

CHAPTER

22 Christology

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Abstract

Christology is concerned with the identity of Jesus Christ. This essay explores Paul's Christology with the help of the various categories that make up a concept of personal identity: name, narrative, character, relationships, and roles. In the case of Jesus Christ, however, the issue of identity is complicated by the fact that Paul not only understands Jesus to be a human individual, but also, in some sense, includes him in the divine identity of the one and only God. This essay explains this puzzle in terms of a Christology of divine identity.

Keywords: Christology, divine identity, divine name, divinity, humanity, messiah, monotheism

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1. Identity—Human and Divine

CHRISTOLOGY is concerned with the identity of Jesus Christ, and in this essay we shall explore Paul's Christology (in the whole Pauline corpus with the exception of the Pastorals) with the help of the various categories that make up a concept of personal identity: name, narrative, character, relationships, and roles. In the case of Jesus Christ, however, the issue of identity is complicated by the fact that Paul not only understands Jesus to be a human individual, but also, in some sense, includes him in the divine identity of the one and only God. Elsewhere I have argued at length that the most useful model for understanding the way in which the early Christian movement from a very early stage associated Jesus with God is what I call a 'christology of divine identity' (Bauckham 2008). Paul inherited and shares this common early Christian understanding of Jesus Christ, while at the same time developing it in some distinctively Pauline ways. My proposal of a 'christology of divine identity' is a relative newcomer on the scene of Pauline studies, and, although it has been welcomed quite widely, by no means all scholars would agree with it.

The Christian movement began in the context of early Jewish monotheism and one of its most remarkable features is that early Christians were able to attribute divinity to Jesus without abandoning this monotheism. A key to understanding this is to recognize that Jews thought of the one God not so much in terms of divine nature (what God is) as in terms of divine identity (who God is). They used the analogy of human personal identity. God has a personal name (YHWH) and a specific character (Exod 34:6–7). He has a narrative identity as the God who created the world and made Israel his own people and has a story with the world and with Israel that awaits a future completion. But when Jews in the late Second Temple period explained, as they often did, what made the God of Israel unique, they focused especially on the two key ways in which God was related to the whole of the rest of reality: that God created all things and that God is the sovereign Ruler of all things. In distinguishing this one and only God from all other purported gods, these characteristics had the advantage of highlighting God's absolute uniqueness. He alone is the Creator; all other things were created by him. He alone is sovereign over all things; all creatures are subject to his

rule. Some (like the angels) serve him, but none share his rule. Angels in heaven stand before him, as servants awaiting orders. No one sits beside him on the throne of the universe except (in a few texts) God's Wisdom. But Wisdom is God's own wisdom, not something other than God. She belongs to God's unique divine identity. Finally, in defining early Jewish monotheism, it is important to note that this unique divine identity required that God must be worshipped (that is, acknowledged to be the only God) and only this unique God may be worshipped. Worship defines the uniqueness of God in Jewish religious practice. Probably more than anything else, it was their monolatry that set Jews apart from all other people in the ancient world.

For the sake of understanding early Christology, it is important to note that God's 'roles' as sole Creator and sole Ruler of all things were understood to be intrinsic to who God is—his unique identity. They are not mere divine 'functions' that could be delegated to someone else who is not God. When early Christians claimed that Jesus Christ participated in these divine roles, this cannot be understood in terms of a so-called functional Christology, according to which he functions as God without being God. On the other hand, early Christians did not think much about divine nature or Jesus' participation in it. But when they spoke of Jesus participating in God's creation of all things and sharing the throne of the universe from which God rules over all things, they were placing Jesus, as clearly as could be done, on the divine side of the absolute distinction between God and all other reality. When they worshipped Jesus, they were making the same point in religious practice. This amounted to claiming that Jesus shares the unique divine identity or is included in the unique divine identity. Since they did not intend either to deny the humanity of Jesus or to make him a second god (abandoning monotheism) or simply to say that Jesus is identical with God (my use of the term 'christology of divine identity' employs the word identity in the sense of personal identity, not in the sense of 'being identical with'), early Christian beliefs about Jesus inevitably complexified the notion of God. Hurtado calls this a 'binitarian mutation' in Jewish monotheism (Hurtado 1988); others have called it 'christological monotheism' (Wright 1991: 99; Bauckham 1998). It required internal differentiation within the unique identity of the one God. A key way in which early Christians characterized this was as the relationship of the divine Son to his Father. All this we shall see in Paul.

An element in personal identity is the name by which someone is known to others and which serves to distinguish them as the particular individual they are. It is primarily a label for an individual, but may also say something further about them. That Paul uses Jesus' personal name Jesus shows that he did have in mind a particular historical individual, as is shown also by his references to such historical specifics as Jesus' death on a cross or his brother James, whom Paul knew. In the Pauline corpus (excluding the Pastorals) Paul refers to Jesus by name 174 times, but in only 18 of these cases does he use the name Jesus alone. In every other case, Jesus occurs together with 'Christ' or 'Lord' or both. This is partly due to the fact that Jesus was a common Jewish name, but more to the fact that these titles said a great deal more about Jesus' identity than the name Jesus itself. As we shall see, 'Lord', while not exactly a name, often carries the implication that Jesus shares with God the unique divine name YHWH. 'Jesus' indicates his human identity, 'Lord' his divine identity. The way that the two combine can be seen most clearly in Phil 2:8–11 (see below).

