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Introduction

The Need for Further Study

THE PROBLEM

Despite the vast amounts of energy expended by biblical scholars toward an understanding of the theology of Paul the apostle, most of the effort has been devoted to Paul's soteriology, Christology, eschatology, ecclesiology, and ethics. Few scholars start at the beginning: Paul's understanding of God. James D. G. Dunn highlights the dilemma when he comments, "The problem for us, however, is that Paul's convictions about God are all too axiomatic. Because they were axioms, Paul never made much effort to expound them. They belong to the foundations of his theology and so are largely hidden from view."[1] As a result, scholars all too often skip over Paul's convictions about God in favor of the more obvious statements he makes about justification, grace, and works of the law. Indeed, one proposition on which most scholars would agree is that Paul was consumed with a passion for spreading the gospel of Christ. As scholars focus on exploring this christological emphasis, they frequently become myopic, narrowly focusing on Christ's identity without exploring the interrelationship of Christ and God.[2] Thus, this present study will attempt to address this gap in schol-

1. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 28.

2. Dahl argues that the problem occurs throughout all of New Testament scholarship, not just in Pauline studies: "When considering treatments of New Testament Christology, we note that most pay astonishingly little attention to the relationship between faith in Christ and faith in God, to the transfer of divine names, attributes, and predicates to Jesus, or to the emergence of 'trinitarian' formulations" (*Jesus the Christ*, 155).

arship by investigating the meaning and significance of Paul's strongest monotheistic statements.

A few examples serve to illustrate the necessity for such a study. Calvin J. Roetzel, while offering an investigation into Paul, spends very little time considering the question of the place of God in Paul's belief system.[3] Paul's strongest monotheistic statements receive scant attention in Roetzel's work. In particular, he does not mention Paul's monotheistic reference in Gal 3:20; his comments on 1 Cor 8:4–6 and Rom 3:30 are very brief and serve only as a way of referring to the factions in Corinth in the former and to Paul's universalizing tendency in the latter. When Roetzel does broach an in-depth discussion of God in his book, he does so within a discussion of how Paul's ethics are connected to the holiness of God.[4] In a section that summarizes Paul's theological views, he offers a single paragraph on God as creator, redeemer, and judge.[5] Similar to Dunn, Roetzel notes that Paul's theological presuppositions were not explicit: "Like the grammar and syntax of the language he spoke they were simply taken for granted."[6] Unfortunately, however, Roetzel misinterprets this lack of explicit God language as an indication that Paul's theology is only peripheral to his Christology. The study presented here will suggest that the opposite is true: Paul's understanding of God was never merely an assumption, but rather provided a conscious foundation that intentionally shaped the rest of his arguments.

Other scholars have adopted an approach similar to that of Roetzel. C. K. Barrett has organized his discussion of Paul's theology into the following categories: the reign of evil, law and covenant, grace and righteousness, Christ crucified, the church, and the Holy Spirit and ethics.[7] Although Barrett does discuss Paul's understanding of God peripherally and sporadically within these various subsections, he does not directly address Paul's fundamental understanding of the one God. Once again it is taken for granted and thus, perhaps unintentionally, depreciated.

Jürgen Becker takes a more direct approach to downplaying the role of God in Paul's theology when he argues that it is a mistake for scholars

3. Roetzel, *Paul.*
4. Ibid., 31–38.
5. Ibid., 94–95.
6. Ibid., 94.
7. Barrett, *Paul.*

to describe Paul as first trying to extend Old Testament Judaism into the new Christian religion; rather, everything is grounded in Paul's experience of the gospel of Christ.[8] Having declared this, he nonetheless discusses (albeit briefly) Paul's understanding of God the creator, humans as creatures of God, and the imminent judgment of God. Becker quickly dismisses Paul's statements about Christ's involvement in creation, concluding that "Paul understands the final determination of human beings and the God of salvation christologically but otherwise deals separately with God as creator and with God's relationship to creation."[9] This compartmentalization of Paul's thought about God and Christ, and of Old Testament Judaism and the new Christian perspective, is simply not born out in Paul's letters, as this study will show.[10]

In contrast to many scholars, then, this study explores what it may mean to take Paul's understanding of God as a point of departure for his understanding of Christ. More specifically, this study asks how a Jew like Paul—who had been "zealous for the traditions of [his] ancestors"[11]—could simultaneously proclaim loyalty to the one God of the Jews and affirm Jesus Christ as Lord. Thus, this study investigates the question of how Paul's monotheistic convictions affect his overall christological argument.

THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Rather than approach the conundrum just described from a perspective of christological monotheism, i.e., investigating all of the texts regarding Christ and his exalted status in relation to God,[12] this study will approach

8. J. Becker, *Paul*, 374.

9. Ibid., 380. Other scholars who similarly offer little consideration of the role of monotheistic belief in Paul's theology include Schoeps, *Paul*; Ridderbos, *Paul*; Furnish, *Theology and Ethics*, but see also *Theology of First Corinthians*, 67–75, where Furnish considers the one-God language but argues that monotheistic belief is subordinated to the existential reality of belonging to God; and Segal, "Paul's Jewish Presuppositions."

10. A notable exception to this paucity of theological focus can be found in the writings of N. T. Wright. He has consistently argued that monotheism and election provide the fundamental structure of Jewish thinking, and as a result provide the fundamental structure for Paul's thinking as well. Wright correctly analyzes the importance of Paul's monotheistic statements, although in this study I will disagree with some of his conclusions regarding interpretations of specific passages.

11. Gal 1:14.

12. This approach has been explored previously by scholars such as Wright and Hurtado.

the question from the opposite direction. We will examine the contexts and themes of the most explicit one-God statements in Paul's undisputed letters—1 Cor 8:4–6, Gal 3:20, and Rom 3:30—and inquire into how these monotheistic passages contribute toward an understanding of Paul's further argument. What role does this one-God language play? What does this tell us about Paul's conception of God and the rest of his argument? Furthermore, we will explore whether this strong one-God language affects Paul's language about Christ elsewhere in the letter. How does Paul conceive of the relationship between God and Jesus within the text? In those contexts where his monotheistic language is the strongest, does Paul's language about Christ diminish Jesus's lordship, or does it nevertheless remain unaffected? What does this tell us about Paul's understanding of the identity of Christ?

Such an in-depth study of these three passages has not been undertaken previously; often, the texts are referred to in scholarly works, but rarely have they undergone intense scrutiny that focuses specifically on Paul's understanding of the relationship between God and Christ contained therein.[13] Many commentaries provide only a cursory description of the one-God formula, treating the language as mere background material.[14] As a result, these commentators miss the significance that Paul's monotheistic theology has within his larger argument.

The title of this book reflects my desire to correct this oversight. The main thrust of the term "dynamic" emphasizes that Paul's one-God theology is *not* an unreflected concept that occasionally appears in Paul's writing by rote; rather, Paul intentionally utilizes his understanding of the one God in order to underscore his overall argument. It is crucial for Paul's logic. Thus, my primary use of this term concerns Paul's argumentation; nonetheless, a secondary nuance of the term alludes to Paul's specific understanding of the oneness of God, which focuses on uniqueness more so than numerical oneness. Indeed, in chapter 2 I will argue that Paul's understanding of God involves a complex oneness.

13. Giblin focuses on these three passages, but only in the brief article "Three Monotheistic Texts in Paul."

14. See, e.g., Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 142–43. Tobin acknowledges that Rom 3:30 is a reference to Deut 6:4 and says that Paul uses it as part of a *reductio ad absurdum* argument (God cannot be god only of the Jews, since he is one). But Tobin does not further discuss any further significance of this aspect of Paul's theology.

My use of the term "flexibility" also reflects Paul's argumentation. Paul applies his one-God language in very different contexts and with different goals in each case. Whereas the term "dynamic" suggests the intentional shaping of Paul's arguments with one-God concepts, the term "flexibility" emphasizes that such shaping occurs within a variety of contexts. Paul is not constrained to use his monotheistic ideas in only one setting.

PROLEGOMENA

As we explore Paul's one-God language, a number of related issues must be investigated. Because these issues touch upon more than a single text, it is best to begin the discussion here.

