isa 63:16) and of the world. Though Paul frequently names God as Father, it is only within the reformulation of the *Shema* that Paul connects God as Father with creation.¹⁵³ As Creator, the Father is the source of all things. The term “Father” expresses Jesus’ unique relationship within the Godhead. It also expresses the personal relationship believers share with God.¹⁵⁴ God the Father is both transcendent and immanent.

In addition to reminding the Corinthians that the Father is Creator, Paul points out that the Father is also the goal. According to Fee, such a creedal formula would express eschatological terms in which God stands at the beginning and end of all things. However, Paul personalizes the creed by using the pronoun “we” and an ambiguous preposition, εἰς, “for/unto,” to create a goal with “a very strongly telic (purpose) force to it.”¹⁵⁵ The goal of the Christian is relationship with the Father, a relationship that includes practical implications. All of creation

the one God, who has ultimate authority, for he is the source of all things. James F. McGrath, *The Only True God: Early Christian Monotheism in Its Jewish Context* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 40-2.

¹⁵² Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 129.

¹⁵³ Cf. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 316-17. The paternity of God is frequently mentioned by Paul, who calls God “Father” about 40 times. God is the Father of all those who believe and have received the Spirit of adoption as his children (Rom 8:14-15; 9:26; 2 Cor 6:18; Gal 3:26; 4:6). Paul writes to believers about “the Father” (Rom 6:4), “God the Father” (1 Cor 8:6; 15:24), and “our God and Father” (Gal 1:4; Phil 4:20; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:3; 3:11, 13; 2 Thess 1:1; 2:16). Often, God the Father is mentioned in conjunction with Jesus. In all but two of Paul’s letters (Colossians and 1 Thessalonians), his greeting includes “God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ/Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; 2 Thess 1:2; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Titus 1:4; Phlm 1:3). God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he raised from dead (Rom 15:6; 2 Cor 1:3; 11:31; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:3; Col 1:3).

¹⁵⁴ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 374-75. *Contra* Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, ed. George W. MacRae, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 144. Conzelmann refers to the two explanatory relative clauses and draws the conclusion that “Father” refers only to God as Creator and not to God as Father of Jesus Christ.

¹⁵⁵ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 375. Cf. Fee, “Theology of 1 Corinthians,” 40-1.

was created by design for God's will and purposes. The *Shema* requires both belief and practice of exclusive worship of and obedience to the Father, the Creator of all things.

Mention of the Father in 1 Corinthians 8:6 presupposes the Son,¹⁵⁶ and Paul makes a theological statement by including the preexistent Son in the *Shema* and by applying to him both the title "Lord" and the role of divine agent of creation.¹⁵⁷ In connecting "Lord" with "Jesus Christ,"¹⁵⁸ Paul divides the wording of the *Shema* between the Father and the Son. The importance of this move is found in understanding that in the religious sphere, κύριος in the Old Testament always refers to Yahweh, the true God.¹⁵⁹ While in the New Testament, God is primarily called (ὁ) κύριος in Old Testament quotations and allusions drawn from the LXX,¹⁶⁰ Paul regularly and consistently uses κύριος with reference to Christ.¹⁶¹ Though Paul's use of

¹⁵⁶ Hurtado notes that there is no explicit reference to Jesus' divine sonship in 1 Corinthians 8. Paul only refers to Jesus as God's "Son" seventeen times in his letters, not to express divinity or justify worship of him but to express the unique standing and intimate favor Jesus has with his Father and to show the Father's direct involvement in Jesus' redemptive work. Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 101-8.

¹⁵⁷ Concerning the possibility that Paul sees Jesus as the preexistent Son here, Murphy-O'Connor asserts, "There is no allusion to the preexistence of Christ." Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "First Letter to the Corinthians," 806. Similarly, Dunn argues that Christ is not being identified as a preexistent being but with the creative power and action of God embodied in Christ. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 182-83. However, Fee believes 1 Corinthians 8:6 to be Paul's earliest assertion of Christ as the preexistent Son of God. This is not something Paul is arguing for. Rather, Paul is arguing from "a basic theological affirmation held in common by the entire early church," an affirmation firmly in place within the first two decades of the Christian faith. Fee, *Jesus the Lord*, 31. Similarly, Collins, *First Corinthians*, 320; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 144-45; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 343; Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 118-26; Schnelle, *Apostle Paul*, 398-99. Cf. Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 375-6; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 91; Joseph Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology," NJBC, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 1382-1416, here 1393-94.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 291-301; Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 35; O'Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 47; Peter Toon, *Our Triune God*, 168-69. See "Excursus: κύριος" beginning on p. 71.

¹⁵⁹ See "Excursus: κύριος" beginning on p. 71.

¹⁶⁰ Foerster, "Κύριος," 1086.

¹⁶¹ Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 55-6; O'Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 45-6. Paul uses the title "Lord" or "Son of God" for Jesus and reserves "God" for the Father. In his oldest letter alone, 1 Thessalonians, Paul calls Jesus "Lord" twenty-four times. Paul's use of the title "Lord" for Jesus is never defended or explained, for belief in the full deity of Jesus was an essential precept from the very start of Christianity. Paul and fellow believers regarded Jesus as sharing in the unique identity of God.

κύριος in 1 Corinthians 8:6 may at first appear to reflect the divine personal name “Yahweh,” he more likely has in mind the title *Adonai*.¹⁶² Insight into Paul’s view of who Christ is can be seen in this “name-turned-title” given to the resurrected and exalted Christ Jesus in early Christian affirmations (1 Cor 8:6; Phil 2:9-11; Rom 10:9-13; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Tim 2:22).¹⁶³ Further, though the vocative use of κύριε was used as an honorific title, Jesus’ reference to himself as “Lord” was more significant (Mark 2:28; 11:3; 12:37).¹⁶⁴ Thus, the title κύριος, as used by Paul within the reformulated *Shema* and elsewhere, implies a position equal to that of God. What is said about Yahweh in the Old Testament is true of Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁵ Paul, in his reformulation of the Jewish confession of faith, divides the wording of the *Shema* between the Father and Son, showing that Paul’s view of the oneness of God includes both the Father and the Son. There is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ.

Whereas in 1 Corinthians Paul divides the *Shema* by applying two of the prepositions, “from” and “for/to,” to God to describe his relationship as Creator of all things, and the third,

¹⁶² Block, “How Many Is God?” 211. Block also points out that the latter title of Deuteronomy 10:17, “the God of gods and Lord of lords,” which refers to Yahweh, is applied to the Lamb in Revelation 17:14.

¹⁶³ Fee, *Jesus the Lord*, 126-36.

¹⁶⁴ Yarnell III, *God the Trinity*, 79-80. Cf. R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 486-88; William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT. (Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 436-38; Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 570-72. Jesus’ use of the royal psalm, Psalm 110, in Mark 12:35-37 challenged the Jewish notion of the Messiah, who was much more than the Son of David. Jesus the Messiah is Lord of all and will be exalted to the throne of God to rule over all the earth. *Contra* Bousset who argues that the significant transition of the divine name “the Lord” did not originate in the primitive Palestinian community, but rather in the Hellenistic communities. Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. John E. Steely, 5th ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 122-28.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. O’Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 47-8. For Paul, the word of the Lord in the Old Testament became the word of the Lord Jesus (1 Thess 1:8; 2 Thess 3:1); salvation promised to those who call on the name of the Lord for deliverance in the Old Testament was fulfilled by Christians who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Joel 2:32; 1 Cor 1:2); and the day of the Lord was reapplied to the day of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 5:2; 1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16). Paul applies Old Testament passages which refer to God as “Lord” to Jesus or speaks of these passages as fulfilled in Christ (Rom 10:13 cites Joel 2:32 and Phil 2:10 alludes to Isa 45:23-24). In addition, Christ shares lordship over all created beings in heaven and on earth (Phil 2:10; Col 1:16-17; 2:8-10), and in some instances, it is not always clear if the title “Lord” applies to God or Christ (e.g., 1 Cor 4:19; 2 Cor 8:21).

“through,” to Christ, Paul uses the same prepositions in an undivided way to refer to God alone at Romans 11:36a: “For from him and through him and to him are all things.” God is the agent of creation, for from him are all things; the goal, for to him are all things; and the instrumental cause, for through him are all things.¹⁶⁶ This monotheistic formula expressing the unique identity of God as the sole Creator of all things was not original to Paul. It “was known to him as a Jewish description precisely of God's unique relationship to all other reality.”¹⁶⁷ The importance of Paul's theological grammar in dividing the prepositions is expressed by Richardson:

[Paul's] thinking begins and ends with God. Yet between the ‘movement’ from God and back to God there is Christ. Thus Paul's language about God has been opened up, amplified, explicated, justified, by language about Christ . . . Clearly, God is not eclipsed by Christ in Paul's thought. Rather, in most of the contexts where Christ-language occurs, God is explicitly or implicitly origin, author, prime mover and goal . . . Here God is the framework, environment, warrant, ultimate reference-point of that ministry. Christ-language ‘fills out’ the framework by demonstrating the pattern.¹⁶⁸

In dividing the wording of the *Shema*, Paul includes the preexistent Son in the uniquely divine work of creation.¹⁶⁹ Christ was not just present at creation; he is the very agent of creation, the instrumental cause, a role exclusive to God, who carried out the work of creation by means of his Wisdom and Word. In the same way Jesus takes the place of “the Lord” in the *Shema*, he takes the place of “Wisdom” and “Word” in Second Temple Judaism.¹⁷⁰ Jesus is neither a “second

¹⁶⁶ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 39; Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 102-3.

¹⁶⁷ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 39; Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 103.

¹⁶⁸ Richardson, *Paul's Language about God*, 304.

¹⁶⁹ Fee notes that Paul typically “encloses the work of the Son within that of the Father.” In 1 Corinthians 8:6, Paul does this by framing the phrases referring to the one Lord's role as agent of creation and redemption within the phrases referring to the Father as the ultimate source and goal of creation and redemption. Fee, *To What End Exegesis?* 357.

¹⁷⁰ *Contra* Richardson who proposes that based on the two different perspectives of “we” (ἡμεῖς), there is the possibility of τὰ πάντα having two different meanings. Christians were created “for God” (εἰς αὐτόν) and redeemed “through” Christ (ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ). Thus, the first τὰ πάντα refers to God's creative work and the second to his salvific work through Christ. Such an interpretation denies Wisdom Christology. For Richardson, it is

God” nor is he a semidivine intermediary. He is not a competitor for the devotional attention of Christians. He is unequivocally included in the identity of Israel’s God, and, as the one in whom the fullness of Yahweh is revealed (Col 1:19; 2:9), Jesus deserves exclusive devotion and worship accorded to the one true God.

Paul’s affirmation that Jesus participated in the work of creation with the Father also includes Jesus in the goal of the “new creation.” The second phrase “hints at Christ’s soteriological role on behalf of Christians.”¹⁷¹ Jesus Christ is the means through whom Christians attain their existence and the aim toward which they are destined. He is both origin and goal. Creation and redemption are both the work of Christ, who has a role in the “protological and eschatological” work of God.¹⁷² Jesus Christ is the agent of eschatological salvation, the eschatological Lord through whom God has come into the world to work and to save and, in the end, who will hand over the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor 15:24; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15).

After considering the above, it must be noted that while Paul includes Jesus in the unique identity of God, he also distinguishes Jesus from God. The two are not interchangeable. Each remains recognizably distinct from the other in their roles and identity. Jesus is the Lord and the

doubtful that Paul is saying anything about the preexistence of Christ. Paul’s “twin affirmations” about the “one God” and the “one Lord” “are simply set side by side, and the relationship between the two is not spelled out.” According to Richardson, those who see a binitarianism in these verses have “over-simplified the evidence of these texts.” Richardson, *Paul’s Language about God*, 297-300. Similarly, Dunn asserts that when the context is considered, it can be seen that Paul is simply drawing on pre-Christian tradition to draw out the implications of Christ’s Lordship. Paul is not talking about the preexistent Christ. Rather, he may be identifying Christ with the creative act and power of God. Thus, Christ is “the action of God” and “embodies the creative power of God . . . in a final and complete way.” Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 181-82. While Fee does understand the passage to affirm the preexistence of Christ as the personal agent of creation, he asserts that there is no evidence to support that Paul is identifying Christ with personified Wisdom. Fee argues that it is doubtful Paul “would have understood Wisdom in terms of *personal pre-existence in the same way that he so considered Christ*” (p. 368, emphasis in original). Unlike Wisdom, who was simply present at creation, Paul understood Jesus as the Son of God who was an actual agent of creation. Fee, *To What End Exegesis?* 355-75.

¹⁷¹ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 343.

¹⁷² Collins, *First Corinthians*, 315.

mediating agent involved in the divine work of creation and salvation, which are both initiated by God the Father. The relationship is one of “*asymmetrical mutuality* between God and Jesus, whereby God is not who God is as ‘father’ without Jesus and Jesus is not who he is as the raised and exalted one without God.”¹⁷³ God and Jesus mutually share the divine name κύριος and the divine work of creation and salvation in such a way that their identities “are inseparably bound up with one another’s.”¹⁷⁴ At the same time, the relationship is asymmetrical. Christ is the one through whom God creates and saves. Thus, there is both a shared identity between God and Jesus and an irreducible distinction.¹⁷⁵ God the Father and Jesus together are “one God,” and at the same time, each is distinctly unique.

It is noteworthy that Paul does not argue for the reformulation of the *Shema*. Rather, his wording assumes that his audience is already familiar with the christological significance which Paul has interpreted in the *Shema*.¹⁷⁶ This may be a result of Paul’s appropriation of a preexistent formula,¹⁷⁷ which is believed to have been a public baptismal acclamation, an utterance “rooted in the wonder inspired by the experience of power” and recited on occasions when believers were gathered together for worship.¹⁷⁸ Such a baptismal acclamation would have reminded believers of their salvation by the power of God in Christ. The acclamation echoes both the

¹⁷³ Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 133. Emphasis in original.

¹⁷⁴ Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 133.

¹⁷⁵ Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 134.

¹⁷⁶ Fee, *Jesus the Lord*, 30-1; Wright, “One God, One Lord,” 23. Cf. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 146-47.

¹⁷⁷ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 315; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 336; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 101-2. The nature of the hymnic structure which Paul uses in verse 6 differs from his usual mode of expression. Nowhere else does Paul use the phrase εἰς Θεὸς ὁ Πατήρ or refer to the mediating role of Christ in creation. Thus, some exegetes regard the creed as a pre-Pauline formula.

¹⁷⁸ Murphy-O’Connor, “First Letter to the Corinthians,” 806; Murphy-O’Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians*, 102-3.

Shema and “the primitive Christian kerygma” (1 Cor 12:3; Rom 10:9).¹⁷⁹ Paul’s reformulation of the *Shema* presents not only his belief and practice but also the belief and practice of his contemporaries.

Hurtado refers to Paul’s reformulation of the *Shema* as “a mutation” within the Jewish monotheistic tradition, which he asserts was no “clumsy crossbreeding of Jewish monotheism and pagan polytheism under the influence of Gentile Christians too ill-informed about the Jewish heritage to preserve its character.”¹⁸⁰ Paul remains firmly rooted in monotheism. However, his thinking, and that of first-century Christians, was enlarged to encompass the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Thus, devotion to Christ was compatible with the monotheistic faith and practice of the first Jewish Christians. The inclusion of Jesus in their religious devotion and worship, which was a result of the conviction that it was Yahweh’s will, affirmed the sovereignty and glory of God.¹⁸¹

In placing “Jesus within an explicit statement, drawn from the Old Testament’s quarry of emphatically monotheistic texts,”¹⁸² Paul reaffirms strict Jewish monotheism and gives the *Shema* christological significance. While maintaining the ways Judaism distinguished the one true God from all other reality, Paul explicitly presents the reality that the identity of Christ is found within the very definition of the one God and Lord of Israel.¹⁸³ The statement of the *Shema* is that worship and devotion, exclusive allegiance, belongs to the one true God, the

¹⁷⁹ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 336.

¹⁸⁰ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 139-40.

¹⁸¹ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 139.

¹⁸² Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 129.

¹⁸³ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 40; Brian S. Rosner, “Paul and the Trinity,” in *The Essential Trinity: New Testament Foundations and Practical Relevance*, eds. Brandon D. Crowe and Carl R. Trueman (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2017), 118-34, here 121.

Creator and sovereign of all. This requires both right behavior and right theology. Believers must live out their freedom in Christ in light of the fact that they exclusively serve the one true God. For Paul and those who have been saved by the Father through Christ, worship entails devotion to both the Father *and* the Son. First Corinthians 8:6 is not an isolated statement. Paul also reflects the early Christian devotion to both the Father and the Son in his other letters, as well.

The Name That Is Above Every Name: Philippians 2:6-11

In an appeal to the Philippians for an attitude of humility to foster unity within the church in the midst of opposition, Paul presents the Christ-story in a way that professes devotion to both the Father and the Son in what is commonly referred to as the *Carmen Christi* or “Christ Hymn” (Phil 2:6-11).¹⁸⁴ The passage begins with a statement about the preexistence of Christ in eternity,¹⁸⁵ then moves to speak of his incarnation, and poetically concludes with the exaltation

¹⁸⁴ Believing Paul to be the original composer, Bauckham goes against the majority view that this is a pre-Pauline hymn. Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 57. Similarly, Fee points out the lack of historical evidence to support that the passage was ever sung as part of the Christian liturgy. Fee notes that the only poetic element of the passage come from Paul’s allusion to Isaiah 45:23 in verses 10-11 and states that Philippians 2:9-11 reads more like an argument than a hymn. Fee, *Philippians*, 90. Cf. Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 42-62.

¹⁸⁵ *Contra* Dunn who rejects the idea that Paul is supporting the preexistence of Christ in this passage. He does this by appealing to Adam Christology, which is the method, according to Wanamaker, that scholars who reject the concept of pre-existence here “almost inevitably appeal.” Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 113-21; Charles A. Wanamaker, “Philippians 2:6-11: Son of God or Adamic Christology?” *NTS* 33.2 (April 1987): 179-93, here 179. Though Silva believes the Adam-Christ theme “has sometimes been pressed beyond the evidence,” he also contends that between Philippians 2 and Genesis 1-3 there is “an undeniable network of associations,” which may also be seen in other texts (e.g., Rom 5:19; 8:29; 1 Cor 15:41; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4; Phil 3:21; Col 1:15; 3:10). Moisés Silva, “Philippians,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 835-39, here 837. On the other hand, Fee notes, that though the Adam-Christ theme is “an intriguing analogy,” there are no linguistic parallels to Genesis 1–3. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 209-10. Similarly, Richard Bauckham, “The Worship of Jesus in Philippians 2:9-11,” in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, eds. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville: Westminster, 1998), 128-39, here 134-35; Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 121-23; Witherington, *Jesus the Sage*, 259-60. Cf. Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 390-93; Fee, *To What End Exegesis?* 337-40; Stephen E. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul: An Analysis of the Function of the Hymnic Material in the Pauline Corpus*, *JSNTSup* 36 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 70-3; Larry J. Kreitzer, “‘When He at Last Is First!’ Philippians 2:9-11 and the Exaltation of the Lord,” in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, eds. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville: Westminster, 1998), 111-27, here 118.

of Christ.¹⁸⁶ In the latter part of the hymn, Paul affirms “a transformed definition of Jewish monotheism that includes Christ within the definition of God.”¹⁸⁷ Along with the exaltation of Christ, God bestows upon Jesus, not simply an honorific title or name, but “the name that is above every name.” This name connotes the nature of the resurrected Christ. He is the risen Lord God Almighty, and he deserves the worship of every creature, including angels and demons.¹⁸⁸

As in the reformulation of the *Shema* in 1 Corinthians, Paul “encloses the work of the Son within that of the Father”¹⁸⁹ by framing the hymn with references to God (2:6; 2:11c) and highlighting the work of God in response to Christ’s obedience (2:9).¹⁹⁰ In the first part of the hymn, Paul describes the deity of Christ in terms that underscore Jesus’ self-denial. Christ, who existed in the form of God, emptied himself by laying aside the characteristics which identified him as the Son of God: “his right to be served, his privileged position as Son of God, and his visible glory.”¹⁹¹ In response to Christ’s obedience, God exalted Jesus to the highest position, a place of superiority over the entire cosmos,¹⁹² and gave him “the name that is above every name.”