2. Messianic Identity

In the Pauline corpus (excluding the Pastorals) Paul refers to Jesus as 'Christ' (*Christos*, meaning 'anointed one', a Greek translation of the Hebrew *Mashiah*, Messiah) 344 times. In most of these cases (210) he uses this term alone (with or without the article), otherwise combining it with 'Jesus' (Christ Jesus 56 times, Jesus Christ 21 times) or 'Lord' (Christ the Lord twice) or both (Lord Jesus Christ 46 times, Jesus Christ the Lord 4 times, Christ Jesus the Lord 5 times). Among NT writers Paul is unusual in his use of 'Christ' alone as a way of referring to Jesus (this usage occurs elsewhere only in Hebrews and 1 Peter). This usage has often been thought to show that it has become a mere name, no longer a way of designating Jesus the Messiah of Jewish expectation, prophesied in the Jewish scriptures. But, even if it were being used as a second name or nickname, much as Simon Peter was often known by his nickname Peter or Cephas, it would be a mistake to suppose its meaning was not significant. The meaning of a nickname was usually evident and available to be used if one chose to focus on it. Paul on one occasion plays on the meaning 'anointed' (2 Cor 1:21). However, in the ancient world a second name or nickname would always either follow the personal name or be used alone. That Paul's dominant method of combining 'Jesus' and 'Christ' is 'Christ Jesus' shows that 'Christ' still functions as a title. For Paul, Jesus was so identified with the office or role of Messiah that 'Christ' sufficed to identify him. This usage, of course, also presupposes that in Paul's churches it was uncontroversial that Jesus was the Messiah and that the Messiah was Jesus. (Within the wider Jewish community, of course, this was controversial, but in his letters Paul addresses Christians.) Paul's usage resembles the way, within the United States, one can speak of 'the President', or, within the United Kingdom, of 'the Queen'.

p. 409 In the light of this usage of 'Christ', it is very striking that, apart from referring twice to Jesus' descent from David (Rom 1:2; 15:12; cf. 9:5), Paul says very little about him that corresponds to the Jewish expectation of a new David. He makes no allusion to the majority of the scriptural texts that were commonly taken to refer to the Davidic Messiah (Gen 49:9–12; Num 24:17; Ps 132:11–18; Isa 9:6–7; Jer 23:5–6; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24; Dan 7:13), all of which are echoed elsewhere in the NT. Paul does cite what was probably the favourite text of Davidic Messianism: Isaiah 11:1–10 (2 Thess 2:8; Rom 15:12), while Ps 2:7 and 2 Sam 7:12–16 probably lie behind Romans 1:4 and other occurrences of the title 'Son of God' in Paul's writings (see below). But, apparently, whatever Paul shared with the ideas about the Davidic Messiah that were current among his Jewish contemporaries, he was content to take it largely for granted. More important for Paul were the death of Jesus, his resurrection from the dead, and his exaltation to share the throne of God in heaven. These were not part of Jewish messianic expectation, but for the early Christians they defined the sort of Messiah Jesus was and, even before Paul, a kind of Christian messianic exegesis had developed that focused on passages in the Psalms and the Prophets that were rarely, if ever, understood as messianic at this time. These were the texts they found not only relevant but revelatory of the significance of the key events in Jesus' story. Paul has this specifically Christian tradition of messianic exegesis in mind when he says that 'Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures' and 'was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures' (1 Cor 15:3–4). The texts from this tradition that especially surface in Paul's own writings are Psalm 110:1 and Isaiah 52:13–53:12.

Decisive as Jesus' death, resurrection, and exaltation were for Paul's understanding of what it meant for Jesus to be Messiah, what is most distinctive of Paul is his focus on the fact that Jesus died *on a Roman cross*, as an alleged criminal whose manner of death, according to the Torah (Deut 21:23), declared him cursed by God (Gal 3:13–14). Paul preached 'a Messiah who was crucified' (1 Cor 1:23). His comment that such a Messiah was 'a stumbling-block to Jews', as well as 'foolishness to Gentiles', shows he was very conscious that it was the Messiah of scriptural prophecy he was 'publicly exhibit[ing] as crucified' (Gal 3:1) in his proclamation of the gospel. Key features of Paul's soteriology reflect his profound reflection on this apparent paradox.

At stake here is Jesus' narrative identity (to which we shall return). But an important implication of Jesus' messianic identity, for Paul as for other NT writers, is that it ties Jesus' own narrative into the scriptural narrative of God's people Israel and the purpose of God for the world that, according to the biblical promises, was to take effect through his election of Israel. Since for Paul, called by the Messiah himself to be the apostle to the Gentiles, the full inclusion of the Gentiles in the messianic people of God was central to his life and thought, the promises to Abraham that through his 'offspring' the nations would be blessed and that he would be 'father' of many nations were highly significant (Gal 3:6–18, 29; Rom 4:11–24). As the one who fulfilled those promises, Jesus was not only the Messiah for Israel, but also the Jewish Messiah for the

Gentiles. Paul is not the only NT writer to make this point (cf. Matt 1:1; Rev 7:9), but he made it distinctively his own when he made it the basis for his understanding of the roles of faith and the Law in the long-term purposes of God. By relating the story of Jesus, especially his death on a cross, to the story of Abraham, Paul re-shaped the narrative of Israel and the Messiah.