One of the key presuppositions of this study is that Paul was firmly grounded in, and drew upon, his Jewish heritage. Although during much of the last two centuries scholars found profound Hellenistic influences in Paul's thought, Pauline scholarship has recently come to understand that Paul's fundamental paradigm was Jewish.[15] The apocalyptic elements in Paul's thought[16] and his extensive use of the Jewish Scriptures in support of his arguments[17] argue strongly in favor of a profound Jewish influence on Paul. This background makes the question of Paul's understanding of God and Christ even more difficult, because at the heart of Judaism lay the conviction that God is one and at the heart of the new belief in the risen Christ lay the conviction that Jesus is Lord. We will explore the intersection of these various concepts throughout the thesis.

We will begin examining Paul's Jewish background by investigating the meaning of the difficult term "monotheism." It is not clear from the term itself how monotheism relates externally to other ideas about divine beings. Specifically, does "monotheism" describe the worship of one god to the exclusion of all other existing gods, or does it describe the belief in one god alone along with the conviction that no other gods exist? In response to this question, a number of more specific terms have emerged in the last two centuries of biblical scholarship, including "henotheism," "monolatry," "inclusive monotheism," and "exclusive monotheism."

15. See Ridderbos, *Paul*, 13–43, for a discussion of the historical development of Pauline theology in this regard.

16. See Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, and *Triumph of God*.

17. See Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*.

It is important to note that the term "monotheism" first arose in the seventeenth century when it was coined by Henry More. More's usage, however, reflects his interest in attempting to classify religions according to their philosophical beliefs.[18] This stands in contrast to the concerns of the early Christian churches, which construed the issue (albeit not under the designation "monotheism") in relation to the idolatrous practices in pagan culture and not as merely an intellectual assent to various propositions.[19]

Scholars have tried to refine More's definition in order to illustrate a development within Judaism. H. H. Rowley, for example, has traced the seeds of monotheism back to Moses while, however, describing Moses as a henotheist; Moses did not deny that other gods exist. This view then develops fully in the time of Deutero-Isaiah into a belief that there is only one deity, namely, the God of Israel.[20] John Sawyer has also argued for such a development, noting that the Israelite notion of "one God" began with an understanding of Yahweh's uniqueness, and later developed into a belief in the sole existence of the God of Israel.[21] Other scholars, however, deny that "monotheism" is at all an appropriate term to use. Peter Hayman, for instance, argues that Judaism never fully emerged from its polytheistic roots.[22]

Clearly, the question of "monotheism" is not as straightforward as a "one god" lexical analysis of the word might suggest. Our understanding is further clouded by the rise of interest in intermediary figures during the Second Temple period. Angels, archangels, exalted patriarchs, divine "hypostases," and angelomorphic figures—which of these may be included in the "identity of God,"[23] and what criteria are used for their inclusion? This is an issue to which we will return below.

All of these developments cause one to question whether the term "monotheism" provides an appropriate designation, since the phrase can encompass so much—and may not even reflect a biblical understanding of belief in the one God. Unfortunately, the alternative terms betray

18. MacDonald, "Origin of 'Monotheism.'"

19. See Moberly, "How Appropriate Is 'Monotheism'?"

20. Rowley, "Living Issues."

21. Sawyer, "Biblical Alternatives to Monotheism."

22. Hayman, "Monotheism—A Misused Word?"

23. This is the term used by Richard Bauckham. See the discussion in the following note and on pages 8–9.

similar assumptions. As a result, in this study I will most often refer to the more generic "one-God language" in Paul. In this way I hope to avoid some of the presuppositions that accompany the other terms. By using the expression "one-God language," I intend to connote the specifically Jewish understanding of the one God, Yahweh, who is the unique creator, sustainer, and ruler of all that exists and who has determined to have a special relationship with Israel, which includes Israel's exclusive devotion to Yahweh.[24] The question of whether Paul believed other gods existed will be discussed in chapter 2. At times, however, it may be necessary to use the adjective "monotheistic" as a description of Paul's thought. In those cases, I do not wish to imply More's philosophical understanding, but instead simply intend an adjectival understanding of the Jewish perspective outlined above.