¹⁸⁶ For the focus of this study, verses 10 and 11 are the most significant. For a more in-depth look at the entire passage, which is one of the most discussed and debated passages, see Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 191-229; Fee, *Philippians*, 89-102; Matthew E. Gordley, *New Testament Christological Hymns: Exploring Texts, Contexts, and Significance* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 79-110; Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 97-283; C. F. D. Moule, “Further Reflections on Philippians 2:5-11,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce on His 60th Birthday*, eds. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 264-76; Silva, *Philippians*, 92-117; Silva, “Philippians,” 835-39; Thielman, *Philippians*, 109-33; Charles A. Wanamaker, “Philippians 2:6-11,” 179–193; Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 56-98.

¹⁸⁷ Ben Witherington, *New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 1:199.

¹⁸⁸ Witherington, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 1:199.

¹⁸⁹ Fee, *To What End Exegesis?* 357. Cf. Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 79.

¹⁹⁰ Gordley, *New Testament Christological Hymns*, 99.

¹⁹¹ Wanamaker, “Philippians 2:6-11,” 188.

¹⁹² Thielman, *Philippians*, 120.

At first glance, “the name that is above every name” seems to refer to “Jesus,” for the next clause states “at the name of Jesus every knee will bow.”¹⁹³ However, most scholars agree that the name bestowed on Jesus can be none other than the divine name itself.¹⁹⁴ The acclamation, “Jesus Christ is Lord,” is the acknowledgment of the title that is the Greek translation of “Yahweh” and the designation of the position of the risen and exalted Jesus Christ.¹⁹⁵ Thielman notes that the significance of Paul’s ambiguity concerning the name is because his emphasis is on the status of the name rather than the name itself.¹⁹⁶ God’s exaltation of Christ and the bestowal of the name “above every name” is the beginning process by which the equality Jesus has always possessed with the Father will be acknowledged by all creation. God himself is the one who bestows the name “Lord” upon Jesus. Thus, to acknowledge Jesus as Lord in no way compromises the strict monotheistic worship of God’s people.¹⁹⁷

For verses 10 and 11, Paul directly borrows from the LXX of Isaiah 45:23, a fitting verse drawn from a passage that speaks of Yahweh as the sole Creator of all things, and whose ultimate purpose of judgment is redemption (45:18-25).¹⁹⁸ Through Isaiah, Yahweh declares four times that there is no other god besides him, a reminder that salvation is grounded in strict

¹⁹³ Moule suggests “the name that is above every name” is the name “Jesus” and explains that the earthly name “Jesus” is acclaimed as the highest because in the incarnation, Jesus displayed the highest divine attributes of service and self-giving. For Moule “the Lord Jesus Christ” is merely an extension of the name Jesus. Moule, “Further Reflections on Philippians,” 270. Silva supports this view citing Moule’s explanation as a “satisfactory answer” to the question of which name Jesus received. Silva, “Philippians,” 837.

¹⁹⁴ See “God’s Unique Name” in chapter 2 and “Excursus: κύριος” beginning on p. 71.

¹⁹⁵ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 58; Fee, *Jesus the Lord*, 108; Foerster, “Κύριος,” 1088-89; Fowl, *Story of Christ*, 65-6; Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, rev. Ralph P. Martin, WBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 126; Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 95-6; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 136.

¹⁹⁶ Thielman, *Philippians*, 120. Cf. Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 236-37.

¹⁹⁷ Brendan Byrne, “The Letter to the Philippians,” NJBC, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 791-97, here 795.

¹⁹⁸ John N. Oswalt, *Isaiah*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 522.

monotheism.¹⁹⁹ The passage affirms the uniqueness of Yahweh in the context of his redeeming work of Israel and of the world and the universal acknowledgement that he will receive. Yahweh declares, “To me, every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess to God.” To “bow the knee” is a common idiom for showing reverence as a means of recognizing the authority of a god or a person.²⁰⁰ However, not everyone will pledge allegiance to Yahweh. While some will receive the promises of Yahweh, others will reject them. Even so, there will be a universal acknowledgment of Yahweh’s sovereignty with confession of his righteousness and strength.

Paul makes a significant gloss in verse 10 by substituting “at the name of Jesus” for “to me,” which refers to Yahweh in Isaiah 45:23, and in doing so, he applies the unique identity of the God of Israel, who is declared to be God alone over all creation and the Savior of the world, to the exalted Christ. Yahweh himself exalted Jesus Christ and “transferred this right to obeisance to the Son,”²⁰¹ and in the end, every person will “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” Paul writes elsewhere that such a confession of Christ’s Lordship is possible only through the experience of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:3). To confess Jesus as Lord is a demarcation between those who will acknowledge Christ as Lord and be saved and those who will stubbornly hang on to their false gods (Rom 10:9). Paul’s interpretation of Isaiah 45:23 is the prediction of a universal acknowledgement of the exalted Jesus Christ, who has been given the title “Lord,” which is the Greek equivalent of the Old Testament name of Yahweh.²⁰² At the eschaton, Jesus is the one of whom every created being will recognize the truth and to whom everyone will bow

¹⁹⁹ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 366.

²⁰⁰ Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 222. Fee, *To What End Exegesis?* 340; Cf. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 127; Kreitzer, ““He at Last Is First!”” 119-20.

²⁰¹ Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 224; Fee, *To What End Exegesis?* 341; Fee, *Philippians*, 100.

²⁰² Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 112. Cf. Bauckham, “Worship of Jesus in Philippians,” 131.

the knee to acknowledge his sovereignty, even if they do not choose to yield and receive his salvation. Paul refracts Isaiah's prophecy in a way that positions Christ at the center of worship, which can only be properly given to the one true God.²⁰³ In the same way Isaiah spoke in eschatological terms about the recognition of Yahweh's unique identity, Paul speaks of the eschaton applied to Christ. Therefore, Paul's statement is "no unconsidered echo of an Old Testament text, but a claim that it is in the exaltation of Jesus, his identification as YHWH in YHWH's universal sovereignty, that the unique deity of the God of Israel comes to be acknowledged as such by all creation."²⁰⁴ Jesus has the character and office of Lord, for he *is* the Lord, the sovereign over all creation.²⁰⁵

Paul's statements in Philippians 2:6-11 identify Jesus with God by showing how the Son and the Father share the unique identity of God as distinguished from all other reality and how they are at the same time distinct from one another.²⁰⁶ Jesus' oneness with God can be seen in that Jesus is "in the form of God," equal to God, and has received the divine name. At the same time, Jesus is distinct from God, for Jesus is Lord "to the glory of God the Father."²⁰⁷ Whereas the ultimate goal in Isaiah remains the glory of God, Paul enlarges the understanding of what that

²⁰³ Bruce W. Longenecker and Todd D. Still, *Thinking Through Paul: A Survey of His Life, Letters, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 306.

²⁰⁴ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 53. *Contra* Richardson who notes that transference of the Old Testament language about God to Christ is evident in the New Testament. However, he claims there is no transference evident in Philippians 2:10-11. Rather, he states, "for Paul the universal lordship of Jesus is the new expression of Jewish monotheism." Richardson, *Paul's Language about God*, 288.

²⁰⁵ Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 126.

²⁰⁶ Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 79.

²⁰⁷ Fee expresses the distinction between the Father and the Son: "So the risen Christ is not Yahweh himself, who is always referred to by Paul as *God*. Rather, the preexistent *Son of God* returns by way of his resurrection to receive the honor of having bestowed on him the *substitute name* for God, which for Paul then becomes a title for Christ as 'Lord'—and this 'name' is now used by Paul exclusively for Christ and never for God the Father." Fee, *Jesus the Lord*, 129-30, emphasis in original. Cf. Kreitzer, "'He at Last Is First!,'" 121.

means by revealing that it is the confession, “Jesus Christ is Lord,” that glorifies the Father.²⁰⁸ Jesus is not a second God. He lives and reigns with the Father in heaven, sharing in the divine glory of full equality with God, a gift from the Father to the Son.²⁰⁹ Worship of Jesus, then, is in obedience to God for the glory of God.²¹⁰ Thus, in worshiping Christ, Paul maintains his Jewish monotheism, affirming God’s supremacy and sovereignty. God is the one who exalted Jesus and mandated the acclamation of Christ,²¹¹ and, as in 1 Corinthians 8, though there is no mention of the sonship of Jesus, the significance of Jesus as Lord to the glory and worship of God relays the inseparable relationship between the Father and Son in which their identities are “inextricably intertwined.”²¹² Jesus, as the rightful bearer of the divine name, also shares in the uniqueness of Yahweh.²¹³

Again, Paul has no need to explain or justify his view of Christ as he relays the story of Jesus. Paul simply reflects the devotional practice of first-century Christians to emphasize the appropriate behavior befitting one who has pledged allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.²¹⁴ Jesus sets the example of self-denial that he calls his followers to demonstrate in their relationships with one another (Phil 2:1-5). However, Jesus is not merely an example to be followed nor does he simply illustrate the divine identity. His self-giving act of humiliation and death on the cross

²⁰⁸ Steve Moyise, *Paul and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 95.

²⁰⁹ Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 275.

²¹⁰ Larry W. Hurtado, *God in New Testament Theology*, LBT (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 44.

²¹¹ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 136.

²¹² R. W. L. Moberly, *The Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus*, in *Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 221.

²¹³ Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 95-6.

²¹⁴ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 112-13. Cf. Gordley points out that Paul’s “audience would appreciate only those themes for which they had some prior understanding.” Gordley, *New Testament Christological Hymns*, 101.

for the salvation of the world followed by his exaltation demonstrates his uniqueness as the one true God. “Jesus himself and his story are intrinsic to the divine identity. . . In this act of self-giving God is most truly himself and defines himself for the world.”²¹⁵ The God whom Paul and first-century Christians worshiped included God the Father *and* God the Son, and Paul presents this divine relationship between the Father and the Son in a way that tells the story of Jesus and the worship due him while maintaining strict monotheism. In the same way Paul represents Jesus’ inclusion in the divine identity of God as he reminds the Philippians of their obligation to serve the Lord in a worthy manner, so too, Paul includes the story of Jesus as Lord and one who shares in the unique divine identity of Yahweh when he writes to the Colossians.

The Image of the Invisible God: Colossians 1:15-20

Paul’s letter to the Colossians also contains a christological statement about Christ which is firmly rooted in Jewish monotheism. In response to a report from Epaphras, Paul tackles the false teaching that threatened the Colossian church by reminding these new Gentile Christians of the foundation on which the church of Colossae was built: the supremacy and the sufficiency of Christ.²¹⁶ It was through Christ alone that God brought about the redemption of the world. Therefore, Christ is both supreme Lord and sufficient Savior.²¹⁷ In the major christological passage of Colossians 1:15-20, Paul picks up and expands upon the language he used for the

²¹⁵ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 69.

²¹⁶ Lucas, *Message of Colossians*, 4-9, 27. In addition to a reminder that scholars do not exactly know what the “false teaching” was that threatened the church at Colossae, Lucas offers compelling reason to believe that the false teaching, which must have been largely Christian but influenced by the environment of religious syncretism, came from within the church. Such teaching threatened the purity of the faith and prompted Paul’s “friendly” letter to the new, immature, and unformed body of believers. Cf. Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 17-26, 73; Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 23-32.

²¹⁷ Lucas, *Message of Colossians*, 29.

Lord Jesus Christ in 1 Corinthians 8:6.²¹⁸ In “poetic praise of Christ,”²¹⁹ Paul presents Jesus as supreme in creation and in the new creation of the church (1:15-18) and sufficient in his person and in his work (1:19-20).²²⁰ As both Creator and Redeemer, Jesus shares in the divine identity of Yahweh.

As in the previously considered christological passages, Paul again encloses the work of the Son in the Father. He begins with words that echo Israel’s story of redemption by reminding the Colossians of a reason for gratitude.²²¹ God has caused them to hear and receive the gospel and has delivered them from the kingdom of the enemy into the kingdom of the Father’s “beloved Son, in whom [they] have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (1:12-14).²²² The poem also ends with a story of redemption. Only this time, the redemption includes all of creation, for God has graciously and lovingly reconciled the world to himself through his Son (1:20).²²³ The poetic praise of Christ in between fills out the description of the Father’s beloved Son in relation to all other reality from before the first creation to the new creation.

²¹⁸ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 17-8, 299.

²¹⁹ Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 81-5, here 81. Cf. Fowl, *Story of Christ*, 31-45; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 83-6; Eduard Lohse, *A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, trans. William R. Poehlmann and Robert J. Karris, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 41-6; Morna D. Hooker, *Colossians*, ECB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1404-12, here 1406; Seitz, *Colossians*, 90-93; Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 68-70. Though this is often called a “hymn of praise to Christ,” evidence for its prior existence as a hymn is debated. McKnight proposes that the hymn may have its origins in the Old Testament, Jewish wisdom tradition, and Greco-Roman vocabulary. Paul, though, because of his experience of Jesus, “has swallowed it all up into new expression by means of his own exegesis.” Scot McKnight, *The Letter to the Colossians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 133-38, here 138. Nonetheless, the nature of the text, whether prior to or original to Paul, does not impact the scope of this thesis.

²²⁰ Lucas, *Message of Colossians*, 28.

²²¹ Fee notes that when it comes to giving attention to the poem, most scholars begin with verse 15. However, Fee asserts that attention to the poetry must truly begin with verse 12 so the echoes of Israel’s story are not missed. Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 295.

²²² Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 64-5.

²²³ Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 74.

The first strophe of the poem, verses 15-17, proclaims the role of Christ in creation in a more detailed way than the phrase “through whom all things came,” which Paul previously wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor 8:6). Jesus is “the image of the invisible God,” which is an allusion to the creation of humanity in God’s image (1:15; Gen 1:27).²²⁴ Jesus, who from all eternity has perfectly reflected in his nature the character and life of the Father,²²⁵ became the image of God as man, the visible representation of the image humans were intended to bear. As a perfect revelation of God, Jesus made the invisible God visible²²⁶ and restored the image of the Creator that was marred by the first Adam.²²⁷ It is through the Son, who perfectly bears the image of the Father that God is known (cf. 2 Cor 4:4-6). Thus, in a few words, Paul affirms that the Father and the Son share the same identity.²²⁸

Jesus is also “the firstborn over all creation.” This does not mean that he is the first of all created beings, for Jesus, the pre-existent Christ, is the one by whom all creation came into being and is thereby distinguished from creation.²²⁹ He is the divine agent of creation, and “all things” were created “in him,” “through him,” and “for him.” The nation of Israel was called Yahweh’s

²²⁴ G. K. Beale, “Colossians,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 841-70, here 851-53. Cf. Dunn, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 87-9; Lohse, *Commentary on the Epistles*, 46-8; Seitz, *Colossians*, 95.

²²⁵ Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 74. Cf. 2 Cor 4:4 and Phil 2:6.

²²⁶ McKnight notes that even though it is implied in the Old Testament that God appeared in visible form (see “The Angel of Yahweh” in chapter 2), the appearance of Jesus as the image of God transcended Old Testament categories and advanced revelation history. McKnight, *Letter to the Colossians*, 145-49.

²²⁷ Wright points out that it is only in Jesus that divinity and humanity can be understood, for “the man Jesus fulfils the purposes which God had marked out for himself and humanity.” Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 74-5, here 75. Cf. Beale, “Colossians,” 852; G. K. Beale, *Colossians and Philemon*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 80-6; Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 87; Seitz, *Colossians*, 95.

²²⁸ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 301.

²²⁹ Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 58-9; Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 87-8; Lohse, *Commentary on the Epistles*, 48-9.

firstborn (Exod 4:22; Jer 31:9), and, as the greatest of all the kings, the Davidic king was appointed as Yahweh's firstborn (Ps 89:27).²³⁰ In the Old Testament, the firstborn son was always the father's heir.²³¹ Seitz explains that Israel is God's firstborn, not because Israel is "the first distinctive thing in a series of kindred things" but because Israel was ransomed and marked of blood by the sacrificial act of redemption.²³² In the same way, David's kingship is not preeminent in the sense of being better than any other kingship but rather in the sense of uniqueness in the covenant relationship with God.²³³ The firstborn position is one of relationship and status. Jesus is the firstborn in that he holds the rights and privileges of the firstborn Son of the Father.²³⁴ Thus, Jesus, who existed before all things, is the heir of all things of the Father, and as "the firstborn over all creation," Jesus is preeminent and has the position of superiority and sovereignty.

The first strophe ends with a reaffirmation of Christ's preexistence and cosmic significance. In the preexistent eternal Son, "all things hold together." This implies more than a preservation of the cosmos. It can also imply that all things have their existence in Christ.²³⁵ In the same way the nation of Israel held a special position as God's covenant people and the Davidic kingship had unique dominion, so is Jesus' rule and reign unique. His kingdom, which is

²³⁰ Moo notes the significance of the messianic allusion and the use of the metaphorical sense of "firstborn" of Psalm 89 for Colossians 1:15, for Paul had just written about Jesus in messianic/kingly terms (vv. 12-14). Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 119. Cf. Beale, *Colossians and Philemon*, 87-8.

²³¹ Lucas, *Message of Colossians*, 33.

²³² Seitz, *Colossians*, 95.

²³³ Seitz, *Colossians*, 96.

²³⁴ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 301.

²³⁵ Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 90.

grounded eternally in his relationship with God, confirms the promises of the covenant given to David.²³⁶ As the Son of the Father, Jesus is the rightful ruler of all things.

Jesus is the image of God, the firstborn of creation, and the Creator of all things. Paul uses three prepositions to note the work of Christ in creation: “in,” “through,” and “for” or “to.” These prepositions were often used in speaking about God and the cosmos, and the language of creation here parallels Jewish wisdom tradition.²³⁷ Paul expresses the advanced revelation of God in Christ by using “traditional and culturally connected language.”²³⁸ Personified Wisdom, a divine agent of creation, “is now to be seen as embodied in Christ, its character now made clear by the light of his cross and resurrection (1:18, 20).”²³⁹ Jesus shares in the divine identity of God as the source of creation, the agent of creation, and the goal of creation.²⁴⁰

The second strophe of the poem, verses 18-20, proclaims the role of Christ in the new creation and adds details to the phrase “through whom we exist” (1 Cor 8:6). The supreme Creator and sustainer of all things is the crucified and resurrected Lord Jesus Christ who reconciled all things to God the Father and inaugurated the new creation in and through himself.²⁴¹ Paul shows this by anchoring Christ’s supremacy over all things in the historical reality of salvation history and in his lordship over those who pledge their allegiance to him.²⁴²

²³⁶ Seitz, *Colossians*, 96-7.

²³⁷ Dunn, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 88-91; McKnight, *Letter to the Colossians*, 138-43. Links between Colossians and Wisdom literature include such passages as Gen 1:1, 26-28; Prov 3:19; Ps 104:24; Sir 1:4; 43:26; Wis 7:17-22a; 22b-25; 8:5; 9:1-2, 9; and several suggestive texts from Philo.

²³⁸ McKnight, *Letter to the Colossians*, 138.

²³⁹ Dunn, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 91.

²⁴⁰ McKnight, *Letter to the Colossians*, 152.

²⁴¹ Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 79.

²⁴² Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 90.

All of Yahweh's work in creation and redemption has been done in and through Christ. As "the firstborn from among the dead," Jesus is sovereign and the giver of new life to all those who worship him as Lord.²⁴³ Christ's supremacy is a right which he has always had as the preexistent Son, but which is now fully recognized after his resurrection and ascension.²⁴⁴ Those who partake in the new humanity by means of his redemption share in the risen life of Christ as one living entity with Jesus. Christ is also "the head of the body," which is a metaphor used to explain that Jesus is both sovereign and source. He supplies life to the community of believers and exercises guidance and control over the church.²⁴⁵

Jesus, the Creator who entered his creation, is identified with the Father and yet distinguished from the Father. "God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Christ]." By fullness, Paul may have been thinking of a "complement," as in the full number of a ship's crew, when he referred to the "full and perfect nature" of God in Christ.²⁴⁶ For Paul, nothing of God was lacking in Jesus. The entirety of God's divinity and power is found in him. All of God's attributes, the full complement of his spirit, word, wisdom, and glory are revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.²⁴⁷ Thus, there are not two gods, but one God, who in all his fullness dwells in Christ

²⁴³ Cf. McKnight, *Letter to the Colossians*, 158-59.

²⁴⁴ Wright points to Philippians 2:5-11 which explains the basis for Christ becoming preeminent in his resurrection. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 79.

²⁴⁵ Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 68. Cf. Beale, *Colossians and Philemon*, 102-3; Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 91; McKnight, *Letter to the Colossians*, 155-56; Moo, *Letters to the Colossians*, 127-28.

²⁴⁶ *LSJ*, s.v. πλήρωμα. Cf. McKnight, who refers to parallel passages to understand "fullness" as the Father's fullness or "God in his fullness" (1 Cor 10:26; Col 2:9; Eph 1:23; 3:19; 4:13). McKnight, *Letter to the Colossians*, 160.