However, in itself this does not warrant N. T. Wright's claim that, in Paul's understanding, Jesus fulfilled the role that Israel should have played but had culpably failed to play (Wright 1991: 59, 61; he even speaks of 'Israel-Christology [29]'). Paul does not make this criticism of Israel. If Jesus, in this sense, embodied Israel and played Israel's role, one should expect some allusion to Isaiah 48–50, the only prophetic passages that could plausibly ground such an understanding of the Messiah. But Paul never echoes those chapters with reference to Jesus. Of the Isaianic Servant passages he alludes only to Isaiah 52:13–53:12, where the Servant is clearly distinguished from the people. The Messiah Jesus according to Paul achieved the salvation of Israel and the nations, which had always been the task of the Messiah, not Israel, in the purposes of God.

The Messiah expected in the Jewish tradition of Davidic messianism was to be a human being, ruling on earth as David and Solomon had done. But early Christians took a decisive step beyond this when they understood the risen Christ to have been exalted to the right hand of God, sharing the heavenly throne from which God rules all things. For this reason Psalm 110:1 became a key text, in fact the OT text that is most often quoted or echoed in the NT (the Pauline instances are Rom 8:34; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1), sometimes in combination with Psalm 8:6 (as in 1 Cor 15:25–28, Eph 1:20–22) or Dan 7:13–14. Within the Pauline corpus the Christological implications are clearest in Eph 1:20–22, which says that God 'seated' Jesus 'at his right hand', 'far above all rule and authority and power and dominion [thus in radical distinction from all angelic servants of God's rule], and above every name that is named [implying that Jesus shares the divine name YHWH, the name that is above every name]', and 'has put all things under his feet ...'. In this way early Christians developed a notion of the Messiah as one who shares the unique divine throne and thus the unique divine identity. This is a notion that Paul everywhere presupposes as well known and uncontroversial within the Christian movement. At the same time his letters provide abundant evidence of its fundamental importance for him.

3. Divine Identity

In the Pauline corpus (excluding the Pastorals) Paul refers to Jesus as 'Lord' (*kurios*) 228 times. In many of these cases (147) he uses this term alone (with or without the article), otherwise combining it with 'Jesus' (Lord Jesus 22 times, Jesus the Lord twice) or 'Christ' (Christ the Lord twice) or both (Lord Jesus Christ 46 times, Jesus Christ the Lord 4 times, Christ Jesus the Lord 5 times). It is remarkable that Paul does not use 'Lord' to refer to God, except in twelve quotations from the OT (Fee 2007: 637–638; Bauckham 2008: 189). In this he resembles other NT writers, who show a strong and consistent tendency to avoid using 'Lord' for God, restricting it to Jesus, except in some OT quotations and occasionally in composite phrases such as 'the Lord God'. (In a few of the cases where Paul uses 'Lord' alone, exegetes differ as to whether the reference is to God or to Jesus, but the overwhelming usage of the word in Paul favours a reference to Jesus in these few somewhat ambiguous cases.) The fact that Paul uses *Christos* considerably more often than *Kurios* shows that the latter is not a Hellenistic substitute for the Jewish term Messiah. On the contrary, Jesus was already called 'Lord' by Aramaic speaking Christians, as Paul's preservation of the Aramaic prayer *Maranatha* ('Our Lord, come') shows (1 Cor 16:22).

The word *kurios* has a wide range of application. In the Gospels it is sometimes no more than a polite address to a superior ('Sir'). In Paul it occasionally characterizes Jesus as 'master' of his Christian 'slaves' (1 Cor 7:22; Col 3:23–4:1). It can evoke the exalted Christ's rule over all things (Rom 10:12: 'Lord of all'). But there is much to suggest that its general use in Paul reflects the Jewish usage of the word as a reverential substitute for the divine name YHWH (see especially Fee 2007; Bauckham 2008: 182–232). When reading the scriptures in Greek, the divine name was not pronounced (even when it was written in the Greek text) and the normal substitute seems to have been *Kurios* (which came to be written in its place in manuscripts of the Greek Bible and often used in the same way by Jews writing in Greek). Paul would, of course, have been well aware of this function of the word when he quoted the scriptures in Greek. It is therefore very significant that in more than twenty quotations of or allusion to OT texts, Paul takes YHWH in the text to refer to Jesus (Bauckham 2008: 186–187, 220; Fee 2007: 630–635). There are also a wide range of stereotyped phrases, which in the OT refer to YHWH, that Paul appropriates with reference to Jesus,

including 'the name of the Lord', 'the day of the Lord', 'to serve the Lord', 'the word of the Lord', 'the fear of the Lord', 'the glory of the Lord', and 'the command of the Lord'.

It is important also to notice that, as well as the more than twenty cases in which Paul takes YHWH in the OT text to refer to Jesus, there are also more than twenty cases where he takes YHWH in the text to be God the Father (Bauckham 2008: 189–190). Thus Paul does not simply equate Jesus with YHWH, but can take the divine name to refer sometimes to God the Father, sometimes to Christ, in one case even in the same text quoted on different occasions (Isa 40:13 cited in Rom 11:34 [God] and 1 Cor 2:16 [Christ]). So it is clear that Paul is not espousing a 'ditheistic' reading of the OT in which YHWH is a second god subordinate to the high God El. For Paul YHWH is the one and only God, as all Jews in his time believed, but the identity of the God named YHWH somehow includes Jesus.