Strongly related to the issue above is the question of further defining the internal parameters of Jewish concepts of the one God. Does the Jewish understanding of Yahweh limit God's person to one, or does Jewish monotheistic belief allow more than one person within God's identity? Does this question unduly place an emphasis on the ontological status of God in contrast to Jewish methods of conceptualizing the divine? Is monotheistic belief, rather, to be defined along other lines, such as unique activity?

One possible interpretation of Jewish one-God concepts is that Jews considered God's oneness in a strictly numerical sense.[25] The rabbis, for example, were clearly concerned with a numerical oneness of God. The rabbinic literature discusses the "two powers" heresy which arose in the second century. The rabbis reacted very strongly to any suggestion that there might be two powers in heaven.[26] We should keep in mind, however, that the rabbinic texts were written after the first century, and therefore

24. Similarly, Bauckham ("Throne of God," 45) argues that Yahweh's identity is understood as unique because God alone is both creator and sovereign over all things. See also his discussion in "Biblical Theology," in which Bauckham defines Jewish monotheism as the belief in "YHWH's transcendant uniqueness . . . a form of uniqueness that puts YHWH in a class of his own" (211).

25. See, e.g., the views of Cohon ("Unity of God"), de Jonge ("Monotheism and Christology"), and Harvey ("Son of God"). De Jonge and Harvey both argue that Jesus could not have been worshipped in the early church because such an act would have defied monotheistic belief.

26. For a good survey of these disputes, see Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*.

the recorded focus on numerical oneness is likely a reaction, at least in part, to the spread of Christianity.[27]

It is also possible that Jewish monotheistic concepts may have had more to do with an understanding of God's uniqueness. Charles Giblin, for example, argues that Paul viewed God as a unique society of persons whose goal is to communicate with humanity through divine self-disclosure; it is because of this that he thinks Paul emphasizes the relational character of God.[28] N. T. Wright would also agree that the emphasis on numerical oneness is misplaced. For Wright, monotheistic beliefs have less to do with numerical analysis and more to do with providing a polemic against paganism—a polemic that comes through an understanding of the uniqueness of Yahweh. He notes that the passages that are the most fiercely monotheistic (e.g., 1 Cor 8:6) occur within the context of refuting paganism.[29]

An important work for consideration in this area is Richard Bauckham's *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*. Bauckham argues that Jewish monotheistic belief during the Second Temple period was strictly monotheistic; that is, divinity involved creation and rule and did not include intermediary or other exalted figures. Descriptions of Jesus's involvement in creation and rule, however, meant that he was included within the unique identity of the one God.[30] Bauckham argues that the Jews did not use a Greek metaphysical framework for defining nature; rather, they were concerned with God's identity as he revealed himself through his mighty acts.[31] Thus, the traditional distinction in New Testament scholarship between functional Christology and ontological Christology (in which Jesus may appear to function as divine even though ontologically he is not divine) presents a false dichotomy. For Judaism, function and ontology were inseparable; as a result, the actions and identity of Jesus were one. The New Testament writers

27. Segal suggests that Christianity was identified by the rabbis as a "two powers heresy," but he argues that the charge of "two powers" may not necessarily have originated with Christianity or been used exclusively against the new sect ("'Two Powers in Heaven,'" 80.

28. Giblin, "Three Monotheistic Texts."

29. Wright, "One God, One Lord."

30. Bauckham, *God Crucified*.

31. Schnelle similarly comments on Paul's theology that "Gott kommt jedoch nicht in seinem Sosein, sondern immer als Handelnder in den Blick" (*Paulus*, 441).

(including Paul), Bauckham argues, intended to include Jesus within the divine identity because they deliberately described him as creator and ruler and thus considered him worthy of worship.

Bauckham's approach has merit in that it brings into focus a more accurate picture of the holistic nature of Jewish thought. Nonetheless, his argument raises several questions. If the identity of the one God may include anyone who participates in the mighty acts, then what is to prevent others beside Jesus and the Holy Spirit from being described as part of Yahweh's deity? As Tertullian argued, "For I must first ask why, if there are two, there should not be more: because if divinity were capable of number we should need to believe it the more richly endowed (the more there were of it)."[32] What is to prevent Wisdom (as some have argued in recent years[33]) or the Glory or other aspects of God's identity from being described as separate persons? It seems such a move could easily lead in the direction of the Greek pantheon.