²⁴⁷ Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 73-4; Lucas, *Message of Colossians*, 36; Cf. Beale, *Colossians and Philemon*, 108-10; Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 92-3. McKnight notes that Paul has made a christological revision to temple theology in which the glory of God, where glory is an extension of God's self, fills the temple and the earth (Ps 72:19; Isa 6:3; Jer 23:24; Ezek 43:5; 44:4). God's glory, his fullness, now indwells the Son. McKnight, *Letter to the Colossians*, 161.

so that all things would be reconciled to himself.²⁴⁸ Christ is the fullness of God's self-revelation in which all of God's interactions with the cosmos are encapsulated.²⁴⁹ At the same time that Jesus and God are one, they are also distinct. Paul most often refers to the Father as "God" and to Jesus as "the Son" and "Lord." The act of redemption originates with the Father, and the Son is both agent and mediator. Jesus is the agent of God through whom all of the Father's gracious purposes toward humanity are accomplished and the divine intermediary between God and humanity.²⁵⁰

Paul's message to the Colossians is a reminder that the Lord Jesus Christ through whom they were redeemed is the same Lord who is the sovereign Creator of all things. The message maintains Jewish monotheism and at the same time includes Jesus in the unique identity of God.²⁵¹ Paul expresses Jewish monotheism in christological terms and redefines the unique identity of God by including Jesus in the divine activity of creation.²⁵² What is true about Israel's God is true about Jesus Christ, who, as the manifestation of God's "essence," has made God known.²⁵³

Jesus Shares in the Divine Identity as Ruler and Judge: A Pauline Theme

In addition to including Jesus Christ in the unique identity of God by showing Jesus to be Creator and Redeemer of all things, Paul presents Jesus as the eschatological ruler and judge

²⁴⁸ Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 80.

²⁴⁹ Dunn, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 101.

²⁵⁰ Cf. Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 57; McKnight, *Letter to the Colossians*, 165.

²⁵¹ Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 72; Cf. Dunn, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 89.

²⁵² Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 36; Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 72.

²⁵³ Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 70. Cf. McKnight, *Letter to the Colossians*, 145-49.

over all things. Alluding to and quoting from the LXX where κύριος refers to Yahweh, Paul attributes the divine rights, which only apply to the one true God, to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, the eschatological divine judgment and salvation, which is ascribed to God alone, is known as “the day of the Lord” (e.g., Isa 13:6; Jer 46:10; Ezek 30:3; Joel 1:15). In expectation of the risen Lord Jesus Christ’s return, the early Christian church attached the Old Testament terminology to the Parousia.²⁵⁴ Using the exact language of the prophets, Paul refers to Christ when he speaks of the “the day of the Lord” (1 Cor 5:5; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2), and in three other passages, Paul speaks of “the day of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:8), “the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6), and “the day of Christ” (Phil 1:10; 2:16). Though it may seem that Paul is simply pointing to the main event on the day of Yahweh, when Jesus returns in power and glory, such a change in reference is an inclusion of Jesus in the divine prerogative of God who alone is the ultimate judge and Savior. For Paul, the throne of judgment belongs to God (Rom 14:10; cf. Rom 2:16; 1 Cor 5:13) and Jesus (2 Cor 5:10; cf. 1 Cor 4:4; 11:32). Both the Father and the Son sit as ruling judges in the same royal courtroom. In other instances, Jesus serves as vice-regent and advocate before the Father, who is the judge.²⁵⁵ As the eschatological judge, the Lord Jesus Christ judges both those who are in him (1 Cor 4:4-5; 2 Cor 5:9-11; 1 Thess 4:6) and those who refuse allegiance to him (2 Thess 1:9-10; 2:8). He is “the righteous judge,” who judges the living and the dead (2 Tim 4:1, 8).

²⁵⁴ O’Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 48-9.

²⁵⁵ Fay notes that in Romans 8:31-39, Paul’s wording sets the scene of a royal courtroom where Jesus intercedes for his followers before the Father (v. 34). The language fits both the royal throne room and the legal courtroom, but the allusion to Ps 110:1 suggests that Paul had in mind the throne room. Ron C. Fay, “Was Paul a Trinitarian? A Look at Romans 8,” in *Paul and His Theology*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Pauline Studies, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 327-45, here 339-40. Cf. Ron C. Fay, *Father, Son and Spirit in Romans 8: The Roman Reception of Paul’s Trinitarian Theology*, in *Studies in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Dallas: Fontes, 2020), 123-25, 129-30; “Father, Son and Spirit in Romans 8: Paul’s Understanding of God with Special Reference to the Roman Recipients,” (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2006), 277-81, 290-92; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 542.

Paul also quotes or alludes to Psalm 110:1 (109:1 LXX), which “displays the divine person of Christ, his power and the prospect before him,”²⁵⁶ to show that Jesus participates in the authority and power of Yahweh (Rom 8:34; 1 Cor 15:24-25; Eph 1:20, 22; 2:6; Col 3:1). Paul also combines Psalm 110:1 with Psalm 8:6 (8:7 LXX) to show the inclusion of Jesus in the unique identity of God (1 Cor 15:22-28; Eph 1:20-22).²⁵⁷ Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father, and God has given the anointed King Jesus victory over all his enemies. Paul and first-century Christians understood Jesus as one who shares in the divine prerogative of Yahweh as he “exercises God’s eschatological sovereignty over all things, with a view to the coming of God’s kingdom and the universal acknowledgement of God’s unique deity.”²⁵⁸ Thus, Paul could write about the day of judgment and God’s authority and power with reference to both the Father and the Son.

Binitarian or Trinitarian?

The link between Jesus and God is so intertwined that the Father cannot be fully understood without reference to the Son, and the Son cannot be fully understood without reference to the Father. So interwoven are their identities that the significance of Jesus, the one through whom God brought salvation to the world and through whom God will consummate the kingdom, “is also retrojected through time, especially to the origins of the world.”²⁵⁹ Thus, when early Christians examined the Hebrew Scriptures and the literature of Second Temple Judaism in

²⁵⁶ Derek Kidner, *Psalms*, KCC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 2:428.

²⁵⁷ Hays notes that Paul documents the earliest christological exegesis of these psalms. However, it is not clear as to whether Paul is the originator of the christological interpretation or whether he is using a previously established reading. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 84.

²⁵⁸ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 35.

²⁵⁹ Hurtado, *God in New Testament Theology*, 43.

light of the resurrected Jesus, they saw the Son as the full revelation of Yahweh and devoted themselves to the practice of offering him the exclusive worship that could only be given to the one true God.

There are no arguments to be found in Paul's letters for the inclusion of Jesus in the worship of Yahweh. Such arguments were not necessary, for Paul was using language that had already been established in the conversations of the church.²⁶⁰ What Paul does do in addressing various issues in the newly formed churches of the first century is reveal patterns of the devotional practices of believers, who included Jesus in the exclusive worship of Yahweh. Those who give their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ pray to Jesus and pray to God in Jesus' name (e.g. Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:2; 1 Cor 16:22; 2 Cor 12:8; Eph 5:19; 1 Thess 3:11-13), call upon the name of Jesus for salvation (Rom 10:13; 1 Cor 1:2), baptize in his name (Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 6:11; Gal 3:27) and commemorate his death to remember his saving grace (1 Cor 11:17-34). These worship practices portray a belief that Jesus deserves the exclusive devotion that was only to be given to the one true God, thereby showing that they understood Jesus to be included in the divine identity of God. Such worship does not compromise Jewish monotheism, for worship of Jesus always includes worship of God, who either authorizes the devotional practice or who is the one whose ultimate glory is the result of such practices.²⁶¹

Hurtado refers to the veneration of Jesus alongside Yahweh to the exclusion of all other divine figures as having a "binitarian shape."²⁶² However, Paul also reveals a link between Jesus

²⁶⁰ Hurtado notes how remarkable it is that Paul, whose letters are the earliest extant Christian writings, reflects beliefs that are "more presupposed than expounded," for he offers little justification for such reverential treatment of Jesus. Hurtado, *God in New Testament Theology*, 106. Cf. Hurtado, *How on Earth*, 31-55.

²⁶¹ Hurtado, *God in New Testament Theology*, 65.

²⁶² Larry W. Hurtado, "The Binitarian Shape of Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1985 Seminar Papers*, SBLSPS 24 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1985), 377-91, here 377; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 2.

and the Spirit, “which in turn gives a distinctive triadic shape” to the portrayal of God in the New Testament.²⁶³ For example, Paul speaks of the Spirit as “the Spirit of God” and “the Spirit of Christ” who dwells in his people (Rom 8:9), and he equates Christ in the believer with “the Spirit of [God] who raised Jesus from the dead” (Rom 8:10-11).²⁶⁴ Fee calls such an interchange “a crowning expression of Paul’s understanding of the full deity of Christ,” for there is only “one Spirit” (1 Cor 12:4; Eph 4:4).²⁶⁵

The Christian experience is a triadic experience whereby the Spirit unites believers to all of the blessings of salvation which the Father places onto the Son.²⁶⁶ In the Christian experience of God, the Father is the source and goal of all things, Jesus Christ is the divine agent of creation and the mediator through whom salvation is accomplished, and the Holy Spirit is the agent of God’s activity. Thus, any reference to the work of God in the life of the believer includes either an explicit or an implicit reference to both Jesus and the Spirit.²⁶⁷ While it would be anachronistic to say that Paul was presenting the doctrine of Trinity in any of his letters,²⁶⁸ it must be noted that this “triadic shape” of Paul’s writing, and the writing of other New Testament authors,²⁶⁹ is the foundation upon which the doctrine of Trinity was defined in subsequent

²⁶³ Hurtado, *God in New Testament Theology*, 94.

²⁶⁴ Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:840-44; Fay, “Was Paul a Trinitarian?” 340-44.

²⁶⁵ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 584.

²⁶⁶ Sanders, *Deep Things of God*, 173.

²⁶⁷ Toon notes that the presence of the Spirit is often “anonymous, elusive, and invisible.” Toon, *Our Triune God*, 125-26.

²⁶⁸ Fee asserts that Paul’s gospel and his presentation of the work of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the life of the believer is soteriological rather than ontological. Paul presents the fundamentally Trinitarian way in which he experiences God, but he does not deal with theological issues that arise from his experience. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 827.

²⁶⁹ Hurtado, *God in New Testament Theology*, 45; Cf. Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 584.

centuries.²⁷⁰ As was seen above in the survey of three of Paul's major christological passages, the early Christians viewed Jesus as Lord, one who is included in the divine identity of Yahweh and who deserves the worship that can only rightfully be given to the one true God. Attention will now be given to Paul's presentation of the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Excursus: κύριος

Paul's use of the word κύριος, from the LXX, as a title for Jesus is significant.²⁷¹ In the LXX, the word κύριος, "lord," can be used to refer to man (e.g., Eph 6:5, 9; Col 3:22; 4:1) or God (e.g., Rom 15:11; 1 Cor 2:16; 1 Tim 6:15). When referring to man, "lord" is used as a respectful term of address or to signify ownership. While the Greek word κύριος was widely used in the Gentile world as a title of courtesy when addressing one with more status, in the realm of Judaism, κύριος carried a different connotation. Jews, to avoid pronouncing the sacred name Yahweh, used substitutes in both their speech and writing. As a reminder not to speak the divine name, in the original Hebrew Scriptures, the vowels for *Adonai* were placed under the four consonants YHWH.²⁷² In the LXX, the Hebrew *Adonai*, which stood in place of the tetragrammaton, YHWH, was translated κύριος or "Lord."²⁷³ Thus, in the religious sphere, κύριος in the Old Testament always refers to Yahweh, the true God. As a rule, κύριος or ὁ

²⁷⁰ Hurtado notes that though it may not be sufficiently recognized as such, "the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is essentially a christologically shaped statement of monotheism." Hurtado, *God in New Testament Theology*, 46-7.

²⁷¹ Cf. Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 129-38; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 383; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 341.

²⁷² Matthew S. DeMoss and J. Edward Miller, s.v. "YHWH," *Zondervan Dictionary of Bible and Theology Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002); Allen Ross and John N. Oswalt, *Genesis and Exodus*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2008). 303-4.

²⁷³ Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 291-301; Robert Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 35; O'Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 47; Peter Toon, *Our Triune God*, 168-9.

κύριος is “an expository equivalent for the divine name יהוה” and expresses “what the name, or the use of the name, signifies in the original.”²⁷⁴ The term “Lord” as applied to Yahweh in the Old Testament states who and what God is. He is the Creator of the world and the sovereign ruler over all things in heaven and on earth. Compressed within his name is his nature, “the quintessence of His person and the vehicle of His power.”²⁷⁵

While in the New Testament God is primarily called (ὁ) κύριος in Old Testament quotations and allusions drawn from the LXX,²⁷⁶ Paul regularly and consistently uses κύριος with reference to Christ.²⁷⁷ Citations from the Old Testament where κύριος is the translation or substitution for Yahweh, and it is certain Paul is referring to God as κύριος, are found in the following passages:²⁷⁸ Romans 4:8 (Ps 32:1-2), Romans 9:28-29 (Isa 28:22; 1:9), Romans 10:16 (Isa 53:1), Romans 11:34 (Isa 40:13), Romans 15:11 (Ps 117:1), 1 Corinthians 3:20 (Ps 94:11), 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 (Isa 52:11; 2 Sam 7:14). In addition, Paul explicitly refers to God as κύριος when citing Old Testament texts in which there is no direct equivalent in the Hebrew and LXX: Romans 11:3 (1 Kgs 19:10), Romans 12:19 (Deut 32:35), 1 Corinthians 14:21 (Isa 28:11).

In the seven undisputed letters of Paul, 180 of the little more than 200 occurrences of κύριος are applied to Jesus.²⁷⁹ In a few citations of Old Testament passages where Yahweh is the

²⁷⁴ Foerster, “Κύριος,” 1058–1059.

²⁷⁵ Foerster, “Κύριος,” 1070.

²⁷⁶ Foerster, “Κύριος,” 1086.

²⁷⁷ Cf. Craig L. Blomberg, *A New Testament Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2018), 203-4; Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:838-39; Larry W. Hurtado, “Lord,” in *DPL* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 560-69, here 560-61; Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 55-6; O’Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 45-6.

²⁷⁸ The following is a small sampling of Scripture references drawn from the works of Hurtado, “Lord,” 560-69, and Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 111-18.

²⁷⁹ Hurtado, “Lord,” 563. In *Lord Jesus Christ*, Hurtado notes that the proportion remains about the same if the uses in the disputed letters are included. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 111.

subject, Paul names Jesus (ὁ κύριος; Romans 10:13 (Joel 2:32); 1 Corinthians 10:26 (Ps 24:1); 2 Corinthians 10:17 (Jer 9:23-24), and in several instances, he alludes to passages where Yahweh is the κύριος and unmistakably designates Jesus as the κύριος: 1 Corinthians 10:21 (Mal 1:7, 12), 1 Corinthians 10:22 (Deut 32:21), 2 Corinthians 3:16 (Exod 34:34), Philippians 2:10-11 (Isa 45:23), 1 Thessalonians 3:13 (Zech 14:5), 1 Thessalonians 4:6 (Ps 94:2), 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 (Isa 66:15), 2 Thessalonians 1:9 (Isa 2:10, 19, 21). Paul also identifies Jesus with Yahweh by applying passages with the theme of “the day of the Lord” to the eschatological victory of Christ the κύριος (e.g., 1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2).

Additionally, Paul refers to Jesus as κύριος in passages where Jesus’ authoritative status for Christians is the focus (e.g., Rom 14:1-12; 16:2-20; 1 Cor 6:12-7:40), in eschatological passages (e.g., 1 Cor 4:1-5), and in passages regarding worship (e.g., 1 Cor 5:1-5; 11:17-33). Further uses of κύριος as applied to Jesus are found in formulaic expressions such as “the Lord Jesus” (e.g., Rom 14:14; 1 Cor 11:23; 2 Cor 4:14; Eph 1:15; Phil 2:19; Col 3:17; 2 Thess 1:7), “Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 1:4; 5:21; 7:25; 1 Cor 1:9; Jude 1:25), “our Lord Jesus Christ” (e.g., Rom 5:1, 11; 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 8:9; Gal 6:18; Eph 5:20; Col 1:3), “the Lord Jesus Christ” (e.g., 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 4:23; Phlm 1:3). Most frequently, Paul simply refers to Jesus by using the absolute form “the Lord,” which is the equivalent of the Hebrew *Adonai* and Aramaic *Maryah* references to God (e.g., Rom 14:6, 8; 16:2, 8, 11, 12, 13; 1 Cor 3:5).²⁸⁰

Paul’s usage of the traditional language shows that his use of κύριος was not developed by Paul alone. Rather, Paul drew upon pre-Pauline devotional practices and an inherited christological use of “the Lord” as he “sought to align the christological terms and devotional

²⁸⁰ Cf. Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 838-39; Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 225-26; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 629-31; Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology,” 1394-95.

practices of his converts with those of earlier circles of Jewish Christians.”²⁸¹ There were no other identifying words needed for his audience to understand that “the Lord” designated Jesus Christ. For Paul, κύριος functions as a christological term, a term that in itself “does not mean ‘God’ or assert the divinity of Christ . . . [but places] him on the same level with Yahweh and implies his transcendent status.”²⁸² Paul’s consistent use of “Lord” as a title for Jesus shows his conviction that the exalted Christ is “directly and uniquely associated with Yahweh.”²⁸³ In the Old Testament, “Lord,” applied to Yahweh, is a declaration of God’s unique and divine role as the Creator of and the sovereign ruler over all things; in the New Testament, “Lord,” applied to Jesus, is a declaration of Christ’s shared identity with Yahweh.

²⁸¹ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 111; Cf. Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 200-1; Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:527-29.

²⁸² Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology,” 1395. Fitzmyer also reminds readers that Paul possibly calls Jesus Christ *theos*, “God” in Romans 9:5.

²⁸³ Hurtado, “Lord,” 563; Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 112.

CHAPTER 4

PAUL'S TRINITARIAN WRITING, PART 2

In his letters, Paul presents the reality that the Holy Spirit is included in the unique identity of Yahweh.²⁸⁴ He does this in non-theological statements which connect the Spirit with Christ and with the Father in the economy of salvation. Paul's writing reveals that he is what Fee calls a "proto-trinitarian."²⁸⁵ Though Paul makes no explicit statements that God is triune, in expressing his experiences with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, he writes letters full of affirmations, presuppositions, and assertions that reveal him to be both a devout monotheist and an early Trinitarian.²⁸⁶ The good news that Paul so passionately shares is rooted in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who revealed the character of the God of Israel and brought redemption to the fallen world. Since the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, the work of Christ has been made a reality in the lives of those who confess belief in and pledge allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, thus empowering God's people to live in the "already" but "not yet" kingdom of God.

For Paul, the Spirit is "the renewed Presence of God and thus also the presence of the risen Christ" in the lives of individual believers and in the midst of the people of God corporately.²⁸⁷ So, Paul simultaneously speaks of the Spirit in terms of the Spirit of God and the

²⁸⁴ Sanday and Headlam observe, "The language of identity is only partial, and is confined within strict limits," for nowhere does Paul refer to Christ as "Spirit." William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1964), 200.

²⁸⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *Jesus the Lord*, 175.

²⁸⁶ Gordon D. Fee, "Paul and the Trinity: The Experience of Christ and the Spirit for Paul's Understanding of God," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, eds. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Geraldo O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 49-72, here 69-70.

²⁸⁷ Fee, *To What End Exegesis?* 343. Cf. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 10-22.

Spirit of Christ when writing about the Christian experience of salvation, and in doing so, he conveys a portrait that relates God as one in essence and three in divine persons. What Paul presents in his letters concerning the Spirit is done in a matter-of-fact way without argument or explanation because what he knew and had experienced was foundational for all believers.²⁸⁸ The God whom Christians worship and experience is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Paul's Pneumatology

Paul's new understanding of the Spirit in relation to the Father and the Son arose from his interpretation of what he already knew about the Spirit in the Old Testament. Within the boundaries of monotheism, the Hebrew Scriptures present God's Spirit as sharing in the unique identity of Yahweh and at the same time being distinct from God.²⁸⁹ Of the 377 times רוּחַ ("breath, wind, spirit") appears in the Masoretic text, 94 refer to the Spirit of God, who is so closely related to Yahweh that his presence is characterized by the attributes of God.²⁹⁰

The Spirit of God, though invisible, is recognized by his power. He is seen as responsible for creation (Gen 1:2; Ps 33:6; 104:30) and the eschatological renewal of the earth (Isa 32:15). The Spirit of God at times empowered humans with skill and strength (e.g., Exod 31:3-4; 35:31; Judg 14:6, 19; 15:14; cf. Acts 2:3-4), wisdom and insight (e.g., Dan 5:14; cf. John 14:26), and the ability to prophesy (e.g., Num 11:25, 29; 1 Sam 10:6, 10; 19:20, 23-24; cf. 2 Pet 1:21). The

²⁸⁸ Fee, *Paul, the Spirit*, 1-2.