One of the passages in Paul that is most revealing with regard to this usage is 1 Cor 8:6:

For us [there is] one God, the Father
from whom [are] all things and we for him,
and one Lord, Jesus Christ,
through whom [are] all things and we through him.

This carefully formulated credal confession (which surely pre-existed the writing of 1 Corinthians) is a reformulation of the *Shema*, which was the nearest thing to a Jewish creed, recited daily by devout Jews. In its Greek version it reads:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord (*kurios*) our God, the Lord (*kurios*) is one. And you shall love the Lord (*kurios*) your God with all your mind and with all your soul and with all your power
(Deut 6:4b–5)

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As usual, the Greek *kurios* here stands for the divine name YHWH. What Paul has done is to take all the words of the monotheistic confession ('The Lord our God, the Lord is one') and distribute them between God the Father and Jesus Christ ('our' becomes ↳ Paul's opening 'for us'). Paul is not subverting the monotheism of the *Shema* by adding a second divine being, since the 'Lord' of his text represents the YHWH of the *Shema*. Rather he is including Jesus in the identity of the one God whose uniqueness is affirmed in the *Shema*. We should note the implication that Jesus is thereby also included in the exclusive devotion that is due to the one God according to Deut 6:5.

The rest of his formulation depends on a practice, taken over by Jewish writers from Hellenistic philosophers, of using prepositions to define the one God's relationship to 'all things'. Paul himself uses a formula of this kind in Rom 11:36, where he says of God that 'from him and through him and to him [are] all things'. In 1 Cor 8:6 Paul distributes the three phrases in this formula between God the Father and Jesus Christ, just as he does the words of the *Shema*. All three phrases distinguish, as customarily in Jewish talk of God, between the unique God and everything else ('all things'), and so the allocation of the preposition 'through' to Christ places him unequivocally on the divine side of this monotheistic distinction. It was commonplace for Jews to insist that in the work of creation God had no assistant. When they sometimes also said that God created through his Word or his Wisdom, they did not mean 'through *someone else*, other than God', but through his own Word or his own Wisdom, which belonged to his own identity. So if Christ is here assigned the role of God's Word or Wisdom (which is not certain), this is nothing other than a way of including him in the unique divine identity. But the allocation of prepositions between the two divine persons is not stable in the Pauline corpus, for in Col 1:16 it is said of Christ that all things were created 'in him' (or 'through him') and that all things were created 'through him and for him'.

It is in the light of this Pauline reformulation of the *Shema* that we should understand Paul's summary of the message he preached as 'Jesus Christ is Lord' (2 Cor 4:5) and the corresponding confession that sums up Christian belief as 'the Lord is Jesus'. (This translation reflects the word order of the Greek in Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3; Phil 2:11, and is advocated by Fee 2007: 123–124, in preference to the more usual translation, 'Jesus is Lord'.) In two occurrences of this confession (Rom 10:9; Phil 2:11) it is clear in the context that the use of 'Lord' relates to the divine name YHWH. In Rom 10:13 (probably following earlier Christian practice), Paul quotes, as a reference to the Christian confession of Jesus as Lord, the scriptural text, 'Everyone who calls

on the name of the Lord (*kurios* representing YHWH) shall be saved' (Joel 2:32; cf. 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Tim 2:22; Acts 2:21; 9:14; 22:16).

p. 413 Early Jewish monotheism could be said to have especially three facets: creational, eschatological, and cultic-devotional. That YHWH, the God of Israel, was the sole Creator of all things and sole Lord over all things required the hope that, finally in the future, he will be acknowledged as the only God by all the nations and will establish his universal kingdom (note especially the allusion to the *Shema* in Zech 14:9). In Jewish practice the uniqueness of YHWH also entailed cultic-devotional monotheism, by which I mean not only the sacrificial and liturgical worship of the one God alone ('cultic'), but also the life-encompassing, exclusive devotion to the one God through obedience to his law (Deut 6:4–6). It is notable that Paul's application of biblical YHWH texts to Jesus covers all three facets: creational monotheism (e.g., Ps 23[24]:1 in 1 Cor 10:26; Isa 40:13 in 1 Cor 2:16), eschatological monotheism (e.g., Zech 14:5 [note the connection with 14:9] in 1 Thess 3:13), cultic-devotional monotheism in the broadest sense (Deut 6:4–5 in 1 Cor 8:6) and cultic monotheism in connection with eschatological monotheism (Isa 45:23 in Rom 14:11; Phil 2:10–11). By reading Jesus Christ into monotheistic texts of the Jewish scriptures, Paul forges a kind of Christological monotheism. Particularly often it is in scriptural texts that refer to the final and universal manifestation of YHWH's unique identity to the nations that Paul understands YHWH to be Jesus. For Paul, Jesus himself is the eschatological manifestation of YHWH's unique identity to the whole world, so that those who call on *Jesus*' name and confess *Jesus* as Lord are acknowledging YHWH the God of Israel to be the one and only true God (Phil 2:9–11).