Furthermore, occasional passages in Jewish literature suggest that angels or other beings participate in creation or rule.[34] While these passages may not appear frequently, they nonetheless pose a problem for Bauckham's definition and must be addressed. Is there a way to distinguish between angelic figures whom God allows to participate in rule or creation and a more strict sense of "divinity"? Would this muddy the waters as far as which category might include Jesus?

Paul's lack of explicit delineation of the nuances of his own understanding of the oneness of God, combined with the variety of possible interpretations of Jewish one-God language, make it necessary to carefully analyze Paul's use of such phrases. If he interpreted monotheistic belief as entailing numerical oneness, then why did he make such strong statements about Jesus in juxtaposition with God within a context that attempts to be explicitly monotheistic (e.g., 1 Cor 8:6)? If numerical oneness was not his concern, then how did Paul conceive of his Jewish monotheistic

32. "Primo enim exigam, cur non plura, si duo, quando locupletiorem oporteret credi substantiam divinitatis, si competeret ei numerus" (Tertullian *Marc.* I.5.1).

33. See, for example, Penchansky, *Twilight of the Gods*. He argues that "Proverbs 8 presents Hokmah as an Israelite goddess, the daughter of Yahweh" (65).

34. The Son of Man in *1 Enoch* sits on a throne and participates in rule and judgment (46:4–5, 49:4, 51:3, 61:8–9, 69:27), and Melchizedek in 11QMelch judges "the holy ones of God." In a much later text, *3 Enoch*, Metatron/ Enoch is called a prince and ruler (4:1, 5, 8; 10:3) and judges the heavenly beings (16:1; 48c:8).

roots? What latitude did his conviction that there is one God grant him in shaping his understanding of Jesus's identity? Where were the boundary markers for his definition of the divine identity? Too often scholars have briefly acknowledged that Paul embraced Jewish belief in the one God and have not critically explored exactly what these beliefs about the one God involved. This foundational question, however, has ramifications for the rest of Paul's theology and needs to be more fully investigated.

In order to comprehend better the potential boundaries for Paul's monotheistic understanding and his resulting view of the relationship between God and Christ, it is important to analyze the concepts of intermediary figures and angelology in Second Temple Judaism. This discussion will help us understand the degree of flexibility that Jews would allow regarding the inclusion of various figures within the definition of the one God.

The rise of intermediary figures and angelology in Second Temple Judaism is well documented.[35] Nearly a century ago, Wilhelm Bousset suggested that this increased interest in angelology resulted from an emphasis on God's transcendence; these intermediary beings then became the means through which this faraway God related to his creation. Jews then began to worship these authoritative angelic beings. Bousset argued that pagan influences caused these changes from a previously "pure" form of monotheism; the worship of Christ as a deity was thus a further development of this angel worship.[36]

More recently, a number of scholars have taken issue with Bousset's conclusions. Larry Hurtado and Loren Stuckenbruck, for example, have responded that Second Temple Judaism did not evolve in the manner that Bousset contends; rather, even within great variety and despite foreign influences, monotheistic belief remained a pillar of Judaism. There was no compromise of monotheism from a pure to a weakened form.[37] In addition, angelological ideas had not developed to such an extent so as to engender an organized "angel cult."[38] In fact, there is little evidence of

35. See Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*; Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology*; Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*.

36. See Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums*.

37. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 8–9.

38. Hurtado, *One God*, 24–35.

outright angel worship. Earliest Christianity evolved, instead, out of a "mutation" (Hurtado's term) of Jewish ideas.[39]