²⁸⁹ Blomberg, *A New Testament Theology*, 196. Cf. Andrew W. Pitts and Seth Pollinger, "The Spirit in Second Temple Jewish Monotheism and the Origins of Early Christology," in *Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, TENTS, vol. 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 135-76.

²⁹⁰ The following discussion on the Spirit's portrayal in the Old Testament is a summary from Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 904-10.

Spirit caused the cherubim to move (e.g., Ezek 1:12, 20) and set Ezekiel on his feet (2:2), lifted him up (3:12; 8:3), and took him away (3:14; cf. 1 Kgs 18:12; 2 Kgs 2:16).²⁹¹ The presence of the Spirit of God always implies the presence of God's effective power.

The Spirit of God was also responsible for empowering others for leadership. Beginning with Moses (Num 11:17) and Joshua (Num 27:18), the Spirit of the Lord equipped those called to lead his people. In the book of Judges, Othniel (3:10), Gideon (6:4), Jephthah (11:29), and Samson (14:6, 19; 15:14) were empowered to rescue the Israelites from the hands of their enemies. In a similar way, God's Spirit "rushed upon" Saul, the first king of Israel (1 Sam 11:6), and the same is written of David at his anointing (1 Sam 16:13). Isaiah wrote of God's messianic king as the one upon whom the Spirit of the Lord would rest (11:2). He would be the servant of the Lord upon whom God would put his Spirit (42:1-2; 59:21; 61:1).

The Spirit of God was also behind all prophetic activity, whether the prophetic word or inspired speech. The Spirit spoke through David (2 Sam 23:2), Amasai (1 Chron 12:18), Azariah (2 Chron 15:1), and Jahaziel (2 Chron 20:14). The book of Numbers records the accounts of the Spirit empowering prophetic speech in seventy elders (11:25), Eldad and Medad (11:26), and Balaam (24:2). Saul also spoke prophetically as empowered by the Spirit (1 Sam 10:10). According to Zechariah 7:12, the pre-exilic prophets spoke words given to them by the Spirit, although Micah is the only one to attribute his words directly to the Spirit (3:8). The Spirit of the Lord was also the source of Ezekiel's prophecies (11:5).

In addition to prophetic inspiration, the Spirit of God is also the source of revelation. It was prophesied of the Messiah that he would receive "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding"

²⁹¹ Prior to the redemptive work of Christ and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, the enabling of the Spirit was iterative rather than continual, as the Spirit was given temporarily and selectively to individuals according to the will of God. Now, the Spirit dwells within believers permanently (cf. John 14:17; Rom 8:9; Eph 4:30).

(Isa 11:2). The Babylonians said of Daniel that his ability to interpret dreams and the writing on the wall came from “the spirit of the holy gods” (Dan 4:8, 9, 18; 5:11, 14), and Daniel possessed “light and understanding and excellent wisdom” (5:14).

The Spirit of God and his direct connection with the presence of God is articulated in the Psalms. “Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me” was a part of David’s plea for mercy (51:11). In the Old Testament, the Spirit’s influence on a person was temporary rather than continual, for the Spirit came and went according to the will and purposes of Yahweh. In another Psalm, he asks, “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?” (139:7). The divine presence motif is especially associated with the presence of the Spirit. Using the language of relationship, the prophets presented the concept of Yahweh’s presence by referring to the eschatological restoration brought about by God’s Holy Spirit (Isa 63:10-14; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:27; 37:14). Remembering the Exodus, Haggai viewed the present restoration in terms of the Spirit in the midst of God’s people (2:5), and Zechariah relayed God’s message to Zerubbabel, namely that it is God’s Spirit who brings about the purposes of the Lord (4:6).

In Hebrew thought, the Spirit of God is essential to Israel’s eschatological future. Isaiah prophesied that the Spirit would rest upon the Messiah, who will bring salvation (11:2; 42:1; 59:21; 61:1). The Spirit will gather the people God (34:16), and God will pour out his Spirit upon them and their descendants (44:3). By his Spirit, God will bring about the renewal of the earth (32:15-16). Ezekiel also prophesied about the future eschaton and salvation (11:19; 18:31; 36:26-27; 37:1-14), and, as part of the eschatological restoration, the prophet Joel spoke of a renewal of prophecy (2:28:30). The Old Testament is clear in its witness that the Spirit of God is the key to salvation and the renewal of the presence of God among his people.

For Paul, Jewish eschatological expectations were realized with the coming of the Spirit.²⁹² The dynamic and visible experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on first-century Christians was evidence that the end had begun. The coming of the Holy Spirit was the fulfillment of promise (Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13; Joel 2:28-29) and the arrival of the new covenant anticipated by the promised “circumcision of the heart” (Rom 2:29; Deut 30:6). The prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are being fulfilled as God gives his people “new hearts” and “new spirits” (Rom 8:3-4; 2 Cor 3:1-6; Gal 5:16-25; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:26-27; 37:14). The presence of God in and among his people is renewed by the indwelling of the Spirit (2 Cor 3:5-6; Ezek 37:14).²⁹³ Rather than experiencing the iterative presence of God in the Spirit as his forebearers had, Paul and all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and give their allegiance to him experience the continual indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

This eschatological salvation is the heart of Paul’s pneumatology.²⁹⁴ Of the 145 times the word πνεῦμα appears in Paul’s thirteen letters, approximately 120 refer to the Holy Spirit, most commonly simply called “the Spirit.”²⁹⁵ Sixteen times, Paul uses the fuller name “the Holy Spirit.”²⁹⁶ Paul also refers to the Spirit as “the Spirit of God” or “his Spirit” sixteen times²⁹⁷ and

²⁹² Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 915.

²⁹³ Fee, *Paul, the Spirit*, 9-10, 15-16.

²⁹⁴ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 913.

²⁹⁵ See Fee for difficulties in usage that go beyond the scope of this thesis. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 14-36.

²⁹⁶ Rom 5:5; 9:1; 14:17; 15:13; 15:16; 1 Cor 6:19; 12:3; 2 Cor 6:6; 13:14; Eph 1:13; 4:30; 1 Thess 1:5; 1:6; 4:8; 2 Tim 1:14; Tit 3:5. Fee points out that 2 Cor 6:6 is debated (see Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 332-35), and in 1 Cor 2:13 and Rom 15:19, various manuscripts add the word “Holy.” Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 14 n. 2. Cf. Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 587.

²⁹⁷ Rom 8:9; 8:11; 8:14; 15:19; 1 Cor 2:11; 2:14; 3:16; 6:11; 7:40; 12:3; 2 Cor 3:3; 3:17 (possibly “the Spirit of the Lord”; see Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 311-14); Eph 3:16; 4:30 (“the Holy Spirit of God”); 1 Thess 4:8 (“his Holy Spirit”); Philm 3:3.

as the Spirit of Christ” or its equivalent three times.²⁹⁸ In numerous passages, which scholars have labelled as “triadic,” Paul presents the work of the Spirit in conjunction with that of God and Christ, and in doing so, Paul presents God as Father, Son, and Spirit. What follows is a survey of Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; and Ephesians 4:4-6, passages that exhibit Paul’s Trinitarian presuppositions.

The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ: Romans 8:9-11

In Romans 8, Paul provides his audience with a “rich and comprehensive portrayal of what it means to be a Christian.”²⁹⁹ He reminds his audience that believers no longer live under condemnation from the law of sin and death, for the Father, Son, and Spirit have rescued believers from sin and brought them into new life under the dominion of the Spirit (vv. 1-3).³⁰⁰ The Father sent the Son to condemn sin, and the Holy Spirit liberates believers from sin and death by applying the work of Christ. Paul then describes those who live according to the flesh and those who live according to the Spirit (vv. 5-8) before assuring his readers that their state of being is in the Spirit (vv. 9-11).³⁰¹ By the saving grace of God in Christ, believers receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Those in whom the Spirit of God dwells have been transferred from the old

²⁹⁸ Rom 8:9 (“the Spirit of Christ”); Gal 4:6 (“the Spirit of his Son”); Phil 1:19 (“the Spirit of Jesus Christ”).

²⁹⁹ Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 468.

³⁰⁰ Schreiner emphasizes that verse 2 should not be seen as limited to a forensic freedom, for Paul goes on to note that the work of the Spirit produces new life in the believer. The work of Christ is both forensic and transformative. Schreiner, *Romans*, 401.

³⁰¹ See Schreiner for the ontological character of Romans 8:5-11. Schreiner, *Romans*, 411-12. Similarly, Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, SP (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 239-40; Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 539-40; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 488-89; Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 486-87; Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 223. *Contra* Dunn, who argues that Paul is not meaning an ontological classification but a “type as an abstracted, even idealized model to which individuals conform to greater or less degree, but rarely (if at all) completely.” Believers may still choose to willfully live in the flesh. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:425-26.

regime, the realm dominated by the flesh, and transferred into the new, the realm dominated by the Holy Spirit.³⁰²

Though Paul refers to the Holy Spirit nineteen times in chapter 8, the focus is not on who the Spirit *is* but on what the Spirit *does*, with an emphasis on the indwelling of the Spirit.³⁰³ In verse 9, Paul shifts from the former general third person statements to the second person as he addresses his audience and assures them that they live “in the Spirit” and not “in the flesh.” He makes this clear by switching back to the third person and stating the opposite: those who do not have the Spirit of Christ do not belong to him.³⁰⁴ Without the indwelling of the Spirit, there can be no relationship with the Father or the Son, for it is the Spirit alone who brings people into a dynamic relationship with Christ. To be “in the Spirit” is to have the indwelling of “the Spirit of God,” which is “the hallmark of the authentic believer,” a privilege every believer experiences from the time of repentance and belief.³⁰⁵

Paul’s language is that of position, portraying the status of the believer as secure in Christ and now living in the realm dominated by the Spirit.³⁰⁶ The believer is positionally both “in

³⁰² Douglas J. Moo, *Romans*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 251. This is the state of every genuine believer, for the gift of the Spirit is given to those who give their allegiance to Christ. However, as imperfect humans, believers may not always reflect life under the dominion and control of the Spirit. Cf. F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, TNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 159-60; Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1:387-88; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:428; Schreiner, *Romans*, 414.

³⁰³ Gordon D. Fee, “Christology and Pneumatology in Romans 8:9-11—and Elsewhere: Some Reflections on Paul as a Trinitarian,” in *Jesus of Nazareth Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, eds. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 312-31, here 323; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 468. Cf. Watson writes, “Divine being and divine action are inseparable from one another.” Francis Watson, “The Triune Divine Identity: Reflections on Pauline God-Language, in Disagreement with J. D. G. Dunn,” *JSNT* 23.80 (March 2001): 99-124, here 105.

³⁰⁴ Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 489; Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 698-99; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 490-91.

³⁰⁵ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God’s Good News for the World*, BST (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 225. Cf. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 163.

³⁰⁶ Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 489-90; Moo, *Romans*, 251.

Christ Jesus” (vv. 1-2) and “in the Spirit” (v. 9).³⁰⁷ Paul’s parallel statements, “in Christ Jesus” and “in the Spirit,” present the reality of the believer’s existence in relationship with God in which God is continually present with the believer, for Christ, by his Spirit, indwells the believer.³⁰⁸ To speak of a believer as being “in Christ” is an expression of the intimate and personal relationship between the exalted Christ and the believer, who has pledged his or her allegiance to him as Lord.³⁰⁹ “In Christ” and “in the Spirit” are interdependent phrases, for Christ is only experienced in and through the Spirit, and the Spirit is recognized only by that which characterized the life of Christ in his ministry.³¹⁰ Believers who are in Christ were “baptized into Christ Jesus” (6:3) and brought into a living relationship with Christ by the Spirit. Believers are both forensically and spiritually in Christ Jesus. The guilt of their sins has been removed by Jesus’ sacrificial death and the sanctifying work of the Spirit dominates their lives (cf. 8:29-30).³¹¹

Paul defines the ontological reality of living in the Spirit in a variety of ways, interchangeably speaking of the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ dwelling in the believer (vv. 9-10a). The interchange of titles, all of which refer to the same Holy Spirit, demonstrates the distinct but inseparable relationship of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the work of salvation.³¹² The Spirit is simultaneously the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, another

³⁰⁷ Fay, “Was Paul a Trinitarian?” 344.

³⁰⁸ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 307-8.

³⁰⁹ See Longenecker for a discussion of Paul’s use of “in Christ Jesus” and its cognates. Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 686-94.

³¹⁰ Dunn, *Romans*, 1:446.

³¹¹ William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 245.

³¹² Hendriksen, *Exposition of Paul’s Epistle*, 253; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 491. Cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:446; John Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, TPINTC (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 210.

indication of Paul acknowledging the divine dignity of Christ.³¹³ Paul's choice of genitive qualifier is determined by whose activity the Spirit is conveying to the believer, either the activity of God or the activity Christ.³¹⁴ For example, when Paul talks about "the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead," the focus is the resurrection work of God by means of his Spirit (Rom 8:11). Additionally, when Paul uses the imagery of the temple of God to talk about the church and individuals who make up the church, the Spirit of God dwelling in their midst is highlighted (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). When the Spirit is called "the Spirit of Christ," the emphasis is on the work of Christ, as in Roman 8:9, where Paul is stressing the work of Christ and his gift of righteousness applied by the Spirit. In Galatians, Paul speaks of believers being adopted into the family of God by means of "the Spirit of his Son" (4:6), and in Philippians, Paul's desire is for Christ to be honored whether Paul lives or dies (1:19).

Paul resumes his point of emphasis in verse 10. The indwelling power of Christ lives in the believer, and for those who have placed their faith in the Son of God, the Spirit is life.³¹⁵ Though the body is still subject to temporal death, a consequence of sin, the Spirit imparts eternal life, a consequence of God's gracious righteousness received by faith (1:17; 3:22).³¹⁶ Though some scholars identify "the body is dead because of sin" as a past event that occurred at

³¹³ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1:388. Cf. Hendriksen, *Exposition of Paul's Epistle*, 252. Fee asserts that the role of the Spirit as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ "both emphasizes the full deity of Christ and forces us in the end to think of the one God in triadic terms." Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 590-91.

³¹⁴ Fee, "Christology and Pneumatology," 318.

³¹⁵ Cf. Bruce, *Romans*, 165; Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1:390; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:431-2; Hendriksen, *Exposition of Paul's Epistle*, 252-53; Moo, *Romans*, 251-52; Schreiner, *Romans*, 414-15; Ziesler, *Paul's Letter*, 212. Though some translations reflect the notion that πνεῦμα in verse 10 is the believer's spirit (ASV, NASB, NIRV, RSV), the context favors the indwelling Spirit of God. *Contra* those who suggest that πνεῦμα in verse 10 refers to the human spirit. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 491; Sanday and Headlam, *Epistle to the Romans*, 197-98; Stott, *Message of Romans*, 226; Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 202.

³¹⁶ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1:389; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:430-1; Schreiner, *Romans*, 414. Cf. Bruce, *Romans*, 165; Fee, "Christology and Pneumatology," 324-26; Larry J. Kreitzer, "Body," in *DPL* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 71-6, here 72-3; Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 309; Stott, *Message of Romans*, 225-26.

the believer's baptism and conversion,³¹⁷ mention of the resurrection in the subsequent sentence suggests that Paul primarily has in mind the whole person of the believer, who is still subject to the consequences of sin while present in the mortal and corruptible body.³¹⁸ Fee paraphrases, "But if Christ by his Spirit is in you, that means that *even though* the body is destined for death because of sin, the presence of Christ by his Spirit also means that the body is destined for life (because of Christ's own resurrection and the presence of the Spirit)."³¹⁹ While death is still at work in the body as a consequence of sin, the Spirit of life is also at work transforming believers into the image of Christ and assuring them of eternal life to come. Thus, on the basis of righteousness, the Spirit conveys life now and in the eschatological future.³²⁰ The Spirit is life and will give life.

The life of the believer in the Spirit is characterized as having the Spirit of Christ. Paul equates this with "Christ in you," a shorthand way of talking about "the Spirit of Christ in you," or better, "Christ in you by his Spirit."³²¹ Paul is not equating the risen Christ with the Spirit as though they were both one and the same or that they both dwell within the believer together.³²² Rather, Paul's language shifts to emphasize the work of Christ. The life at work in the believer is a result of Christ's gift of righteousness which the Spirit applies to the believer. By

³¹⁷ Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 159; Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 224; Ziesler, *Paul's Letter*, 211. Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 491-92.

³¹⁸ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1:389-91; Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 161.

³¹⁹ Fee, "Christology and Pneumatology," 325-26, emphasis in original.

³²⁰ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1:390; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 492.

³²¹ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 548. Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1:389.

³²² Fee, "Christology and Pneumatology," 318-23, 326-31; Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:843; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:446; Fee, *Paul, the Spirit*, 31-3; Moo, *Romans*, 256; Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 309; O'Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 64; Schreiner, *Romans*, 413-14; Wainwright, *Trinity in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1962), 218.

righteousness, Paul may have in mind both justification and sanctification.³²³ By faith in Jesus, a believer has been credited with the righteousness of God and brought “into the sphere of salvation.”³²⁴ Once saved, the believer is required to live in the Spirit by worshiping God in alignment with the character and conduct of the indwelling Spirit of Christ. Thus, Paul may have in mind both the forensic and the transformative work of the Spirit.

Paul continues in verse 11 with an expanded form of his opening point found in verse 9a.³²⁵ Paul now refers to the indwelling Spirit of God as “the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead” to draw a close connection to the resurrection of Christ and the future resurrection of believers.³²⁶ Here Paul refers to three different actors: the one who raised Jesus (God), Jesus who was raised, and the Spirit. Though some see the Spirit’s role as simply the promise of resurrection life for believers, others understand the Spirit as being both the guarantor and the agent of resurrection life.³²⁷ The Spirit is the guarantor. Those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ have “the firstfruits of the Spirit” and therefore, they have the assurance of eternal life with God (v. 23). The Spirit is also the agent of resurrection. Paul’s statement that the Spirit is life in verse 10 is expanded in verse 11 as a way of ascribing resurrecting agency to the Spirit. The Spirit gives life in the here and now, and he will also give life in the future at the

³²³ Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 310. Osborne asserts that “righteousness” should be seen as forensic here. Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 201. However, according to Morris, for Paul, justification and sanctification are not to be separated. After receiving the righteous of God, the believer is required to live in step with the Spirit.

³²⁴ Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 310.

³²⁵ Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 700.

³²⁶ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1:390.

³²⁷ Morris comments that though Paul is not clear here as to whether the Spirit is agent or guarantor, both are true. Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 310-11. Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1:391-92; Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 553, 808-09; Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 159-63; Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 56. Whereas Hill understands the Spirit to be both guarantee and agent, Fee firmly asserts that there is no text in the Paul corpus that attributes the resurrection of Christ to the work of the Spirit.

resurrection.³²⁸ Thus, the phrase διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος αὐτοῦ Πνεύματος ἐν ὑμῖν, though seen as either accusative or genitive depending on the textual variant adopted, should be taken as genitive.³²⁹ God raised Jesus by means of the Spirit, and in the future, the same Spirit who raised Jesus will be the means by which God will raise believers.

That Paul repeats the phrase “dwells in you” three times shows that the emphasis of the passage is on the role of the indwelling Spirit. The Father is the initiating subject of resurrection life, but the focus here is on the Spirit, whose indwelling marks the beginning of the process of transformation into the likeness of Christ and guarantees its completion at the resurrection.³³⁰ Just as the Father raised Christ from the dead, the Father will also work through the Spirit to give eternal life to those in whom his Spirit dwells.³³¹ God, through his Spirit, will bring about the completion of salvation with the redemption of believers’ physical bodies in the resurrection (v. 23).³³² Resurrection, then, is the “divine action holding both present and future together.”³³³ The transforming power of the Spirit of God is at work presently and will be at work in the future.

The Spirit is also closely related to Christ.³³⁴ The link between the Spirit and Christ is so closely tied together that in the Christian experience of salvation, Christ and the Spirit are

³²⁸ Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 161. Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1:390-92; Schreiner, *Romans*, 415.

³²⁹ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1:392; Fay, *Father, Son and Spirit*, 95-6. Schreiner, *Romans*, 416-17. Support for the genitive includes the account of Ezekiel 37, which conveys the idea of the Spirit as the agent of resurrection, and 1 Corinthians 6:14, where Paul speaks of resurrection by God’s power.