4. Relational Identity

Personal identity is partly formed by a person's key relationships with others. In Jesus' case, especially since in Pauline thought he pre-existed his incarnation, it is his relationship with God the Father that is decisive for his identity. In the Pauline corpus there are seventeen occasions on which Jesus is called 'the Son of God' or equivalent phrases (eleven of these in Romans and Galatians). Paul's use of the article ('the Son') makes clear that Jesus is Son of God in a unique sense, while Paul's statement that 'God sent his Son, born of a woman ...' (Gal 4:4; cf. Rom 8:3) shows that his Sonship preceded the incarnation. It names the eternal identity of the Son within the identity of the one God, though we should note that Paul can speak of 'our Lord Jesus Christ' (2 Cor 8:9) or 'Christ Jesus' (Phil 2:8) when referring to the personal continuity of the pre-incarnate and the incarnate one.

In the background to Paul's use of 'Son of God' there are probably two factors. The phrase was a messianic title in Jewish usage, based especially on Ps 2:7 and 2 Sam 7:12–16, though it seems not to have been in frequent use (perhaps because of the possibility of confusion with pagan ideas about the sons of gods). If Rom 8:29 ('firstborn') echoes Ps 89:26–27, then Paul there appears to be intentionally aware of the background in Davidic Messianism.

p. 414 However, we must also take account of Jesus' own understanding of himself as the Son of God in a special sense, witnessed not only by his self-description as 'the Son' (which is rare in the Synoptic traditions), but also by the stronger evidence of his habitual address to God as 'Father'. Mark preserves the Aramaic word Jesus used—*Abba* (Mark 14:36). It is very striking that Paul also preserves this Aramaic word as a characteristic way in which Christians addressed God (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). For Paul it indicates that Jesus has shared his sonship to God with adopted brothers and sisters (a notion also found in Matt 11:27–28; 28:10; Luke 10:21–22; John 20:17). It seems that the earliest, Aramaic-speaking Christians addressed God as *Abba* because they knew it was Jesus' own usage, and that Paul could take it for granted that his non-Aramaic-speaking readers still used this Aramaic word because it was known to be Jesus' own usage. Thus Jesus' own understanding of himself as Son of God certainly lies in the background to Paul's designation of him as Son of God.

While it is far from the most frequent way in which Paul refers to Jesus, 'Son of God' is the term he prefers when he wishes to speak of Jesus' relationship to God his Father. Jesus is God's 'own Son' (Rom 8:3) and his 'beloved Son' (Col 1:13: literally 'the Son of his love'). There is even an emotional overtone when Paul says that 'we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son' (Rom 5:10) and especially when he says that God 'did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for us all' (Rom 8:32), with the contextual implication that God could not have given anything more precious than his Son. There may be an echo of the story of Abraham and Isaac (Gen 22:1–14).

However, while ‘Son of God’ indicates the inner-divine relationship of Jesus to God the Father, Paul thinks of this relationship not as a private matter but as the source of Jesus’ mission from God (Rom 8:3; Gal 4:4). He is the Son for other sons and daughters, the firstborn of many such, who are adopted into God’s family and ‘conformed to the image of his Son’ (Rom 8:29). This is possible because God’s ‘own Son’ became incarnate ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’ (Rom 8:3) and was given up to death (Rom 8:29), and because the ‘Spirit of God’s Son’ shares with others the Son’s relationship to his own Father (Gal 4:4–7; Rom 8:14–17). Thus the inner-divine relationship that constitutes the identity of the Son entails his relationship also to those who become his human siblings. The love with which the Father loves the Son (Col 1:13) grounds the love of God that through the missions of the Son and the Spirit includes humans in its compass (Rom 8:39). In this way it is essential for Paul’s Christology that ‘Son of God’ refers not only to the divine identity of the pre-existent Christ in eternity but also to the divine *and* human identity of the incarnate Christ.

5. Generic Humanity

An aspect of the identity of all humans is that they share with all other humans the generic features of human nature. Generally, in identifying an individual, we would take the point for granted and it would certainly not need further elaboration. However, according to Paul’s understanding of Jesus, Jesus is in this respect comparable only with the first man Adam. With the creation of Adam, God created human nature as such, but Adam’s disobedience to God brought about, as it were, a mutation in human nature, such that, for all descendants of Adam, human nature is inclined to sin and doomed to die. Jesus is the second or eschatological Adam in that in him humanity has been renewed and rendered immortal. He is the pioneer of a new form of generic human nature. But this required him first to share the old humanity (according to Rom 8:3, ‘the likeness of sinful flesh’; cf. Phil 2:7), though without personal sin (2 Cor 5:21), in order to bring it to an end and, in rising from death, become the source of its transformation.

p. 415 Paul deploys this correspondence and contrast between Adam and Christ (usually called, rather inadequately, his ‘Adam Christology’) in different ways in Rom 5:12–21 and in 1 Cor 15:20–22, 45–49 (these verses are integral to the long discussion of resurrection in 15:12–58). The main point in the former passage is the parallel between Adam’s disobedience, which entailed condemnation and death for all his descendants, and Christ’s obedience, which brought righteousness and eternal life to those who benefit from it. (In both cases Paul speaks of ‘the many’ [5:15], echoing Isa 53:11.) Though it is not spelled out, a kind of solidarity between each of the two individuals and those who receive the effects of their actions is presumed. In 1 Cor 15:22 this solidarity is expressed by the phrases ‘in Adam’ and ‘in Christ’. (Here Paul speaks of ‘all’ who die in Adam and ‘all’ who will be made alive in Christ.) By means of an ingenious exegesis of Gen 2:7 in 1 Cor 15:45–49, Paul is able to apply his ‘Adam Christology’ to the main issue of the latter part of that chapter: the kind of body in which the dead will rise. Adam was from the dust of the earth, Christ ‘from heaven’ (presumably with reference to the parousia). Whereas Adam became ‘a living being (*psuche*)’, animated with mortal life, Christ became (by virtue of his resurrection) ‘a life-giving spirit (*pneuma*)’. This use of *pneuma* is controlled by the exegesis of Gen 2:7 along with the contrast Paul has made between the (mortal) *psuchikon* body and the (risen) *pneumatikon* body (15:44). It does not mean that Christ became non-bodily spirit, still less that he became the Holy Spirit, but that he lives by the eternal life of God, the life of the new creation, and is the source of that life for others.