This debate highlights the difficulty in explaining the development of Christian theology. The first Christ worshippers were Jews, yet Jews worshipped only one God, Yahweh. Thus it behooves us to explore the range of first-century beliefs regarding God and the specific intermediary figures who in some way serve God. Several categories of comparison arise for our consideration. First, some prophets, patriarchs, and priests were exalted to a high status in heaven. Moses and Enoch are two key figures in this discussion. For example, Ezekiel the Tragedian recorded a dream of Moses wherein Moses saw himself enthroned in heaven.[40] In addition, Philo considered Moses to be the ultimate example of godliness.[41] Enoch could also be held in very high esteem. According to the Similitudes, Enoch sits on a throne in heaven (*1 En.* 45:3); he is described as the Son of Man who is involved in judgment (49:4, 61:8–9). According to a later tradition preserved in *3 Enoch*, he is transformed into the exalted angel Metatron. Some scholars, such as Margaret Barker, argue that the priests themselves became God when they ministered in the holy of holies; these priests were exalted higher than any angel.[42] Similarly, Crispin Fletcher-Louis notes that Sirach 50 records a hymn in praise of the high priest Simon ben Onias; in the priestly office, Simon is the embodiment of the glory of God and is the incarnation of Wisdom.[43] Within this category of exalted humans, other figures have been named as having glorified status (e.g., they are venerated or transformed into angels), including Adam, Elijah, Abel, Noah, Jacob, Levi and Melchizedek.[44]

39. Ibid., 124.

40. Lines 68–89 in Jacobson, Exagoge *of Ezekiel*, 55.

41. Philo's texts concerning Moses's exalted status include *Det.* 162; *Leg.* 1.40–41; *Migr.* 84; *Mos.* 1.58; *QE* 2.29, 40; *Somn.* 1.189; *Mut.* 128–29; *Sacr.* 8–10; *QG* 4.8; and *Post.* 27–28.

42. Barker, "High Priest," 99. See also her monograph, *Great Angel.*

43. Fletcher-Louis, "Worship of Divine Humanity," 115–18.

44. For arguments on this perspective, see Fletcher-Louis (ibid.) who cites worship of Adam in *L.A.E.* 12–16. In addition, Gieschen cites numerous Jewish traditions, including: the belief that Elijah (having been assumed into heaven by a chariot of fire) was one of only three men who entered the company of angels without facing death and who supposedly returned to earth as an angel; the belief that Abel is the one like a Son of Man in Dan 7; the detail in *The Book of Noah* where Noah has an appearance like an angel; the reference in the *Prayer of Joseph* to the angel Israel who manifests himself as Jacob; and

The question we must ask when considering the influence of the exaltation of patriarchs, prophets, and priests on the development of Christology is whether these figures were exalted to such an extent that they were thought either to threaten or to redefine monotheistic beliefs. In this case, however, it seems clear that these figures were not given equal standing with God, so that these beliefs did not significantly influence monotheistic understanding. The interpretation of the Tragedian's dream of Moses, for example, should be guided by the manner in which the Tragedian understands the dream—and he interprets it figuratively.[45] The Enoch tradition provides probably the most extensive record of a highly exalted patriarch, and in fact, the tradition eventually led to a rabbinic aberration known as the "two powers" heresy, which arose when Rabbi Elisha ben Avuyah (Acher) saw Metatron sitting on a throne and declared that there were "two powers in heaven."[46] Yet it is important to note that Enoch/Metatron was chastised in heaven for not standing before God (*3 En.* 16:5); he was treated similarly to the other angels and thus does not appear in the text itself to have had equality with God.[47] The question of whether the rabbinic texts are reacting to a hypothetical or real problem is one to which we will return below. As for arguments that the priests became God when operating in their official capacity, Barker and Fletcher-Louis make bold claims on the basis of data taken out of context and disregard the nature of the language used in the texts. The hymn to Simon ben Onias, for example, is sung in response to the call "to sing the praises of famous men," not in response to a call to sing the praises of Yahweh! Although the priests are said to wear the Glory, this appears to be figurative and not literal language about becoming the Glory. The approaches of Barker and Fletcher-Louis do not take into account the nature and function of language, i.e., whether the language has a metaphorical sense that portrays a particular social function (in this case, the performance of the

the tradition that Levi put on the garments of the high priest and served before God in heaven. Also, Hurtado (*One God*) and Gieschen (*Angelomorphic Christology*) both refer to Melchizedek and such texts as Gen 14; Ps 110; and 11QMelch.

45. Bauckham, "Throne of God," 55–57. He gives additional examples of dreams which clearly were intended to be interpreted figuratively, such as Joseph's dream of the sun, moon and stars bowing down to him, which represented his brothers bowing down to him.