³³⁰ Dunn points out the double guarantee: the resurrection of Christ and the experience of the Spirit. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:432. Cf. Byrne, *Romans*, 241; Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 700; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 492-93; Moo, *Romans*, 251-52; Schreiner, *Romans*, 416.

³³¹ Cf. Rom 6:4; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20; Col 2:12.

³³² Dunn, *Romans*, 1:445.

³³³ Jewett, *Romans*, 492. Cf. 1 Cor 6:14; 15:12-19; 2 Cor 4:14.

³³⁴ Hurtado notes that the close connection between the Spirit and Jesus is “the most distinctive and noteworthy feature of the NT references to the Spirit,” for the Spirit had previously not been seen as directly connected with anyone other than Yahweh. Hurtado, *God in New Testament Theology*, 83.

perceived as one, for Christ is known only in and through the Spirit, and the Spirit becomes known as the Spirit of Christ (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:9; Phil 1:19).³³⁵ At the same time, there is a clear distinction between Christ and the Spirit. In Romans 8:11, Paul reverts back to the language of the Spirit of God to show that the Spirit and his role is distinct from that of Christ and his role.³³⁶ The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, so believers have life as a result of the righteousness effected by Christ, whose Spirit dwells in those who believe. The Spirit is also the Spirit of God, so believers have the assurance of resurrection.³³⁷

Just as the Son expanded the first-century Christians' understanding of the Father, so too, by the character of his life and ministry, Christ gave a fuller understanding of the Spirit.³³⁸ Jesus himself is now the criterion by which one can recognize the activity of the Spirit of God, who carries on the work of the resurrected Jesus Christ.³³⁹ The Spirit of God is now also known as the Spirit of Christ, and the way in which one may distinguish the Spirit of God from all other spirits is by comparing the activity to the Spirit of Jesus. In other words, the activity of the Spirit of God aligns with the character of Jesus' life and ministry.³⁴⁰ Thus, those who belong to Christ have the Spirit and will demonstrate the character and conduct of Jesus as they live in the Spirit.

Paul portrays the experience of salvation in the life of a believer as triune. His language of the indwelling Spirit as both "of God" and "of Christ" expresses the "intimate and

³³⁵ Dunn, *Romans*, 1:430. Watson notes, "[I]t must be asserted that for Paul the Spirit is the Spirit of the risen Jesus." Watson, "Triune Divine Identity," 121.

³³⁶ Fee, "Christology and Pneumatology," 326.

³³⁷ Fee, "Christology and Pneumatology," 325.

³³⁸ Fee, "Christology and Pneumatology," 313; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 589. Cf. Ziesler, *Paul's Letter*, 210.

³³⁹ Dunn, *Romans*, 1:429; Fee, *Jesus the Lord*, 179-80; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 589.

³⁴⁰ Dunn, *Romans*, 1:429.

indissoluble” union between the Father, Son, and Spirit in conveying the benefits of redemption to believers.³⁴¹ Additionally, Paul’s statement in verse 11 inextricably binds the Father, Son, and Spirit together. God and the Spirit are united by means of shared agency, and God and Jesus are bound together in their relationship by the involvement of the Spirit’s agency.³⁴² At the same time, the three are distinct divine actors. God initiates the saving action of Christ, and the Spirit is the “connective agency,” who applies the benefits of Christ’s redemptive work to the believer.³⁴³ The Father, Son, and Spirit are eternally distinct in their persons and simultaneously inseparable in their shared divine essence and will.³⁴⁴ Though Paul does not lay out a theology of the Trinity, he expresses the threefold pattern of the reality of God’s work in the economy of salvation in the individual, thus laying the foundation for the later development of the doctrine. Paul’s writing shows that the Father, Son, and the Spirit are clearly at work in the lives of individual believers, but there is more to salvation than individual belief. Salvation includes being joined to the people of God, who have been gathered by the Spirit for the purpose of worshiping the one true God, so Paul’s letters also reveal the activity of the Father, Son, and Spirit at work in the community of God’s people, as can be seen in his communication with the Corinthians.

The Same Spirit, the Same Lord, the Same God: 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Whereas Paul speaks of life in the Spirit for the individual in Romans 8:9-11, in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes of the work of the Spirit in the assembly of God’s people.

³⁴¹ Hendriksen, *Exposition of Paul’s Epistle*, 253.

³⁴² Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 162-63; John W. Yates, *The Spirit and Creation in Paul*, WUNT 2/251 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 148.

³⁴³ Fay, “Was Paul a Trinitarian?” 341.

³⁴⁴ Stott, *Message of Romans*, 225.

As a reflector of the nature of God, the church is called to exhibit both unity and diversity as evidence of the presence of God among the individuals who make up the body of Christ.³⁴⁵ In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul answers questions concerning πνευματικῶν (“spiritual things,” v.1).³⁴⁶ Some of the Corinthian believers were creating disharmony among their brothers and sisters in Christ by discriminating against and disrespecting those in the assembly whose contribution to the church was considered of less value.³⁴⁷ Specifically, the Corinthians were maintaining a faulty view of the manifestation of the Spirit by placing an unbalanced emphasis on the gift of tongues.³⁴⁸ To correct their aberrant thinking, Paul places all πνευματικῶν in proper perspective.³⁴⁹

Paul begins his response by specifying the christological criterion for spiritual experience: the lordship of Jesus.³⁵⁰ The foundational confession, “Jesus is Lord,” is only possible by means of the Holy Spirit living in the believer. Paul reminds the Corinthians that because they have acknowledged Jesus as Lord, their lives and conduct must align with their confession. To illustrate the difference between one being led by God’s Spirit and one being led

³⁴⁵ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 840; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 592.

³⁴⁶ Mark Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 2014), 21. In 1 Corinthians, Paul responds to questions from correspondence that is no longer extant and to issues within the church which he had heard about from reports of others. Cf. 1 Corinthians 7:1, 25; 8:1; Margaret M. Mitchell, “Concerning περὶ δέ in 1 Corinthians,” *NovT* 31.3 (1989): 229-56. Mitchell rightly argues that though the formula περὶ δέ may be used in response to a previous letter, it is not restricted to this use, even in letters which mention a former letter. The formula may simply signal a new topic, one in which both the author and the reader are familiar.

³⁴⁷ Alan F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 216.

³⁴⁸ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 840; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 592. Cf. Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 206.

³⁴⁹ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 454. Morris notes that in this context, it makes little difference whether τῶν πνευματικῶν should be translated as “spiritual persons” or “spiritual gifts/things,” for both Paul and the Corinthians would have had in mind persons who exercise the gifts. Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, TNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 162. Cf. Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 282; Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 909-11.

³⁵⁰ Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 216; Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 924.

astray by mute idols, Paul cites an ancient cursing practice (vv. 2-3).³⁵¹ The two opposing choices, either cursing Jesus or hailing him as Lord, serve as an unambiguous testimony of a person's allegiance.³⁵² Believers are now Spirit people under the influence of the Spirit of God and must no longer think and behave as non-Spirit people.³⁵³ As Spirit people, they must live and worship together in unity with diversity under the influence of the Spirit, who always points people to the Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of the Father.

In the only place in his letters where he writes of the Spirit, Lord, and God in consecutive and parallel statements, Paul emphasizes the oneness of God to argue for unity in the midst of diversity within the community of his people (vv. 4-6).³⁵⁴ More than any other letter, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians stresses the oneness of God and the unity of believers as a reflection of God's oneness. Paul's emphasis echoes the theology of the *Shema*, which asserts that there is one God and one Hebrew people.³⁵⁵ To emphasize the oneness of God and the unity of the church, Paul contrasts the variety of gifts and the same Spirit, Lord, and God.³⁵⁶ In each of these three lines, Paul refers to that which is different and that which is the same, "not exactly repeating but

³⁵¹ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 455-56. *Contra* Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 204. Hays asserts that Paul coined the contrasting phrase to fit opposite the confession, "Jesus is Lord." Hays, *First Corinthians*, 209. Cf. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 567-72. For a summary of twelve differing views regarding ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, see Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 918-24.

³⁵² Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 565. Cf. Matthew W. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 92-9. Bates explains that allegiance to Christ requires more than the confession, "Jesus is Lord." Such a confession of loyalty is only one dimension of allegiance which requires intellectual agreement with the gospel, confession of loyalty, and embodied fidelity worked out in obedience to the Spirit. Bates writes, "Public declaration that *Jesus is Lord* is at the bedrock, because this designates mental agreement with the gospel and the desire to live a life of personal fidelity to Jesus as the sovereign ruler of heaven and earth" (p. 98, emphasis in original).

³⁵³ This is the language of Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 30-31.

³⁵⁴ Richardson, *Paul's Language about God*, 217.

³⁵⁵ Erik Waaler, *The Shema and The First Commandment in First Corinthians: An Intertextual Approach to Paul's Re-reading of Deuteronomy*, WUNT 2/253 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 393.

³⁵⁶ Waaler, *The Shema*, 393.

reinforcing and slightly developing” the previous thought.³⁵⁷ Three times Paul refers to the workings of the Holy Spirit under three different categories. In essence, Paul is asking, “How can there be discord in the church when there is unity in these strongest of forces?”³⁵⁸

Paul’s use of the word διαρρέσεις, translated “varieties,” only occurs here in the New Testament. In secular Greek, διαρρέσεις can mean “separation or dissolution,” “division,” or “distribution.”³⁵⁹ In the context of Paul’s letter, διαρρέσεις may favor the definition of “distribution” rather than “distinction,” for the gifts/service/activities are demonstrations of the Spirit working in the body of Christ (v. 7).³⁶⁰ However, Paul’s argument for unity in diversity supports the meanings of both diversity and distribution, for the variety of gifts/service/activities comes from the same Spirit/Lord/God.³⁶¹ Thus, Paul may have a double meaning in mind as he stresses both the diversity in the assembly of God’s people and God’s sovereign action in his church.³⁶² Pointing to the use of the verb διαποῦν (“apportions”) in verse 11 and its allusion to the sovereignty of the Spirit, Thiselton favors the translation “different apportionings.”³⁶³ Though this makes for a less than smooth reading of the text, “different apportionings” brings out the idea of the variety of gifts/service/activities freely allotted by God in his infinite grace.

³⁵⁷ Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 565.

³⁵⁸ Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 268.

³⁵⁹ Heinrich Schlier, “διαρέω, διαίρεσις,” in TDNT, eds. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 184-85, here 184.

³⁶⁰ Schlier, “διαρέω, διαίρεσις,” 185. Cf. Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1967), 262-63.

³⁶¹ Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 286-87. Cf. Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 586.

³⁶² David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the Local Church*, BST (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 196.

³⁶³ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 929. Cf. Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 286-87.

The rich diversity of the manifestations of the Spirit is an expression of the diversity in God, who is experienced in many different ways. As the embodiment of Christ's presence in the world, the church reflects the diversity of God in a variety of ways through individual members of the body, all the while pointing to Jesus as Lord.³⁶⁴

Paul uses three broad categories to describe the manifestations of the Spirit: gifts, service, and activities. In verse 4, the word Paul uses for "gifts," *χαρισμάτων*, comes from the root "grace" (*χάρις*) and points to the grace of God operational in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In using "gifts" to describe the spiritual things, Paul "provides a theological corrective" to the Corinthian sentiment that emphasized the "ecstatic nature of the phenomena."³⁶⁵ The gifts given by the Spirit are the true spiritual realities given to members of God's household for the building up of the body of Christ. Rather than creating division, the allotment of the diversity of gifts is for the divine purpose of unifying the church. All believers receive gifts as direct clients from the same Spirit, who is the benefactor or patron of all God's people.³⁶⁶ Each member of God's household receives directly from God for the common good of the community. Even the poorer members have received gifts and have been empowered to share these with the wealthy and prominent members.

In verse 5, Paul speaks of "service" (*διακονιῶν*) distributed by the same Lord. Those who serve the body of Christ are enabled to do so by the indwelling Spirit of Christ. Thus, believers

³⁶⁴ Prior, *Message of 1 Corinthians*, 195.

³⁶⁵ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 452. Cf. Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 567-68; Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 929-30.

³⁶⁶ Ciampa and Rosner note the significance of understanding abilities as "gifts" within the context of the patronage system in the Roman world. As members of God's household, all members, even the poorer ones in the eyes of humans, are among the privileged in receiving the grace of God. Thus, all Christian "clients" owe proper worship to the one true God, who is their generous patron. In return for God's infinite generosity, God's people are called to be generous within the community of believers. Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 568-69.

serve Christ as they serve the others.³⁶⁷ Such service is to be used for strengthening and encouraging one another in the body of Christ as an expression of submission and devotion to Jesus as Lord.³⁶⁸ Thus, every member of the body of Christ is to be regarded as worthy of receiving a particular assignment to be used in the service of the Lord.³⁶⁹ There is no one kind of service that is better than another, for the variety of service is a manifestation of the Spirit (v. 7), activated by the Spirit (v. 11), and given by the same Lord. Thus, each gift of service should be seen as “a royal and holy service.”³⁷⁰

Paul’s third parallel statement stresses the variety of ἐνεργημάτων, or “activities,” which serve as both God’s activity within the corporate body of Christ and God’s activity within the individual as God activates gifts for service (v. 6).³⁷¹ Though ἐνεργημάτων “connotes the actualization of power,”³⁷² the emphasis is on the effectiveness of the power.³⁷³ Paul notes that this effective activity of God applies to everything in everyone, not as self-induced, but rather, produced in Christians by God. All things done in the body of Christ for the common good are ultimately achieved by God’s working in the lives of individuals by means of the Spirit.³⁷⁴ Again, such activity is to be used for the good of the body of Christ so the church may fulfill her purpose in bringing praise and honor to God.

³⁶⁷ Cf. Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 164; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 570.

³⁶⁸ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, TNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 255.

³⁶⁹ Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 570.

³⁷⁰ Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 570. Cf. Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 931-32.

³⁷¹ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 933. Cf. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 255-56.

³⁷² Collins, *First Corinthians*, 452.

³⁷³ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 933-34.

³⁷⁴ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 162.

Though Paul uses three different broad categories to describe the manifestations of the Spirit and attributes these to different persons, Taylor rightly cautions that the point of Paul's argument will be missed if one tries to distinguish between the different terms or suggest that the Spirit, Lord, and God do different things.³⁷⁵ Paul's language is flexible,³⁷⁶ and in verse 7, he encompasses all of the categories in verses 4-6 within "the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." Paul's intent is to broaden the thinking of the Corinthians so that they understand what it means to be Spirit people. The contrastive *δέ* ("but") in verses 4 and 6 emphasizes the difference both between the diversity and unity and between the phenomenon and the source. The source and purpose of the manifestation is one, while the phenomena are diverse in form.³⁷⁷ What is most important is from where the gifts/service/activities come, to whom they are gifted, and to whom they point.³⁷⁸ God distributes his gracious gifts in a variety of ways through the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit so that those enabled and empowered by the manifestation of the Spirit may bring honor to the Son to the glory of the Father. All members of the body of Christ are the recipients of the Holy Spirit. Thus, all members receive gifts/service/activities that come from the same Spirit/Lord/God for the purpose of building up the body of Christ.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁵ Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 287; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 576-77. Cf. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 161.

³⁷⁶ For example, Paul attributes *ἐνεργημάτων* to both God and the Spirit when he notes that a manifestation of the Spirit is "*ἐνεργήματα* of miracles" (1 Cor 12:10). Additionally, in Romans, Paul attributes gifts to God (11:29), and in 1 Corinthians, he attributes them to the Spirit.

³⁷⁷ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 936. Cf. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 210.

³⁷⁸ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 931.

³⁷⁹ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 453. Collins asserts that the first "all" of verse 6 refers to the totality of God's activity and the second refers to all Christians. Similarly, C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 284; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 563; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 211; Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 165. *Contra* Fee who states that it may or may not be true that every single person in the community has his or her own gift, but it is highly unlikely this is Paul's meaning. Paul's concern is on

Though Paul's focus in this passage is not the nature of God or the relationships between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, God's "relational identity" is the foundation upon which Paul builds his argument.³⁸⁰ Thus, Paul's writing communicates his commitment to monotheism while at the same time having a "trinitarian cast."³⁸¹ Paul's reference to idols in verse 2 and the attention he draws to the Spirit, who causes one to acknowledge Jesus as Lord, is linked with his previous discourse in chapters 8—10, especially the reformulated *Shema* (8:4-6).³⁸² Whereas Paul earlier presents a "binitarian basis for unity" of the Father and the Son in 1 Corinthians 8:6, 12:4-6 expands the concept "to a triple basis of unity" to include the Spirit.³⁸³ Paul encapsulates "the same Spirit . . . the same Lord . . . the same God" by replacing the phrase "one God" in verse 6 with "one Spirit" in verse 11. Thus, "the one and the same Spirit" operates as a summary of the expanded phrase.³⁸⁴ Paul's language of the same Spirit/Lord/God encompassed within "the one and the same Spirit" is found in the context of his earlier use of the curse formula, in which Paul lays out the dividing line between those who choose to follow the Lord and those who do not. Thus, Paul echoes the covenantal use of the *Shema*, which called for unified loyalty to God on behalf of all God's people.³⁸⁵ There is one God and one Lord, the same Spirit, Lord, and God who acts in various ways within the body of Christ.

the collective community as a whole. The emphasis is on the diversity of ways in which the Spirit is manifested (cf. vv. 8-10). Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 163-64.

³⁸⁰ C. Kavin Rowe, "The Trinity in the Letters of St Paul and Hebrews," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, eds. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 41-54, here 50.

³⁸¹ Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 255. Cf. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 162-63.

³⁸² Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 560, 564-66; Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 268.

³⁸³ Waaler, *The Shema*, 439.

³⁸⁴ Waaler, *The Shema*, 439. Richardson notes that Paul's use of parallel language when referring to both God and the Spirit highlights the theocentric character of the Spirit. Richardson, *Paul's Language about God*, 218.

³⁸⁵ Waaler, *The Shema*, 439.

Barrett writes of the fluidity of Paul's language: "The Trinitarian formula is the more impressive because it seems to be artless and unconscious."³⁸⁶ Paul's basis for calling for unity in diversity within the church is the unity and diversity found within God as Father, Son, and Spirit. The diversity within the church is both natural and divinely appointed and approved.³⁸⁷ As the embodiment of Christ's presence in the world, the church must reflect the unity and diversity of the one true God whom they worship.

In his typical way of writing, Paul applies spiritual realities to and relays theological truths through his instruction to the churches concerning everyday living. Though he does not explicitly lay out the doctrine of the Trinity, Paul's Trinitarian presuppositions are evident in the way he communicates with words that are "so unstudied, so freely and unselfconsciously expressed."³⁸⁸ It is the combination of Paul's writing that contributes to the doctrine of the Trinity. On one hand, Paul emphasizes God's unity in such a way that it subsumes the work of the Son and the Spirit (e.g., 3:22-23; 11:3; 15:23-28), and on the other, he portrays Christ and the Spirit in terms of their full deity (1:3; 8:6; 12:6, 11).³⁸⁹ Just as the Father, Son, and Spirit work in the lives of individual believers in the economy of salvation, so too do all three work within the community of the body of believers who are called to worship God as Father, Son, and Spirit. Christian unity in diversity is an indication that God in his fullness is present in the midst of his people. So important is this characterization of the church that Paul also emphasizes unity in the body of Christ in his letter to the Ephesians.

³⁸⁶ Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 284.

³⁸⁷ Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 268.

³⁸⁸ Fee, "Paul and the Trinity," 335.

³⁸⁹ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 163.

One Spirit, One Lord, and One God and Father: Ephesians 4:4-6

In a letter pervaded by the image of the church as the body of Christ made alive by the Spirit of God, Paul writes to the Gentile Christians in Ephesus to instruct them in what their allegiance to Christ should look like in day-to-day life lived out in the community of Christ. As a body of believers reconciled to God through Christ and indwelt by the Spirit, the church is called to live in unity as God's holy people as a witness to his reconciliation.³⁹⁰ Following a presentation of the essential elements of the church's identity (Eph 1—3), Paul exhorts believers, who have been called to Christ, "to walk in a manner worthy of the calling" they have received. He then outlines a list of the core characteristics of a worthy walk and identifies the goal: "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (4:1-3).³⁹¹

Paul interrupts his ethical instructions with a confession of faith that has wording similar to 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, though here in Ephesians 4:4-6, the "one Spirit . . . one Lord . . . one God" are "successively amplified."³⁹² With a sevenfold expression of "one," Paul lists the spiritual realities that unite believers in the body of Christ. In thoroughly relational language, using three simple affirmations, Paul refers to four Christian experiences found only in relation to God as Father, Son, and Spirit.³⁹³

Paul begins with "one body" (v. 4), a theme he has already established (1:23; 2:16; 3:6) and will continue to develop throughout the letter (4:12, 16; 5:23, 30). Paul's reference to the

³⁹⁰ Bock, *Ephesians*, 117; Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 119.