Paul’s use of the phrase ‘in Christ’ here (15:22) connects with his wider use of this phrase (164 times, though not necessarily all with the same sense) to express some kind of solidarity between Christ and believers. The nature of that solidarity has been widely debated, but it seems to involve more than a representative role for Christ, though Paul certainly does see him as representative of the new humanity. Through faith and the Spirit believers are united with Christ and participate in his death and resurrection (cf. Gal 2:19–20). Similarly in the metaphor of the body and its members, Paul indicates that Christ’s new humanity is a ‘corporate’, not merely individual reality (1 Cor 12:12; cf. 6:15). The general thought is that he has brought into being a new form of generic humanity. Others can share it by participating in the transition he has made from the old (‘in Adam’) to the new (‘in Christ’).

Paul’s contrast between Adam and Christ also makes contact with the idea of Christ as the image of God. In their mortal nature humans ‘bear the image of the man of dust’ (alluding to Gen 5:3), but in resurrection they ‘will bear the image of the man of heaven’ (1 Cor 15:49). The implication is that Christ is the true image of God and that the new humanity is conformed to him, rather than to Adam. In context (15:43; cf. Phil 3:21),

there is probably an association of the image of God with glory, an association that recurs in 2 Cor 3:18–4:6 (and cf. Rom 3:23). It may not be possible to systematize all Paul's associations of Christ with the image of God (cf. also Col 1:18) and with glory (cf. also 1 Cor 2:8), but in different contexts he probably has in mind the reflection in Christ's humanity of both the moral goodness and the metaphysical splendour of God. ↵

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6. Narrative Identity

A crucial element in personal identity is a person's story and it is notable that the two most extended Christological passages in the Pauline corpus are narratives (Phil 2:6–11; Col 1:15–20). Both narrate the confluence of divine and human identity in Christ and therefore both narratives begin prior to the beginning of his human existence, the Philippians passage in order to narrate the act of incarnation itself, the Colossians passage in order to narrate his role in the creation of all things. Both passages assume a unity of personal subject throughout his pre-existence and incarnation: the pre-existent one is also the man Jesus. Both passages have been widely supposed to be pre-Pauline hymns that Paul (assuming his authorship of Colossians) has incorporated in his letters, making a few additions of his own to their texts. However, there seems to be no precedent for hymns consisting only of third-person narrative, with no address to God (contrast the way hymns are described in Col 3:16; Eph 5:19), while neither has the metrical form one expects of Greek verse. (The model of Jewish psalmody might answer the second problem, but not the first.) On the other hand, they seem to be studied compositions and are relatively independent of their present context. Paul may have composed them for use in a variety of contexts. They could have had a liturgical use without being hymns (they could appropriately introduce acts of worship of Jesus). Perhaps they were more credal than hymnic in function. If Paul did not compose them himself, at least his use of them shows he made their Christology thoroughly his own.

Michael Gorman appropriately calls Phil 2:6–11 'Paul's master story' (2001: 88; 2009: 13) because it echoes so much of what Paul says throughout his letters. It is an extraordinarily rich but also much debated passage. A few scholars (notably Dunn 1980: 114–121) have denied that it envisages pre-existence, but they have not persuaded many. For ↵ them and for some others Adam Christology is the (or a) major key to the passage, but in my view there is far too little real correspondence to the story of Adam for this to be plausible and what there is can be better explained in other ways. In my view, echoes of two passages in Isaiah (52:13–53:12; 45:21–23) are the really significant scriptural allusions. The parallels can be seen here (NRSV modified):

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Philippians 2:6–11	Isaiah 52-53; 45
[Christ Jesus], though he was in the	53:12: because he poured himself out ...
form of God,	(52:14; 53:5: form ...
did not regard equality with God as	appearance)
something to be used for his	(53:7: he was brought low)
own advantage,	53:12: ... to death.
⁷ but <i>poured himself out</i> ,	53:12: Therefore ... 52:13: he shall be
taking <i>the form</i> of a slave,	exalted and lifted up and shall be
being born in human <i>likeness</i> ;	very high.
and being found in human <i>form</i> ,	45:22–23: Turn to me and be saved,
⁸ he <i>humiliated</i> himself,	all the ends of the earth!
becoming obedient to <i>the point of</i>	For I am God, and there is no other.
<i>accepting death</i> –	²³ By myself I have sworn,
even death on a cross.	from my mouth has gone forth in
⁹ <i>Therefore also</i> God exalted him to the	righteousness
<i>highest place</i>	a word that shall not return
and conferred on him the Name that is	‘To me every knee shall bow,
above every name,	every tongue shall swear.’
¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus	
<i>every knee should bend</i> ,	
in heaven and on earth and under the	
earth,	
¹¹ <i>and every tongue should acknowledge</i>	
that Jesus Christ is Lord,	
to the glory of God the Father.	