46. See Segal's *Two Powers in Heaven* for an extensive analysis of the rabbinic texts addressing the heresy.

47. Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology*, 192–93.

cultic rituals). Barker and Fletcher-Louis need to further define the criteria they use in determining how the language should be understood in each instance. Furthermore, the texts from which they draw their conclusions are many and diverse. If a tradition has survived that describes the high priest as becoming God, one would expect a stronger unity among the writings.

But perhaps the strongest criterion to use in evaluating these ideas is that of cultic worship.[48] As Hurtado argues, there is no evidence that the exaltation of figures such as Enoch modified devotion to the one God in any substantial way.[49] These figures simply were not exalted to the point of being worshipped in an organized sense.[50] While it is true that *1 Enoch* can depict Enoch as an object of worship, this only occurs at the last judgment and not prior to that time.[51] In addition, Enoch's role is limited in a way that Christ's is not.[52] Thus it appears that the worship of Jesus did not have a comprehensive parallel so that it could be explained by the exaltation of patriarchs, prophets, or priests.

The second category of intermediary figures to consider is that of the angels themselves. Several "principal" angels are named throughout Jewish literature, but Michael is the name that appears most frequently.[53]

48. In evaluating Christian cultic worship, Hurtado (*One God*, 93–124) finds six features that signify cultic devotion: hymnic practices, prayer, the use of the name of Christ, the Lord's Supper, confessions of faith, and prophetic announcements of the risen Christ. It is precisely the absence of such *organized* veneration that leads Hurtado to dismiss angel worship as a precursor of the exaltation of Christ. While cultic devotion provides a strong criterion which scholars such as Hurtado, Stuckenbruck, and Knight would endorse, it is not without its difficulties. Fletcher-Louis, for example, uses this criterion and achieves dramatically different results. Thus, the criterion perhaps needs to be defined more distinctly in order to provide a clearer direction.

49. Hurtado, *One God*, 67.

50. Stuckenbruck (*Angel Veneration*, 264) argues that such "worship" is actually possible, but that even this does not infringe upon the uniqueness of God. He notes, for example, several passages where angels appear to be worshipped in the same breath as God, yet the usage itself makes every attempt to preserve a monotheistic perspective. In Tob 11:14–15, the Rheneia (Delos) inscription, and the Kalecik inscription, for example, angels are included in the praise language, but the singular usage of various terms indicates that this all-encompassing praise is nonetheless directed to God.

51. *1 En.* 46:5; 48:5; 62:6, 9.

52. Bauckham (*God Crucified*, 19–20) notes that Enoch is clearly a creature who does not himself participate in the act of creation, unlike Christ, who participates with God in creating the world.

53. Texts referring to Michael include Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; *1 En.* 20:5; *T. Ab.*; 2 Macc 11:6–8; 1QM 17:6–8.

Michael's primary role is as guardian, commander, or warrior for Israel.[54] Gabriel's name is also frequently mentioned, as are Raphael, Uriel, Israel, Yahoel, Eremiel, and Metatron.[55] Gieschen notes that the angels in Second Temple Judaism become increasingly distinct from God.[56] One of the keys to their authority, however, is listed in Exod 23:20–21, where the Divine Name is said to be in the angel. Thus, the angels are distinct from God and do his bidding, yet they carry his authority.[57]

Much of the discussion concerning angelology revolves around whether these intermediary beings were actually worshipped in Judaism. Certainly the rabbinic literature proscribes the veneration of angels through sacrifices, images, prayers or outright worship.[58] The question arises as to whether this proscription addressed actual practices within Judaism, or if it served simply as a preventive, rather than corrective, measure. Stuckenbruck argues that it is plausible that some Jews held beliefs that the rabbis considered threatening,[59] whereas Hurtado believes the evidence for this is not sufficient.[60] Despite the lack of evidence, it is reasonable to conclude that if the rabbis took the time to debate and chronicle their response to angel worship, the cultural milieu must have presented a significant possibility of such behavior. The rabbis were adamant that any worship belonged solely to the one God of Israel. This deep-rooted conviction is also supported by a "refusal tradition": at times, in the context of angelophanic visions, the seer would assume a reverent posture before a prominent angel, but the angel would explicitly reject any kind of veneration and try to steer the worship back toward God.[61]

Veneration of angels is found in the form of invocations, reverence, and thanksgiving, yet this does not amount to "cultic devotion" to angels as such, as Stuckenbruck argues. Furthermore, angel veneration, where it occurs, does not function as a substitute for the worship of the one God;

54. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 126. See also Hannah, *Michael and Christ*.