³⁹¹ Cf. Bock, *Ephesians*, 116-18.

³⁹² Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 336. Cf. Bock, *Ephesians*, 119; Cohick, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 249; Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 117-18; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 255-56. Bock notes the liturgical feel to these verses while acknowledging that it is uncertain whether this was an existing creed or original to Paul.

³⁹³ John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, BST (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 150.

body is a metaphorical expression used as an image of the assembly of believers.³⁹⁴ The church is the body of Christ with Jesus as its head. This one body, vitalized by the one Spirit, consists of both Jews and Gentiles. The phrase “one body and one Spirit” is a reminder of what Paul previously wrote in 2:13-22.³⁹⁵ Christ, the one who is himself peace and preaches peace, created the church as the “one new man” and “one body.” By his death on the cross, Jesus ended the hostility between Jews and Gentiles and reconciled both groups to God (2:13-17). Now, all those who are in Christ Jesus have access to the Father “in one Spirit,” and the body of believers has become “a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (2:18, 22). The church then is positionally secure in the Spirit and bound together by the Spirit.

The indwelling Spirit, within each individual believer and in the midst of the corporate body, creates unity between the church, as the body of Christ, and Christ, as the head of the church.³⁹⁶ It is a unity experienced in Christ, and so it thoroughly transcends all differences, for all barriers have been broken down in Christ.³⁹⁷ The source of unity is both Christ and the Spirit (cf. 4:4, 5).³⁹⁸ Believers who make up the body enter into union with Christ by baptism in the one Spirit (1 Cor 12:13; cf. Eph 2:18) and maintain the union by participating in the eucharist (1 Cor 10:16-17).³⁹⁹ Believers are reconciled, not only with God but also with one another. Thus,

³⁹⁴ Cf. Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 118; Kreitzer, “Body,” 71. Fung points out that Paul would have been familiar with the Hebrew concept of “‘corporate personality,’ with its oscillation between the individual and the corporate and its notion of the inclusion of the many in the one.” Thus, when Paul portrays the church as the body of Christ, he is expressing the idea of unity between the one and the many, of the union between believers and Christ (p. 78). Ronald Y. K. Fung, “Body of Christ,” in DPL (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 76-82.

³⁹⁵ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 256. Cf. Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 198.

³⁹⁶ Fung, “Body of Christ,” 80.

³⁹⁷ Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 117. Cf. Eph 2:11-22.

³⁹⁸ Fung, “Body of Christ,” 81. Cf. Stott, *God’s New Society*, 150.

³⁹⁹ Fung, “Body of Christ,” 81.

the body consists of a diversity of believers, who are called to maintain unity as a demonstration of God's grace. The church is both one and many, unified yet diverse.

The body of believers is "called to the one hope." The former life of believers held "no hope," for they were "without God in the world" (2:12). Now, however, those who have responded to the call of Christ and placed themselves under his lordship have the shared hope of participating in the future resurrection life in which Christ will unite all things in heaven and on earth to himself (1:10). The confident assurance for this hope comes from the indwelling Spirit, who is both the evidence and guarantee of their hope (1:13-14). Believers both have hope and are called in this hope. That is, hope accompanies God's call.⁴⁰⁰ As part of the eschatological community, believers live in the "already" realized hope of the indwelling Spirit, who calls them to and empowers them to live in unity with one another as they wait for the "eschatological conclusion" of their calling when they will experience the fullness of God's "immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness . . . in Christ Jesus" (2:7).⁴⁰¹ As they walk in the reality of their position in the Spirit and in Christ, the church must worship God by living out the hope of its calling in a way that honors and brings glory to God.

Continuing with verse 5, Paul moves more quickly with the next two affirmations. There is "one Lord" to whom believers have given their allegiance. The Lord Jesus Christ is the object of "one faith." By "one faith," Paul is not referring to faith as in the body of truth believed by Christians but the act of believing and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.⁴⁰² The confession of

⁴⁰⁰ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 257.

⁴⁰¹ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 703.

⁴⁰² Bock, *Ephesians*, 119; Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 336; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 516-17; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 258. *Contra* Cohick, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 252; Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 119; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 199. Foulkes asserts that it may mean an attitude of trust in the Lord, but here, as in verse 13, it refers to the truths concerning the Lord and work and purpose. Snodgrass asserts that "one faith" is a reference to the explanation of the

Jesus as Lord to express the faith of the church unites believers to Christ in allegiance and to one another in unity as one body.⁴⁰³ There is also “one baptism,” the “unifying mark of believers,” which binds them together in unity under the lordship of Christ.⁴⁰⁴ Such unity transcends the boundaries of ethnicity, social class, and gender because believers are united together in their shared faith in Christ.⁴⁰⁵

The climax and the final declaration of unity focuses on God as the unifying factor of the previous confessions (v. 6).⁴⁰⁶ Here, Paul sums up the *Shema*, the Jewish confession of monotheism.⁴⁰⁷ As was noted earlier, Paul remained firmly rooted in monotheism, the worship of the one true God, who is Creator of and sovereign over all.⁴⁰⁸ Paul understood the one true God to be God as Father, Son, and Spirit because that is how God revealed his presence through Christ and the Spirit. In the soteriological experience of every believer and in the presence of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ in the church, God reveals himself as one in essence and three in divine persons. Paul describes the one God and Father as transcendent (“over all”), pervasive (“through all”), and immanent (“in all”).⁴⁰⁹ Grammatically, the four occurrences of

gospel in 2:1-10. Though verse 13 does refer to the content of faith, prior to chapter 4, all references to “faith” have referred to the trust that Christians place in Christ (1:13, 15, 19; 2:8; 3:12, 17).

⁴⁰³ Max Anders, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians*, HoNNTC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 150.

⁴⁰⁴ Anders, *Galatians, Ephesians*, 150. Paul does not qualify what he means by “one baptism,” and such a discussion goes beyond the scope of this study. For further study of the differing views, see Bock, *Ephesians*, 120; Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 336-37; Cohick, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 252; Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 704-5; Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 119; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 517-18; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 258-59.

⁴⁰⁵ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 258. Cf. Galatians 3:26-29.

⁴⁰⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 518.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. Cohick, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 253; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 199.

⁴⁰⁸ See “There is One God and One Lord: 1 Corinthians 8:5-6” in chapter 3.

⁴⁰⁹ Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 337. Cf. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 519-20.

“all” could either be masculine, referring to people, or neuter, referring to things. There is valid and convincing support from the context of the letter for both viewpoints.⁴¹⁰ Those who interpret “all” to refer to things point to what Paul has said about God with regard to creation and the eschaton. In the future, God will “unite all things” in Christ (1:10), work “all things” according to his will (1:11), and subject “all things” to Christ (1:22). God is the Creator of “all things” (3:9) and the Father who names “every” family in heaven and on earth (3:15). As Creator, God is over all of creation, and as the one who sums up all things in Christ, he is through all and in all.

Those who interpret “all” to refer to people point to Paul’s references of believers having been adopted into the family of God (1:2) and having access to the Father by means of the Spirit (2:18). Additionally, God rules over the church through Christ (1:20-23), and he dwells within the church body by means of his Spirit. The only way to view “all” as referring to things when noting that God is “in all,” is to look at the phrase as applying to the future when his fullness will fill “all in all” (1:23). God is sovereign over the church, through whom he accomplishes his purposes by means of his Spirit dwelling individually in each believer and corporately in the church.⁴¹¹ Cohick suggests, that readers should “keep the ambiguity, as we think about believers, who are drawn from all humanity and who are part of God’s plan for the unity of all the cosmos under Christ.”⁴¹² Whether “all” refers to people or things, what Paul makes clear is that there is one God and Father who is supreme over all. He is the only true God who deserves worship.

In these three concise affirmations, Paul exhorts the Ephesians to maintain unity within the church by presenting God as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as “the center and model for

⁴¹⁰ Cf. Bock, *Ephesians*, 121-22; Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 337-38; Cohick, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 254; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 520; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 259-60.

⁴¹¹ Cf. Bock, *Ephesians*, 122; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 520.

⁴¹² Cohick, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 254.

unity.”⁴¹³ Paul’s language moves so smoothly between “one Spirit,” “one Lord,” and “one God,” implying that the divine triad constitutes the unity of God as Father, Son, and Spirit.⁴¹⁴ The same unity in diversity that exists in the triune God is the same unity in diversity that must be exhibited in the body of Christ. In verse 7, Paul’s language of “all” shifts to “each one of us.” The church, made up of a multitude of diverse persons, has been called to live in unity as the embodiment of the presence of God in the world. Paul’s language presupposes what he and his audience had experienced in their conversion and in their worship: God as a triune God. Thus, Paul is able to write with triadic formulas seamlessly moving between the language of God, Lord, and Spirit.

The Triune Nature of God

In the previous chapter, it was asked whether Paul presented a binitarian or a Trinitarian view of God. In each of the above “triadic” texts (Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 4:4-6), it has been shown that Paul presents God as Father, Son, and Spirit in the economy of salvation and in the experience of those living in the family God. Thus, Paul maintains a Trinitarian view of God. Paul’s presentation requires no explanation, as it was presupposed by both him and his audience that God reveals himself as Father, Son, and Spirit, for this is how each believer experiences God from conversion onward. Even in the places where the Spirit is not explicitly mentioned, it is implied that the Spirit is at work (e.g., Rom 10:9-10; 2 Cor 5:17-19). For Paul, the Spirit is the key to the Christian experience, for he is the eschatological evidence and the guarantee that God is dwelling in and among those who give

⁴¹³ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 521.

⁴¹⁴ Rowe, “Trinity in the Letters,” 51.

their allegiance to the Lord.⁴¹⁵ The work of the Spirit in the individual and in the community of God's people always has the goal of honoring the Son to the glory of the Father.

The Father, Son, and Spirit are intertwined so closely that their identities are inseparable. God is who he is relationally. God is who he is as Father only in relation to his Son, and the Son is who he is only in relation to the Father. The Spirit, who is simultaneously the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, is who he is only in relation to God and Christ, and the Father and the Son can only be known through the Spirit. Thus, the relationship of the three “are what they are, in full mutuality of co-implication.”⁴¹⁶ The salvation of a believer is a joint action among the three. The Father initiates salvation, the Son accomplishes salvation, and the Spirit applies salvation. Therefore, any reference to salvation includes reference, either explicitly or implicitly, to the triune God as Father, Son, and Spirit, for “[t]o name the one is to name the three, since their identities mutually implicate one another's” in an asymmetrical way.⁴¹⁷

The divine unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit works salvation in the lives of individual believers for the goal of worship within the community of God's people. It is impossible to offer prayer and worship to the one true God without acknowledging God as Trinity, for to worship the one true Creator and sovereign God is to worship the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Though Paul does not lay out a systematic framework for what this looks like for the individual believer and for the church, he does give insight into the nature of true prayer and worship as he addresses the issues that arose in the community living in the power of the Spirit and striving to honor the Son to the glory of the Father in the “already” but “not yet” kingdom of God.

⁴¹⁵ Fee, *Paul, the Spirit*, 180-81.

⁴¹⁶ Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 152. Cf. Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 135-37.

⁴¹⁷ Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 135. Cf. Watson, “Triune Divine Identity,” 122-23.

CHAPTER 5:

TRUE PAULINE WORSHIP IS TRINITARIAN

As Paul addresses the needs of God's people gathering together in community, he presents a portrait of God as Father, Son, and Spirit in the economy of salvation and in the experience of the community gathered together in prayer and worship. Paul appeals to those who have received the mercies of God to live in a way that honors the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit to the glory of the Father. In the same way that there is no systematic presentation of the theology of the Trinity, there is also no systematic presentation of worship in Paul's letters. However, Paul does present hints of what first-century Christian worship looked like. For Paul, salvation always requires a response of prayer and worship both individually and corporately.⁴¹⁸ The response of prayer and worship, which is rooted in who God is and what God does, was nothing new for Paul or first-century Christians.⁴¹⁹ From the beginning, all of God's creation has been designed to bring glory and honor to the Creator. God's covenant people of Israel recognized this and declared it daily with the confession of the *Shema*, a cry of allegiance to the one true God and a pledge to worship him with their entire being.⁴²⁰

As an avid monotheist, Paul remained faithful to the Jewish confession of faith. However, the arrival of Jesus and the events of his death, resurrection, exaltation, and the arrival of the Holy Spirit revealed a clearer portrait of the God of Israel. Early Christians included Christ and the Spirit in their devotion to God because they understood there to be an interconnectedness between Father, Son, and Spirit. Christ has been exalted to the right hand of the throne of God

⁴¹⁸ Cf. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 883-84; e.g., 1 Corinthians 14:15, 26; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 5:19-21; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 3:16.

⁴¹⁹ Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 413.

⁴²⁰ Cf. Block, *Deuteronomy*, 182-84; McBride, "Yoke of the Kingdom," 304.

where he participates with the Father in exercising divine sovereignty over the cosmos, and the Spirit has been sent by the Father and the Son to apply the work of Christ and gather the people of God together in community. If the *Shema* encompasses the belief and practice of exclusive worship required by the one true God, and if Paul rightly reformulates the *Shema* to include Christ and the Spirit, then Christian worship must include the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. True worship must be Trinitarian.

Back to the *Shema*

The distinction between the one true God and all other reality is unambiguous. There is one, unique God who is the Creator of all things, and as the Creator, he is also the sovereign ruler over all things. There is God, and there is all other reality; there is the Creator, and there is creation. All reality is defined in relation to Yahweh, who is in an absolutely unique category, a category that requires worship of him alone. Only the Creator of and ruler over all things deserves the worship of creation.

This study began with a look at the *Shema*, the Israelite declaration of allegiance to the one true God, an emphatic response to “Who is Yahweh whom the Israelites worship?” In the midst of the polytheistic worship of pagan nations, the Israelites remind themselves daily that they serve the only true God, the Creator of and sovereign over all things in heaven and earth, the only one who deserves the worship of all creation. The confession, “Hear, O Israel, Our God is Yahweh, Yahweh alone!” binds the covenant community of God together in “unity of belief and praxis.”⁴²¹ Yahweh alone is to receive exclusive worship and obedience. Bauckham defines worship in the Jewish tradition as “the recognition of the unique divine identity, and so must be accorded to the one who created and rules all things, but may not be accorded to any other

⁴²¹ Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 6.

beings, all of whom are created by and subject to the one true God.”⁴²² To rightfully receive worship, a being would have to demonstrate participation in the unique identity of God as Creator and sovereign.

The Israelites knew their God, for he had revealed himself to them by his unique and personal name, Yahweh, the covenant name, which is associated with all of God’s promises, past, present, and future. He is the God who creates and rules, who redeems and saves, and who will bring judgment at the eschaton. In revealing his name, Yahweh revealed himself to be uniquely personal and intimate. He is simultaneously transcendent and immanent. To reveal his immanence without compromising his transcendence, Yahweh employed divine agents who are undeniably included in his unique divine identity. The Angel of the Lord and God’s personified attributes, Wisdom and Word, are so closely related to God in their divine roles and activities and at the same time distinct from Yahweh. These divine agents reveal the uniqueness of Yahweh in his unity and diversity (see chapter 2). Thus, the understanding of divine uniqueness in the monotheistic worship of the Israelites includes a plurality in unity.

When the early Christians viewed the Hebrew Scriptures and the literature of Second Temple Judaism through the lens of Christ’s life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and the arrival of the Spirit, the foundation laid within the previous literature—God’s complexity, his immanence and transcendence, and the notion of plurality—allowed room for the worship of God as Father, Son, and Spirit. The *Shema* was an integral part of the early Jewish Christian’s thinking, so, rather than abandoning their Jewish roots, they reformulated the *Shema*. What did worship of the one true God look like for the covenant people of Israel? How could early Jewish Christ followers remain faithful to the declaration and requirement of the *Shema*, while at the

⁴²² Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 25.

same time incorporating Christ and the Spirit in the worship of God? In the same way that the covenant people of Israel worship the one true God exclusively through covenantal love, so too must the church worship God by living out the hope of its calling in a way that honors and brings glory to the one and only true God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The *Shema* and Worship

For the covenant people of God, Yahweh alone is uniquely their God, who redeemed them out of slavery and promised to fulfill his covenant promises given to Abraham. As a covenant people, the Israelites were called to worship and serve Yahweh alone. The reciprocating response to Yahweh's sovereignty and redemption is absolute and undivided worship of and allegiance to Yahweh, which is to be demonstrated by loving him with every part of their lives. Their love and loyalty were to be deeply rooted in their hearts as they served and worshiped the Lord their God with every aspect of their lives, including themselves, their time, and their resources.

The *Shema* is found in Moses' address to the new generation of the covenant people of Israel just prior to their entry into the land of promise (Deut 6:4-9). The covenant between Yahweh and his chosen people was the establishment of a theocracy in which Yahweh is king and those he rescued and redeemed out of Egypt are his subjects.⁴²³ The book of Deuteronomy uses imagery employed in political treaties of the ancient Near East (ANE) and is viewed as a vassal treaty between Yahweh and the people of Israel.⁴²⁴ In suzerain/vassal treaties, vassals

⁴²³ Craigie, *Book of Deuteronomy*, 19.

⁴²⁴ Craigie, *Book of Deuteronomy*, 22-4. Cf. Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 13-26; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 23-4; William L. Moran, "Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25.1 (Jan 1963): 77-87, here 82; J. A. Thompson, *The Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1964), 22; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 338, 351; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 2-3.

often pledged to “love” their sovereign king.⁴²⁵ The term “love” is interpreted as loyalty, which demands obedience.⁴²⁶ Yahweh, who redeemed Israel out of slavery in Egypt, is the suzerain, and the people of Israel, who owe their allegiance only to Yahweh, are his vassals.⁴²⁷ The stipulations of the treaty presented in Deuteronomy are based on the principle of love. Yahweh initiated the covenant in love, and his covenant people must maintain their relationship with Yahweh by loving him with every sphere of their lives (v. 5).⁴²⁸ Couched within covenant language designed to move the people to exclusive devotion and obedience to Yahweh, the *Shema* is the core of Israelite worship.⁴²⁹ The *Shema* includes a call to gather, a proclamation of the uniqueness of Yahweh, and a response to worship Yahweh in love.⁴³⁰

The *Shema* opens with a traditional call to worship: “Hear, O Israel!”⁴³¹ The call to assemble was a collective call to the community of the covenant people of Israel. It was a call to gather for “radical worship and communal identity” centered on Yahweh, the one true God.⁴³²

⁴²⁵ Moran, “Ancient Near Eastern Background,” 78-80. Craigie points out that the language of loving God “is not drawn directly from the treaty terminology; rather it is one of the features of the Hebrew relationship to God which made possible the use of the treaty terminology in the first place.” Craigie, *Book of Deuteronomy*, 170.

⁴²⁶ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 351.

⁴²⁷ Craigie, *Book of Deuteronomy*, 22-4; Cf. Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 98.

⁴²⁸ Craigie, *Book of Deuteronomy*, 19, 41. Love is a recurring theme through Deuteronomy. God loves his people (5:10; 7:7-16; 10:15), who are required to love him in return (5:10; 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20). God also loves the sojourner and calls his people to do the same (10:18-19).

⁴²⁹ Craigie, *Book of Deuteronomy*, 17-8; Ernest W. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 46, 70. Nicholson asserts that the entire book of Deuteronomy is a commentary on Deuteronomy 6:5.

⁴³⁰ Dennis W. Krouse, “Back to Basics: A Biblical-Liturgical Model for Christian Living,” *Worship* 84.6 (November 2010): 482–97, here 483.

⁴³¹ Anthony Phillips, *Deuteronomy*, CBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 55; Krouse, “Back to Basics,” 485; Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, trans. Dorothea Barton (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 63. The invitation is found throughout Deuteronomy (5:1; 6:3; 9:1; 20:3; 27:9).

⁴³² William S. Kervin, “Dimensions of Worship in the Shema: Resources for Christian Liturgical Theology,” *SR* 48.1 (2019): 115-37, here 127.

For the Jew, individual identity is inseparable from the communal and covenantal character of Israel.⁴³³ The second phrase of the *Shema* is a proclamation of Yahweh's "intimate self-disclosure" and "the heart of God's revelation."⁴³⁴ The unique Creator of and ruler over all things is both transcendent and immanent. Yahweh chooses to be intimately connected to his covenant people. He entrusts his people with his name and the covenant relationship tied to it, and he calls his people to unwavering, whole-souled commitment as they represent him in the world.