The narrative is one of humiliation followed by an exaltation that is its consequence (a pattern based on Isa 53:12). We could call it a narrative of radical incarnation, in that the one who shares the divine identity not only became human but shared the human condition at its most abject (see also 2 Cor 8:9). The pre-existent Christ, being equal with God, shared the divine splendour (‘the form of God’) in heaven. But he did not understand his equality with God as a matter of being served by others. Rather it was something he could express in service, obedience, self-renunciation, and self-giving for others. So he exchanged the outward splendour of heaven (‘the form of God’) for human life on earth (‘the form of a servant’), as one who lived out obedience to God even to the point of shameful death on a cross. Because this was an expression of his equality with God, it qualified the incarnate one to exercise the divine sovereignty over all things. So he is given the divine Name (‘Lord’ here must stand for the Tetragrammaton) and receives the worship of the whole creation. The passage does not deny that he shared the divine identity and therefore Name in his pre-existence, but shows how *as the incarnate one* he became the one who will bring all creation to acknowledge the unique deity of YHWH.

Paul has understood that the role of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah is to achieve what neighbouring passages of Isaiah predict: the universal recognition of YHWH as the only God. By applying the words of Isa 45:23 (spoken in Isaiah by YHWH) to the exalted Jesus, Paul has included the latter in the divine identity of YHWH, in the same way that the widespread early Christian use of Ps 110:1 did. It is crucial to notice that Isa

45:21–23 is a strongly monotheistic passage, exemplifying the eschatological dimension of Jewish monotheism. Paul's attribution to Jesus of the universal worship YHWH demands for himself alone in Isa 45 does not at all compromise that monotheism. Since one who exercises the unique divine sovereignty over all creation cannot but belong to the very identity of the one God, worship of him as 'Lord' is 'to the glory of God the Father'. The Father's own deity is praised in the worship given to Jesus.

This passage is the strongest indication in the Pauline corpus that early Christians practised the divine worship of Jesus. Though the passage speaks directly of the eschatological worship by all creation, it can hardly be doubted that those who already acknowledged Jesus to be *their* Lord worshipped him in this way, not as an alternative object of worship besides God but as one who participates in the worship given to God. At the same time, this passage is the strongest indication in the Pauline corpus of the way that a Christology of divine identity affected the earliest Christians' understanding of God. Radical incarnation means that the Lord is also the Servant. The God who is high can also be low, because God is God not in seeking his own advantage but in self-giving. Humiliation is as appropriate to God as exaltation (cf. 1 Cor 1:25).

p. 418 In the second passage of narrative Christology, Col 1:18–20, the narrative is more like two chronologically successive depictions of Christ, two parallel celebrations of his supremacy over all things, the first relating him to the creation of all things, the second to ↵ the reconciliation of all things. (The repetition of this phrase 'all things' would be alone sufficient to place Christ emphatically on the divine side of the distinction between God and creation.) The verbal correspondences between the two parts are italicized here:

He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over all creation;
¹⁶*for in him all things in heaven and on earth* were created,
things visible and invisible,
whether thrones or dominions
or rulers or powers—
all things have been created *through him* and *for him*.
¹⁷He himself is before *all things*,
and *in him all things* hold together.
¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church;
he is the beginning,
the firstborn from the dead,
so that he might be pre-eminent in *all things*.
¹⁹*For in him* all the fullness [of God] was pleased to dwell,
²⁰*and through him* to reconcile *to him all things*,
whether *on earth or in heaven*,
by making peace through the blood of his cross. (NRSV modified)

The purpose of the first half of the passage is to establish the supremacy of Christ over all the cosmic powers—angelic beings created by God, probably including both good powers and (since the second half of the passage presumes that the cosmos needs reconciliation) those that rebelled against God. Christ's supremacy is asserted by equating it with God's. The kind of 'prepositional theology' that we noticed in 1 Cor 8:6 is here more developed in its application to Christ's relation to the creation. The first clause of verse 16 probably expresses his instrumental causality or agency (*en* meaning 'through' or 'by'), the last clause of the verse repeats this with a different preposition (*dia* meaning 'through') but then adds his final causality as goal of all things ('for'). The key phrase 'all things' occurs in both clauses and between them is sandwiched a very full specification of all the creatures, focusing especially on the angelic powers. It could hardly be more clear that the pre-existent Christ is qualitatively distinguished even from such exalted and most powerful of creatures. That he is 'firstborn' does not mean that he is the first created being but that he is the heir of and authority over all creation (cf. Ps 89:27 [88:28]). The point is reinforced by more prepositions in verse 17.

The first line of the whole passage presumably means that he is the *visible* image of the invisible God and shows that the incarnation is in view from the start. (The word 'invisible', picked up in verse 16 along with its opposite, distinguishes Paul's usage here from what is said in Wis 7:25–26 about God's Wisdom and in Heb 1:3 about the pre-existent Christ.) It is as the one who through incarnation unites divine and human identity that he can be understood as not only the origin but also the goal of the whole creation.