Following the acknowledgement that Yahweh is the one and only true God, who is uniquely the covenant God of Israel, Yahweh calls his people to covenant faithfulness with the command to be loyal to him alone by loving him "with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (v. 5). Fidelity to Yahweh requires covenant loyalty, a whole-souled devotion shown by love.⁴³⁵ The "heart" connotes "mind," and, when combined with "all your soul," it expresses full devotion that includes a willingness to sacrifice one's life for Yahweh.⁴³⁶ The Hebrew word for "might," *ḥayil*, is usually translated as the adverb "very." However, here and in 2 Kings 23:25, "might" indicates both ability (i.e., power, strength) and resources (i.e., wealth).⁴³⁷ The readiness to give one's life and the provision of might and force in the service of the suzerain are the same elements found in ANE vassal treaties.⁴³⁸ Thus, covenantal love affected every sphere of a person's life as he or she expressed gratitude for Yahweh's love and faithfulness by giving whole-hearted allegiance to Yahweh.

⁴³³ Kervin, "Dimensions of Worship," 126.

⁴³⁴ Krouse, "Back to Basics," 486.

⁴³⁵ Cf. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 142; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 98-9.

⁴³⁶ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 338-39. Cf. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 142.

⁴³⁷ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 339-40. Cf. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 142; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 99.

⁴³⁸ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 351.

Verses 6-9 parallel 11:18-20. “These words” were to be on the hearts of his people (6:6; 11:18a),⁴³⁹ taught to their children (6:7a; 11:19a), recited throughout the day (6:7b; 11:19b), bound upon their hands and foreheads (6:8; 11:18b), and inscribed upon their doorposts (6:9; 11:20). The phrases “on your heart” (6:6) or “in your heart and in your soul” (11:18) and the language of constant awareness are also part of ancient declarations of political loyalty echoed in the language oaths found in vassal treaties.⁴⁴⁰ For the Israelites, the constant awareness of Yahweh and his requirements went far beyond abstract theological notions. Covenantal love for Yahweh is “[e]nacted in a comprehensive range of liturgical and performative ritualizations accompanied by deep, self-conscious intentions, [love] is embodied in such a way as to bear witness to the fact that nothing in life and living is to be left untouched by such devotion and allegiance.”⁴⁴¹

Covenantal love and worship cohere, for the command to love is linked with the demand of exclusive devotion.⁴⁴² The love Yahweh commands of his people includes reverential fear, loyalty, service, and obedience.⁴⁴³ The verb for “worship” provides the same link as “love.” Both are associated with a vassal’s responsibility toward his or her suzerain.⁴⁴⁴ In worship, the vassal

⁴³⁹ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 340. “These words” can refer to verses 4-5, the moral and ethical instruction of Deuteronomy (as in the parallel passage, 11:18-20), or to the Decalogue (cv. Exod 20:1; Deut 5:1). Cf. Craigie, *Book of Deuteronomy*, 170. Craigie asserts that “these words” refer to the commandments, “which provided the framework within which the Israelites could express their love of God.”

⁴⁴⁰ Craigie, *Book of Deuteronomy*, 170; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 341.

⁴⁴¹ Kervin, “Dimensions of Worship,” 129.

⁴⁴² Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 340, 351.

⁴⁴³ Moran, “Ancient Near Eastern Background,” 78, 81-2; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 351.

⁴⁴⁴ Moran, “Ancient Near Eastern Background,” 77-87; C.f. D. J. McCarthy, “Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship between Yahweh and Israel.” *CBQ* 27.2 (Apr 1965): 144-47; J. W. McKay, “Man’s Love for God in Deuteronomy and the Father/Teacher -- Son/Pupil Relationship,” *VT* 22.4 (Oct 1972): 426-35. While Moran argues that love for God in Deuteronomy is an idea that originated in ancient Near

bowed before the suzerain as an act of acknowledgement, allegiance, and obedience.⁴⁴⁵

Covenantal love, as defined by and pledged in the covenant between Yahweh and his people, is an acknowledgment of the unique claim that Yahweh alone is the one true God and a pledge to be loyal and obedient to him. Though affection and emotion are involved in the love between Yahweh and Israel, the command of love works itself out in praxis.⁴⁴⁶ In concrete terms, covenantal love for Yahweh was to be worked out by fearing the Lord their God (10:12), keeping his commandments (10:12; 11:1, 22; 19:9), serving him (10:12; 11:13), walking in all his ways (10:12; 11:22; 19:9:30:16), maintaining loyalty towards him (11:22; 30:20); and obeying his voice (30:20).

The *Shema* bears witness to Yahweh's presence in the history of the people of Israel,⁴⁴⁷ whom he created, rescued, and redeemed so that they can fulfill their purpose of worshiping their Creator. Yahweh requires absolute loyalty and surrender to his will. True worship both acknowledges Yahweh as the one and only true God and requires unwavering fidelity, unqualified devotion, and unreserved submission to the Creator of and ruler over all things.

Paul and the *Shema*

The *Shema* is a declaration of allegiance to the unique covenant God of Israel. There is no other God besides him. He alone is the Creator and sovereign ruler. Thus, Yahweh is the one

Eastern vassal treaties, McCarthy expands the concept to include the relationship between a father and son. Similarly, von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, 64. McKay takes it further and proposes that the author gives new meaning to "love" by associating it with Wisdom literature. Yahweh is the father/teacher, and Israel is the son/pupil, who is called to filial obedience, reverential love, and dutiful respect.

⁴⁴⁵ Thompson, *Ancient Near Eastern Treaties*, 33, n. 7.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. Block, *Deuteronomy*, 189-90; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 351.

⁴⁴⁷ Duane Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, WBC, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins, 2001), 1:143. Cf. Craigie, *Book of Deuteronomy*, 169.

and only true God. Such allegiance to the covenant God who reveals himself and redeems his people calls for those who have received his mercies to reciprocate his covenant love. Those who worship Yahweh demonstrate their devotion by loving God with all their heart, soul, and might (Deut 6:5). Those who give their allegiance to Yahweh must be totally committed to him without reservation or qualification.⁴⁴⁸ Worship of the one true God is worship with every sphere of one's existence.

As incarnate deity, Jesus revealed the glory of the Father in his life, death, resurrection, and exultation, and with the coming the Holy Spirit, Paul and his contemporaries came to understand the one true God to be Father, Son, and Spirit. The soteriological experience of God as three in one illuminated the Old Testament in a new way, and the *Shema* took on a new dimension as those redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ and indwelt by the Spirit expanded their thinking and way of worship to include all three persons of the Trinity.

Though the understanding of God's revealed identity changed, the declaration of the *Shema* remains the same. God's covenant people must still declare their allegiance to the one true God, worship him exclusively, and love him with their entire selves. The God Christians worship is God as Father, Son, and Spirit, and because God is triune, all Christian belief, prayer, and worship must be triune. Allegiance to God is now shown by becoming a sacrifice, living, holy, and acceptable. Access to God through prayer is now by the Spirit through Christ to the Father. Worship is the communion of the Father, Son, and Spirit with a diverse and unified assembly of believers.⁴⁴⁹ Though Paul never explicitly says worship is Trinitarian, in his letters, he presents a confession of faith that acknowledges allegiance to God, outlines what allegiance

⁴⁴⁸ Cf. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance*, 77-100.

⁴⁴⁹ Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 416.

entails, explains the Trinitarian nature of prayer, and reveals the triune character of true worship within the community of Christ.

Confession of Allegiance: Romans 10:9

For Paul, the confession “Jesus is Lord” functions in a similar manner as the confession of allegiance in the *Shema* (Rom 10:9).⁴⁵⁰ In the same way that the Israelite recitation of the *Shema* identifies the speaker as belonging to the covenant people of Israel, the confession, “Jesus is Lord,” identifies one as belonging to the new covenant people of God rescued and redeemed by Christ Jesus. Though this “slogan of identification” may have been used as a baptismal formula, it was more widely used in worship (e.g., 1 Cor 12:3), evangelism (e.g., 2 Cor 4:5), and instruction (e.g., Col 2:6).⁴⁵¹ Both acknowledgements, Jesus is Lord and God raised him from the dead, are essential for salvation. The two assertions are inseparable, for it was at his resurrection that Jesus was appointed Lord by God (cf. Rom 1:4; Phil 2:8-11).⁴⁵² Paul adds the qualifier “God raised him from the dead” as a reminder that Jesus is not simply a divine man to be added to the pantheon of the many gods and lords of the pagans. Rather, Jesus shares in the divine identity of the Father as the self-revelation of God.⁴⁵³ Christ’s resurrection inaugurated the eschatological age to come. Thus, Jesus stands in the already and not yet, “both within and outside history . . . as the source of supernatural life.”⁴⁵⁴ Those who give their allegiance to Jesus as Lord will be

⁴⁵⁰ Dunn, *Romans*, 2:607. Cf. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance*, 96-8.

⁴⁵¹ Dunn, *Romans*, 2:607; Schreiner, *Romans*, 559. Cf. Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 200; Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:527; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 591; Jewett, *Romans*, 629; Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 291; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 658; Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter*, 262.

⁴⁵² Schreiner, *Romans*, 560. Cf. Byrne, *Romans*, 319; Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 291.

⁴⁵³ Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 201. Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:529-30.

⁴⁵⁴ Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 201. Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:530.

saved. Believers, who are already experiencing the preliminary effects of salvation by means of the Holy Spirit, also have the assurance of being saved at the last day.⁴⁵⁵

For Paul, outward confession and inward belief are bound together.⁴⁵⁶ Though one may expect belief to precede confession, in verse 9, confession with the mouth precedes believing in the heart. The order, mouth then heart, echoes Deuteronomy 30:14, which Paul quotes in verse 8, implying that verse 9 further explains the Old Testament quote.⁴⁵⁷ Paul removes any ambiguity and switches the order in verse 10 to show that authentic confession is born out of the conviction of one's heart.⁴⁵⁸ As in the Old Testament, heart represents the totality of the inner person. Thus, belief engages the entire person.⁴⁵⁹ The confession, "Jesus is Lord," is not simply a creed to be recited but a deeply held belief that motivates worship and behavior.⁴⁶⁰

In the same way that the *Shema* requires an acknowledgement of the one true God and submission by means of covenantal love, salvation requires acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord and submission to his lordship.⁴⁶¹ Confession reveals one's identity as belonging to Christ. The confession of Jesus as Lord expresses the faith of the church and unites believers both to Christ and to one another. Just as individual identity for the Jew was inseparable from the communal and covenantal character of Israel, so too is individual identity for the Christian bound up with

⁴⁵⁵ Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 201-2. Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:530; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:609; Ziesler, *Paul's Letter*, 263.

⁴⁵⁶ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:527; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:609; Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 290.

⁴⁵⁷ Schreiner, *Romans*, 560. Cf. Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 202.

⁴⁵⁸ Schreiner, *Romans*, 560. Cf. Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 202.

⁴⁵⁹ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 592. Cf. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 291.

⁴⁶⁰ Dunn, *Romans*, 2:608-9. Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 630; Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 291.

⁴⁶¹ Byrne, *Romans*, 319.

the community of believers in Christ. The confession of Jesus as Lord binds believers together in the new covenantal love inaugurated by Christ.⁴⁶² For the believer and for the community of Christ, devotion, loyalty, and allegiance is to the Lord Jesus Christ, who shares in the divine identity of God.⁴⁶³

Whole-Souled Devotion: Romans 12:1-2

Allegiance to the one true God requires obedience worked out in covenantal love. True worship demands whole-souled devotion from those who have given their allegiance to Christ and now live in Christ and in the Spirit. Romans 12:1-2 begins with “therefore,” which is a pivotal word that must be given its full weight, for it looks back in order to look forward.⁴⁶⁴ For Christians, the “false and foolish worship” practiced by those with depraved minds is in the past (1:25, 28).⁴⁶⁵ Now, those who live in Christ by the power of the Spirit must offer “spiritual worship” with renewed minds. The phrase *διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ* (“by the mercies of God”) is a summary of Paul’s theology presented in the previous chapters.⁴⁶⁶ The covenant God of Israel has become the covenant God of all those who believe and have been justified by his grace through Jesus Christ (cf. 1:5, 7; 3:24; 4:16; 5:2, 15-21; 6:14-18; 11:5, 30-32). Whereas the ESV translates *διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν* as “by the mercies,” the better translation is “because of” or “in view of” his mercies, for *διὰ* refers to the basis or the source of the exhortation rather than the

⁴⁶² Cf. McBride, “Yoke of the Kingdom,” 279.

⁴⁶³ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:529; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:608; Jewett, *Romans*, 630.

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 230; Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:595; Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 918; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 748.

⁴⁶⁵ Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 748.

⁴⁶⁶ Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 230-31; Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:595-96; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 749; Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter*, 292.

means by which it is accomplished.⁴⁶⁷ Paul is reminding the audience of the expected response that must come because of God's mercy, which is not simply a past benefit. Rather, his mercies are a present source of power in and through the believer by means of his Holy Spirit.⁴⁶⁸

Believers have been justified by the blood of Christ and saved from the wrath of God so that they may exclusively worship and obey the only one true God, who redeemed them from sin and death.

The words "present," "sacrifice," "holy," and "acceptable" are all technical terms referring to sacrifice.⁴⁶⁹ Though Christians are no longer under the obligation to offer literal sacrifices because Christ fulfilled the law and brought an end to the sacrificial system required under the old covenant (cf. Matt 5:17-18; Rom 6:10; Heb 7:23-24, 27; 9:11-12), Paul exhorts them to offer their bodies as living, holy, and acceptable sacrifices. By "body," Paul is referring to the entire person as being dedicated to serving God in all aspects of life, especially in relation to those in the community of Christ and to the world.⁴⁷⁰ Though Christians already belong to God "by right of creation and by right of redemption," because of his mercies, they freely surrender the whole sphere of their beings to God.⁴⁷¹ Thus, the whole of a Christian's life becomes worship.

⁴⁶⁷ Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 749. Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:595; Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 919-20; Sanday and Headlam, *Epistle to the Romans*, 352; Schreiner, *Romans*, 642-43. *Contra* Dunn, *Romans*, 2:709, who sees $\delta\iota\alpha$ as instrumental.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 749-50.

⁴⁶⁹ Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 231.

⁴⁷⁰ Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 231; Byrne, *Romans*, 362-63; Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:598-99; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:709; Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 327; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 750-51; Ziesler, *Paul's Letter*, 292. Cf. Philippians 1:20; Ephesians 5:28.

⁴⁷¹ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:599-600.

Such sacrifices are “living,” an adjective which denotes the spiritual state of all believers who have been made “alive to God in Christ” by the Spirit (6:11; cf. 6:4, 13; 8:13).⁴⁷² They are also “holy,” in that they are dedicated to God to be continually shaped into the image of Christ, and “acceptable,” in that they are pleasing to God and therefore, accepted by him.⁴⁷³ To offer one’s body is a Christian’s λογικὴν λατρείαν. Though the ESV translates this phrase as “spiritual worship,” Paul does not mean that the sacrifice of one’s self is merely spiritual in nature.⁴⁷⁴ The word λογικὴν occurs only here in Paul’s writing, and in the context of his letter to the Romans and in view of comparative literature, the term should be rendered “rational.”⁴⁷⁵ In light of the mercies of God, the most reasonable thing persons can do is to dedicate their lives to the one who redeemed them from sin and death. Cranfield explains that “the ‘logical’ action of worshipping” is not a one-time pledge of life but a total surrender of self that entails a continual and repeated self-surrender in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.⁴⁷⁶ To offer one’s body to the Lord as a living and holy sacrifice requires steadfast allegiance and unwavering obedience in all areas. It includes both the inner life, a person’s thoughts, feelings, and motivations, and the outer

⁴⁷² Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 434; Schreiner, *Romans*, 644. Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:600-1. *Contra* Byrne, *Romans*, 363; Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter*, 292. Ziesler asserts that the obvious meaning of “living sacrifice” refers to “one that does not die in the process,” and Byrne states that the “living sacrifice” is in contrast to the animals and inanimate objects offered as sacrifice in both Jewish cultic worship and pagan worship. However, the adjective “living” follows “sacrifice” in the same way “holy” and “acceptable” do and so cannot be isolated from “holy” and “acceptable.” It is also improbable that Paul is contrasting the state of humans with animals, for animals were also living when they were sacrificed.

⁴⁷³ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:600-1; Schreiner, *Romans*, 644.

⁴⁷⁴ See the following sources for an extended explanation of λογικός which goes beyond the scope of this study: Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:602-5; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:711-12; Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 920-21; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 751-53; Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 434; Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter*, 293-94. While Cranfield prefers “logical worship,” Moo finds the best translation to be “true worship.” Ziesler, referring to passages which speak of Christians as the new temple, prefers “spiritual worship.” Morris recognizes the ambiguity of Paul’s word choice and notes, “We cannot feel confident that either ‘spiritual’ or ‘rational’ is absent from the adjective.”

⁴⁷⁵ Schreiner, *Romans*, 644-45. Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:602-5.

⁴⁷⁶ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:601-2. Cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 643.

life, a person's words and deeds.⁴⁷⁷ For Christians, such worship is no longer confined to the temple in Jerusalem. As followers of Christ, who gave his life as a once-for-all sacrifice, Christians are called to worship at all times and in all places.

In verse 2, Paul expands upon the meaning of what it means to worship God with one's whole self. Christians are commanded to "not be conformed to this world," literally "this age," which is dominated by sin and produces death.⁴⁷⁸ Those who are in Christ are no longer part of this age, so they are no longer under its administration. Having received the firstfruits of the Spirit (8:23), believers are now in Christ and have been transferred into a new realm.⁴⁷⁹ Though the position of believers is firmly in Christ, the influences of the world in which they live still remain. Even so, believers are called to live out the values of their new life while living in current conditions.⁴⁸⁰ Worship is "the offering of bodily existence in the otherwise profane sphere," day in and day out continually honoring the Son to the glory of the Father by obeying the Spirit.⁴⁸¹ This requires both personal commitment and intentionality in obeying God's commands combined with divine enabling of the indwelling Spirit of God. Christians must continually choose to no longer live as those outside of Christ. The goal is to be conformed to the image of Christ (8:29). Submitting to the Spirit of God, believers continually must choose transformation and renewal.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁷ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:605.

⁴⁷⁸ Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 755.

⁴⁷⁹ Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 232; Ziesler, *Paul's Letter*, 294; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 755.

⁴⁸⁰ Byrne, *Romans*, 364.

⁴⁸¹ Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 329.

⁴⁸² Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:607; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:713.

The consequence of conforming to the world is a debased mind (1:28), so Christians must choose to be transformed by the continual renewal of their minds, which began at their conversion and progresses with each choice of obedience to the Spirit.⁴⁸³ The inward renewal of the mind is connected with the offering of the body, for the inward renewal does not remain inward and invisible but is worked out in every aspect of a believer's life.⁴⁸⁴ Submitting to transformation, the believer is able to discern God's will. The verb δοκιμάζω ("testing") carries the connotation of "proving" as in the sense of "discover in order to carry out."⁴⁸⁵ Only by obedience to the Spirit can the believer discern the will of God.⁴⁸⁶ The three adjectives, "good and acceptable and perfect," point to God's will and communicate God's own estimate of his will.⁴⁸⁷

In these two verses (12:1-2), Paul has outlined both the goal and the means of reaching the goal. The end goal is not simply salvation. Believers are saved for the purpose of worshiping their Creator and Redeemer. The basis of true worship is who God is and what he does. God must be worshiped as Father, Son, and Spirit, for all three work in the economy of salvation in the life of the believer. The appropriate response for Christians is worship of God with every part of their being in every sphere of life. However, this cannot be done by mere will. It requires

⁴⁸³ Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 233. Cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 649.

⁴⁸⁴ Cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 2:714; Schreiner, *Romans*, 646; Ziesler, *Paul's Letter*, 294.

⁴⁸⁵ Ziesler, *Paul's Letter*, 294.

⁴⁸⁶ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:609.