The second half of the passage parallels his authority over all creation with his authority over the community of the new creation, the church, while the same three prepositions as were used in verse 16 to state his relationship to all things as their creator recur in verse 20 to characterize his relationship to all things as their reconciler, the one who through his death brings peace to the disordered cosmos. This not only makes the scope of reconciliation as universal as creation. It also continues the inclusion of Jesus Christ in the identity of God. In Jewish theology, the one and only God is Creator of all and therefore Sovereign over all, and this is the basis for his salvific activity within history. Jesus Christ participates in both God's creative activity and his salvific activity.

It has been very widely agreed that the personified figure of the Wisdom of God, found in some Jewish literature, has contributed significantly to the account of Christ in this passage. Like the latter, Jewish passages about Wisdom regularly use the monotheistic rhetoric of 'all things' (Sir 1:4, 9; 24:8; Bar 3:32; Wis 7:22, 23, 27; 8:1; 9:1–2). Closest to the Pauline passage is the account of Wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon, where Wisdom is the instrumental cause of creation (9:1–2), 'the fashioner of all things' (7:21), and also sustains the whole creation (8:1). But although Wisdom is personified as a female figure distinguished from God, it is clear that she is God's own Wisdom, not a second divine being alongside or subordinate to God. If accounts of her have contributed to the narrative of Christ in Colossians, this would be at least partly because such accounts offered language for including within the unique divine identity a figure who can also be distinguished from God. It is true that (unlike Christ) Wisdom is sometimes said to have been created by God (Prov 8:22 LXX; Sir 1:4; 24:9), but this is only one of several metaphors deployed to picture the way God began to *express* his wisdom when he created the universe (cf. Wis 7:25; Sir 24:3; Bar 3:29–32). It is not meant to deny that she is intrinsic to God's own divine identity. How far was all such language a metaphorical personification of a divine attribute, how far was it making a real distinction within God? Judgements vary and the right answer may differ from one Jewish writing to another. But if Paul depicts the pre-existent Christ as God's Wisdom, then the continuity of personal subject between pre-existent and incarnate Christ shows that, whatever the case with Wisdom, Christ was personally pre-existent within the identity of God. It is surely pressing the poetic quality of this passage too far to reduce it to saying that the man Jesus was the expression of God's creative power and wisdom (against Dunn 1980: 187–194).

The consensus about Paul's dependence on Jewish language about Wisdom in this passage has been challenged recently both by Fee (2007: 319–325, 515–619), who argues that the allegedly parallel language is used differently and that the Jewish texts do not in fact portray Wisdom as God's agent in creation, and by McDonough (2009: 172–191), who thinks Christ's agency in creation was deduced from his messianic authority over the world. The challenges are salutary but probably too sweeping. We might well distinguish between (a) the view that Paul had a ready-made concept of Wisdom, drawn from Jewish literature, and simply identified Christ with it, and (b) the view that he found some of the Jewish ideas about Wisdom useful for formulating what he had to say about Christ. In the latter case, it may be misleading to speak of a 'Wisdom Christology'. On the other hand, if Paul in this passage expects his readers to recognize a portrayal of Christ as the wisdom intrinsic to the divine identity, this would have a contextual resonance with other references to wisdom, both positively with reference to God's purpose in Christ (Col 2:2–3) and polemically with reference to what he rejects (2:8, 23).

7. Character

Character is an ingredient in personal identity and Jews were used to identifying God in part with reference to the classic revelation of his character in Exod 34:6–7 (frequently echoed in OT). On the basis of the rest of Paul's Christology, we should expect him to see the character of the human Jesus as reflecting and manifesting the character of God. This can be briefly expressed as God's love for us manifested in Christ's love for us (Rom 5:8; 8:35–37; Gal 2:20; 2 Cor 5:14). Paul thinks of this especially as love expressed and enacted in the death of Jesus, understood as the Father's giving of the Son (Rom 8:32) and the Son's giving of himself in love (Gal 2:20). Phil 2:6–11, though it does not use the word love, portrays radical incarnation as status-renouncing and self-giving, even self-humiliating service, and the same impression is given by Rom 15:3, 8 and by the image of self-impoverishment, as an expression of grace, in 2 Cor 8:9. In such passages Paul sees a continuity of self-renouncing love in the pre-incarnate Christ's act of incarnation and in his human life culminating in death on the cross. But this love is not confined to the past: it constitutes God's inexhaustible and eternal love for his people in Christ (Rom 8:35–39). While this understanding of love is continuous with the Hebrew Bible's privileging of the 'steadfast love' of God among his attributes, it also gives that love a fresh definition as self-denying and self-giving for others.

Stegman (2005) has argued that the character of Christ plays an especially important role in 2 Corinthians. There Paul refers to the 'gentleness and forbearance of Christ', evidently with reference to the way he exercised authority (2 Cor 10:1; cf. Matt 11:29) and in connection with 'humility' in the sense of status-renunciation. Other references to Christ's 'integrity and innocence' (11:3), faithfulness (1:19–20; 4:13), and self-emptying service (13:4) are more debatable. But it is clear that the character of Christ mattered to Paul as an important aspect of the confluence of divine and human identity that in many ways defines his Christology.

Suggested Reading

Fee (2007) is a comprehensive account that combines detailed exegesis of all relevant passages with surveys of the principal themes. Bauckham (2008, incorporating 1998) focuses on 'divine identity' Christology. Dunn (1998: chapter 4) provides a valuable synthesis on the basis of his extensive earlier work.

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