⁴⁸⁷ Schreiner, *Romans*, 648. Cf. Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:610; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:710-11; Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 330; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 757. *Contra* Morris, who argues that it is redundant to speak of God's will as good, acceptable, and perfect. Thus, the adjectives refer to "the thing that is good and pleasing and perfect." Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 434. Similarly, Ziesler, *Paul's Letter*, 295. Hendriksen asserts that Paul intends that the adjectives speak to what God wants believers to be and to do. God wants his children to be and to do what is good, acceptable, and perfect in his sight. Hendriksen, *Exposition of Paul's Epistle*, 406. Similarly, Fitzmyer writes that the adjectives "sum up the transformed life of the Christian justified and living by faith in Christ Jesus." Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 641.

submission to the indwelling Spirit and a commitment to transformation by the renewal of one's mind to be conformed to the image of Christ. As believers continually submit to the Spirit in obedience, they will discern the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

Concerning the final adjective, "perfect," Cranfield points to Mark 12:30-31 (cf. Matt 22:37-39; Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18) as "the best commentary."⁴⁸⁸ In response to a question as to which commandment is the most important, Jesus quotes the first part of the *Shema*, the Israelite symbol of worship and expression of allegiance to the one true God and his eternal kingdom.⁴⁸⁹ In the same way that the covenant people of Israel were called to practice exclusive worship of and obedience to Yahweh in every sphere of their lives, so are the new covenant people of God called to practice exclusive worship of and obedience to God as Father, Son, and Spirit in every sphere of their lives. While such worship requires individual believers to offer their entirety as a sacrifice to God, believers were created for community. For Paul, though salvation is entered individually, God always intends for the individual believer to be joined to the community of God's people.⁴⁹⁰ Thus, Paul also refers to worship in the context of the body of Christ.

The Trinitarian Nature of Christian Prayer and Worship

Trinitarian worship may be defined as "attitudes of devotion and/or acts of worship of God which recognise [sic] him in triadic fashion by explicitly making references to God (or the Father), Jesus (or the Son), and the Holy Spirit in the same thought unit."⁴⁹¹ For Christians, prayer and worship are rooted in who God is and what he has done. The unique Creator God is

⁴⁸⁸ Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2:610. Cf. Hendriksen, *Exposition of Paul's Epistle*, 406-7.

⁴⁸⁹ See chapter 2, "The *Shema*."

⁴⁹⁰ Fee, *Paul, the Spirit*, 64.

⁴⁹¹ Annang Asumang, "The Role of the Doctrine of Trinitarian Worship in Paul's Dispute with the Judaizers: Galatians 4:6 and Philippians 3:3 as Test Cases," *Conspectus* 14 (September 2012): 1-55, here 17-8.

Trinitarian. He is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and what God has done for us is a Trinitarian act (Gal 4:4-6).⁴⁹² The Father sent the Son to secure salvation, and following Christ's death and resurrection, the Father and the Son sent the Spirit to indwell believers and to gather them into community. Christian worship is inherently Trinitarian because all of God's works are accomplished within a Trinitarian framework.⁴⁹³ Since God is triune, prayer and worship must also be triune. Paul gives glimpses of what it looks like for the community of God to worship the triune God.

In Philippians, Paul makes a general statement about the covenant people of God, whose members "worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh" (3:3).⁴⁹⁴ For Paul, the church is primarily a worshiping community, and worship is only possible by means of the Spirit even when there is no direct allusion to the presence of the Spirit.⁴⁹⁵ Those who have given their allegiance to Christ live by the Spirit in service and loyalty to the one true God.⁴⁹⁶ The Spirit inspires worship, which is focused on the exalted Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of the Father. All acts of devotion and worship are empowered by the Spirit and mediated by Christ for the glory of God.⁴⁹⁷ Thus, true worship takes place within a Trinitarian framework.

⁴⁹² Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 413.

⁴⁹³ Cf. Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005), 14.

⁴⁹⁴ J. Alec Motyer, *The Message of Philippians*, BST (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 149-50. Though Paul does not explicitly refer to believers as covenant people, he implies this by the allusion to Genesis 17 when he writes "we are the circumcision." Cf. Romans 2:29, which echoes Deuteronomy 30:6.

⁴⁹⁵ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 883-84.

⁴⁹⁶ Fee, *Philippians*, 134-5.

⁴⁹⁷ Cf. Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1973), 363.

Paul also presents prayer as Trinitarian. In reverse order of the saving act of God, the believer's act of praying is by the Spirit through Christ to the Father. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul reminds members of the church in Ephesus that they have been made one in Christ (2:14), and it is through Christ that all those who have been reconciled to God have access to the Father by means of the Spirit (2:18). The Spirit imparts life (2:1; cf. Rom 8:2), raises believers in Christ (2:6-7), and grants them saving faith, which is a gift from God (2:8-10; cf. 2:5; Rom 3:24). Christian faith is rooted in communion with the Holy Trinity. The Spirit brings the believer to faith and sustains the new life by creating and sustaining the desire to pray, to worship, and to obey God.⁴⁹⁸ Access to the Father is only through his Son, Jesus Christ, the vice-regent who sits at the highest place of honor and intercedes on behalf of his people before the judge (Rom 8:34; cf. 1 Tim 2:5).⁴⁹⁹ The Spirit also brings the believer into his own intercession (Rom 8:26-27). Prayer is thoroughly Trinitarian in its form and function. Paul models this when he asks the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ to give the Ephesians "the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him" (1:17). Again, in Ephesians 3, Paul includes all three persons of the Godhead in his prayer for the Ephesians to be rooted and grounded in the love of Christ (vv. 14-21).

Though the above references to prayer and worship refer to all three persons of God, it must be remembered that the Spirit is the agent of God's activity and any reference to the work of God includes either an explicit or implicit reference to both Jesus and the Spirit.⁵⁰⁰ So too, all

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 414.

⁴⁹⁹ Dunn, *Romans*, 1:504; Fay, *Father, Son and Spirit*, 129; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 543.

⁵⁰⁰ Hunt notes that the full threefold reference can rarely be found in single passages. However, when the multitude of texts which refer to two of the persons of the Godhead are combined, there is a reinforcement of "the threefold pattern and rhythm" found throughout Scripture. Anne Hunt, "Trinity, Christology, and Pneumatology," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 365-80, here 367.

worship, even if the Spirit is not explicitly mentioned, is Trinitarian, for it is only by the Spirit of adoption that a believer may approach the throne of God (Rom 8:15-17; Gal 4:4-6), and it is only by the Spirit that one can confess Jesus as Lord (1 Cor 12:3). Thus, hymns of praise recorded in Scripture are acts of worship by means of the Spirit directed to the Father for what he has done through the Son. Gathered together in community, believers sang songs that included Old Testament psalms, especially those seen as fulfilled in Christ, along with new songs created to celebrate the work and significance of Jesus (1 Cor 14:26; Eph 5:18-20; Col 3:16-17).⁵⁰¹ Paul weaves hymns and fragments of hymns throughout his letters to remind his readers that they serve Jesus as Lord (e.g., Eph 2:14-16; 5:14; Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15-20; 1 Tim 3:16). Not only were songs sung about Christ, but they were also sung to Christ (Eph 5:19).

The response of worship must be shaped by the reality of the triune God to whom Christians give exclusive worship. Letham explains the rationale behind the Christian's response in honoring each person of the Godhead:

We worship the Father, who chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, who planned our salvation from eternity, who sent his Son into the world and gave him up for us. We worship the Son, in filial relation to the Father, who willingly "for us and our salvation" was made flesh, who submitted himself to life in a fallen world, who trod a path of lowliness, temptation, and suffering, leading to the cruel death of the cross. We worship him for his glorious resurrection, for his ascension to the right hand of the Father, for his continual intercession for us, and for his future return to judge the living and the dead and to complete our salvation . . . We worship the Holy Spirit, who gives life and breath to all, who grants us the gift of faith, who sustains us through the difficulties of life as Christians in a world set in hostility to God, and who testifies of the Son.⁵⁰²

Exclusive allegiance and devotion must be accorded to the one true God, for he is the only one who deserves worship. Such worship requires covenantal love, which entails allegiance to the

⁵⁰¹ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 105-6.

⁵⁰² Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 419.

Creator of and ruler over all creation. Paul demonstrates that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are included in the divine identity of God. Therefore, to give allegiance to the one true God is to worship the Father, Son, and Spirit by covenantal love.

Paul's Presentation of Trinitarian Worship

The early Christians were grounded in their faith as expressed by the *Shema*. So, “when the fullness of time had come,” and God sent his Son to redeem all of creation (Gal 4:4), the only natural thing to do was to expand their understanding of their confession of faith. There remains the belief that there is one God. Only now, because of the revelation of the glory of the Father in Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, exultation, and the arrival of the Holy Spirit, God is understood to be three divine beings in one essence.

This understanding arose out of the soteriological experience of God’s new covenant people. Those who express their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and pledge their allegiance to him alone experience the redemption of God, initiated by the Father, secured by the Son, and applied by the Spirit. What Paul conveys in his letters is a new dimension of the *Shema*.

As an avid monotheist, Paul remained true to his Jewish roots and the worship of one God. Paul and the early Christians did not abandon their monotheistic heritage when they included Christ and the Spirit in their worship of God. Rather, they understood Christ and the Spirit as sharing in the divine identity of God. Additionally, Christ and the Spirit were viewed as the eschatological fulfillment of Jewish expectations. Yahweh, the Creator of and ruler over all creation, will be acknowledged as the one true God.⁵⁰³

In his letters, there is no argument on Paul’s part for including Jesus and the Spirit in the worship of God because both he and those to whom he was writing had encountered God as the

⁵⁰³ Cf. Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 27.

Father, Son, and Spirit in their soteriological experience, and their worship practices reflected their understanding of God as triune. Thus, the reformulated *Shema*, which Paul uses to undergird his arguments in his letters to the churches, is neither explained to nor opposed by those to whom he writes. For Paul and the early Christians, Christ has been given the divine name; he participates in the divine activities of creation and ruling; and he will receive eschatological worship. Additionally, the Spirit, who is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, is the eschatological evidence and guarantee that God dwells in and among his people. What Paul reflects in his letters is the Trinitarian reformulation of the *Shema*: an acknowledgement of God as Father, Son, and Spirit and a commitment to covenantal love expressed by God's people in loyalty, devotion, and submission to the one and only true God who deserves exclusive worship. Pauline prayer and worship are Trinitarian worship. Thus, all true prayer and worship for the Christian must be Trinitarian.

CHAPTER 6:

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

True Pauline worship, worship which reflected the earliest Christian practices, is Trinitarian. Thus, all true worship for Christians must be Trinitarian. This study began with a look at the nature of God as he disclosed himself by his name, by his acts in history, and by his character to his covenant people of Israel. Yahweh has revealed himself as the Creator of and ruler over all things. Thus, he is the one and only true God, and as the one and only true God, he alone deserves the exclusive worship of all creation. The Israelites, whom Yahweh had chosen and rescued from slavery out of Egypt, understood this. Their statement of belief in the one and only true God and their pledge of allegiance to worship him exclusively is found in the *Shema* (Deut 6:4). The declaration, “Our God is Yahweh, Yahweh alone!” is not a mathematical statement about the nature of God. Rather, the *Shema* is a statement of Yahweh’s uniqueness as the covenant God of Israel.

God, as Creator of and ruler over all things, is transcendent and sovereign. At the same time, he is also personal and intimate, as can be seen in his act of entrusting his people with his name and the covenant relationship tied to it. God’s covenant name, “Yahweh,” is a name of dynamic presence signifying that while Yahweh retains his freedom and sovereignty, he also has always been and will always be faithfully with and for his people in covenant relationship in all places at all times (cf. Exod 3:1-4:17). Another way Yahweh revealed his immanence without compromising his transcendence was through the employment of divine agents to accomplish his will and purposes. One of Yahweh’s divine servants, the Angel of the Lord, appeared to God’s people as his messenger. Having both the character and authority of God, the Angel of the Lord shares in the divine identity of Yahweh in that he both speaks for God and forgives sins (e.g.,

Gen 16:7-14; Exod 23:20-23). The Angel of the Lord is both Yahweh and, at the same time, distinct from Yahweh. The personified divine attributes of God, Wisdom and Word, also participate in the divine activities of Yahweh. In Hebrew literature, Wisdom and Word are portrayed as separate and elevated divine representatives of Yahweh, as they participate in the creation of the cosmos and express God's mind and will in relation to the world (e.g., Ps 33:6-9; Prov 8:22-31; Wis 10-19). At the same time, as attributes of Yahweh, Wisdom and Word are not separate, created beings but aspects of God's unique divine identity. The presence of divine intermediaries, such as the Angel of Yahweh, Wisdom, and Word, highlights and underscores Yahweh's covenant faithfulness and his commitment to be present with his people. The relationship between Yahweh and his divine agents allows for plurality in the Israelite concept of God, while at the same time maintaining exclusive worship of Yahweh as expressed in the *Shema*.

The conveyance of God's complexity and of his immanence and transcendence found in the Hebrew Bible and the literature of Second Temple Judaism laid a foundation of concepts that the early Christians saw more clearly with the coming of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The earliest witness to the way the first Christ-followers viewed Jesus and the Spirit can be found within Paul's epistles. Though Paul does not present a systematic theology that includes the doctrine of the Trinity, as he writes to encourage and instruct believers in how to live out their new lives in the Spirit, he draws upon the soteriological experience of every believer to present the reality of God as Father, Son, and Spirit. Believers are elected by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and indwelt by the power of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is a Trinitarian work in which the Father, Son, and Spirit are so inextricably bound together that their identities are inseparable. God is God the

Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Thus, Paul rightly reformulates the *Shema* to include Jesus and the Spirit in the divine identity of God.

In his epistles, Paul includes Jesus in the divine identity of God without argument or explanation. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul undergirds his argument for proper worship with a statement of a reformulated *Shema*, which he splits by dividing the wording between the Father and the Son (1 Cor 8:5-6). Paul includes Jesus in the divine identity of God by applying to him both the title “Lord” and the role of divine agent of creation. In using the title κύριος within the reformulated *Shema* and elsewhere, Paul implies that the resurrected and exalted Jesus Christ has a position equal to that of God. In Philippians 2:6-11, Paul speaks of the eschaton applied to Christ by directly borrowing from the LXX of Isaiah 45:23 and applying the unique identity of God to Jesus by substituting “at the name of Jesus” for “to me,” which refers to Yahweh. Paul includes Jesus in Yahweh’s identity as Creator and Savior of the world. Additionally, Paul relays that it is God himself who has given Jesus the divine name. Thus, worship of Jesus is in obedience to God for the glory of the Father. In his letter to God’s people at Colossae, Paul reminds believers that Jesus is the preexistent Son and the manifestation of God’s essence and “the image of the invisible God” in whom all the fullness of God dwells (1:15-20). In calling Jesus “the firstborn over all creation” and “the firstborn from among the dead,” Paul clearly equates Jesus with God in relaying the reality of the pre-existent Son’s sovereignty and involvement in creation, both past and present. Further, Paul refers to both God and Christ as eschatological judge and sovereign over all things (e.g., Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10). Seated at the right hand of the throne of God, Jesus shares in the divine prerogative of Yahweh.

In addition to linking God and Jesus together in such a way that the Father cannot be fully understood without reference to the Son, and the Son cannot be fully understood without

reference to the Father, Paul includes the Holy Spirit in the divine identity of God. Paul speaks of the indwelling Spirit as both “of God” and “of Christ.” For Paul, the coming of the Spirit was the fulfillment of Jewish eschatological expectations. Thus, the Spirit of God is now also known as the Spirit of Christ (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:9; Phil 1:19). In Romans 8:9-11, Paul speaks of the believer’s life in the Spirit by interchangeably speaking of the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ dwelling in the believer. Paul uses all of these titles for the Spirit to express the distinct but inseparable relationship of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the work of salvation.

In the same way all three persons of the Trinity work in the lives of individual believers in the economy of salvation, so too do all three work within the body of Christ. Paul stresses unity in the midst of diversity in the community of God’s people as evidence that God in his fullness is present with his covenant people. As the embodiment of Christ’s presence in the world, the church must reflect the unity and diversity of the one true God whom they worship. Grounding his exhortations in the relational identity of God, Paul echoes the *Shema* when instructing the Corinthians and Ephesians in what their allegiance to Christ should look like in day-to-day life lived out in the community of Christ. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes of the manifestation of the Spirit by using three different broad categories attributed to “the same Spirit . . . the same Lord . . . the same God” (12:4-6). God’s gracious gifts are distributed to his people in a variety of ways through Jesus by “the one and the same Spirit” so that all believers will glorify the Father by using their gifts to build up the body of Christ (12:11). In similar language, Paul writes to the Ephesians, regarding four Christian experiences found only in relation to “one Spirit . . . one Lord . . . one God” (4:4-6). The community of God gathered together by the Spirit in one body shares one hope, one faith, and one baptism. Paul’s language, which moves smoothly between “one Spirit,” “one Lord,” and “one God,” presents the

unity of God as Father, Son, and Spirit. The same divine unity in diversity that exists in the triune God is the same unity in diversity that must be exhibited in the body of Christ.

Though Paul does not present a systematic theology of the Trinity, as he addresses the needs of the church, he does present a portrait of God as Father, Son, and Spirit in the economy of salvation and in the experience of believers gathered together in community. With the revelation of God in Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit, Paul and the early Christians reformulated their thinking to include Jesus and the Spirit in the divine identity of God and at the same time, maintained their Jewish roots and allegiance to the one true God. The *Shema* includes a declaration that Yahweh is the one and only true God, who is uniquely the covenant God of Israel. It also calls for God's covenant people to respond to Yahweh's sovereignty and redemption by giving him complete allegiance demonstrated by loving him with every aspect of their lives (Deut 6:4-9). The declaration of allegiance to the one true God must now include a declaration of allegiance to God as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for all three belong within the unique identity of God. Just as the declaration "Our God is Yahweh, Yahweh alone!" identified one as belonging to the covenant people of Israel, the confession "Jesus is Lord" identifies one as belonging to the new covenant people of God rescued and redeemed by Christ Jesus (Rom 10:9). For the individual believer and for the community of Christ, allegiance is to the Lord Jesus Christ, who shares in the divine identity of God. Enabled by the Spirit, believers declare the lordship of Jesus Christ to the glory of the Father. Additionally, in the same way the Israelites were called to demonstrate their allegiance by loving Yahweh with all their heart, soul, and might, so too are Christians called to give whole-souled allegiance to God as Father, Son, and Spirit (Rom 12:1-2). Rather than being conformed to the world, which is dominated by sin

and produces death, the believer is called to be transformed as he or she continually honors the Son to the glory of the Father by obeying the Spirit.

For Paul, all Christian experience comes from the Father, Son, and Spirit, who are so closely intertwined that their identities are inseparable. As a relational God, God is who he is as Father in relation to the Son, and the Son is who he is only in relation to the Father. The Father and the Son can only be known through the Spirit, who is both of God and of Christ. The Holy Spirit is only who he is in relation to the Father and the Son. Thus, for Paul, reference to any Christian experience includes reference to all three persons of the Trinity even if only implicitly.

Paul also presents the believer's response to God's gracious acts as Trinitarian. For Paul, salvation is not the end goal for the believer. The Spirit gathers God's covenant people together in community so they may live out their purpose of worshiping the Creator and bringing glory and honor to him. Since God is triune and all Christian experience is triadic, so too, all Christian prayer and worship is Trinitarian. In reverse order of the saving act of God, whereby God initiates salvation, Christ secures salvation, and the Spirit applies salvation, the believer's act of prayer and worship is by the Spirit through Christ to the Father. Access to the Father is only made possible through Christ by means of the Spirit (Eph 2:18). For the Christian, communion with God is communion with the Holy Trinity. Christian prayer and worship are inspired by the Spirit and focused on the Son to the glory of the Father. Though Paul models Trinitarian prayer in Ephesians by including all three persons of the Godhead (1:17; 3:14-21), more often, there is no direct reference to the Spirit. However, this does not mean the Spirit is not present, for all Christian prayer and worship is empowered by the Spirit and mediated by Christ for God's glory. First-century Spirit-led worship included hymns of praise and fragments of hymns, which celebrate the work of the Father accomplished through the Son (e.g., 1 Cor 14:26; Eph 2:14-16;

5:18-20; Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15-20; 3:16-17; 1 Tim 3:16). Paul presents the early church's response of prayer and worship as Trinitarian because it was shaped by the reality that the God to whom Christians give exclusive worship is a Trinity. God is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

What Paul reflects in his letters is the strict Jewish monotheism summed up in the *Shema*, which encompasses the belief and practice of exclusive worship required by Yahweh, the one true God. However, with the revelation of God in Jesus and the coming of the Spirit, Paul had to reformulate the *Shema* to include Christ and the Spirit. Thus, while maintaining the requirement of covenantal love expressed in allegiance and obedience to the one true God who deserves exclusive worship, the Trinitarian reformulation of the *Shema* acknowledges God as Father, Son, and Spirit. *Pauline worship is Trinitarian worship. Thus, all true worship for Christians must be Trinitarian.*

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