55. *3 En.*, the text which mentions Metatron, is a late document, dating probably to the fifth century.

56. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 151. See also Fossum, *Name of God*; and Rowland, *Open Heaven*.

57. See below for a discussion of this authority.

58. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 52.

59. Ibid., 52–75.

60. Hurtado, *One God*, 30–31.

61. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 80–101.

angel veneration is thus not a weakened form of monotheism.[62] Certainly the idea of principal angels may have offered Christians a basic scheme for exalting Jesus without departing from monotheistic belief, but as Hurtado argues, the concept does not account for the unique "binitarian" shape of early Christianity.[63] Most scholars agree that early Christians did not understand Jesus, in the strict sense, to be an angel.[64] The category of principal angels, then, does not seem adequate to alter our conception of monotheistic belief and what that means for the identity of Jesus.

The question becomes somewhat more murky, however, when one considers the category of angelomorphic beings. Charles Gieschen has discussed this issue in depth in his *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence*. He argues that the distinction between Christ and angels does not rule out the possibility of an angelomorphic figure, which he defines as one who has some forms and functions of an angel without necessarily being, in the strict sense, an angel.[65] In fact, God's primary form of self-revelation in Jewish literature is as an angelomorphic figure; angelomorphic Christology, in turn, is evident in several early Christian documents.[66]

The problem of God's self-revelation to Israel is a thorny one. How does the Almighty, whom tradition holds to be invisible, make himself known to his people—especially when no one may look upon the Lord and live (Exod 33:20)? Yahweh certainly used a variety of forms to make himself known, from a burning bush (Exod 3) to a pillar of clouds (Exod 13:21). In several Jewish texts, the form in which God appears is מלאך, or a messenger. The Angel of the Lord sometimes is not clearly distinguished from God, such as in Exod 3:2, while at other times the Angel of the Lord is portrayed as distinct. There is no uniformity in the tradition. Exod 23:20–21, however, may provide important insights for understanding the angelomorphic tradition. In these verses, God identifies an angel and says "my Name is in him" (v. 21). Gieschen thus proposes that a separate

62. Ibid., 200–201.

63. Hurtado, *One God*, 82.

64. Ibid., 73. See also, e.g., Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 161–62.

65. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 3 n. 2.

66. Ibid., 6.

being can operate with God's authority through the possession of this Divine Name.[67]

We must make a clear distinction, however, between God himself appearing in the form of an angel and angels who appear with God's authority.[68] When God appears as an angel and is worshipped, there is obviously no threat to monotheism, because the figure is operating representationally; whether God appears as a burning bush, a pillar of cloud or as an angel, he is still YHWH the Lord of Israel. For angels, however, who carry the Divine Name, the question must be raised: What is the true ontological identity of the angelic being? Does carrying the Divine Name involve a transformation of the identity of the messenger itself, or does it simply transfer God's authority (and not his divinity) to the angelic being? Gieschen argues that the Divine Name is a hypostasis of presence. But again, this raises the issue of what precisely is the nature of the Name—the presence—"in" the angel. Given the evidence noted above that angelic figures refused worship and encouraged others to worship the true God, it seems unlikely that a tradition developed within Second Temple Judaism whereby principal angels came to be worshipped as God. While some diversity may have existed within Jewish thinking, angel veneration does not seem to have made a significant impact on religious practice during Second Temple Judaism. Thus, it appears that these highly exalted angels who had the Divine Name in them were not themselves included within God's identity, but rather served as God's vice-regents, and therefore did not alter the substance of monotheistic belief.

The final category to consider under the concept of intermediary figures is divine attributes and hypostases. A hypostasis is "an aspect of the deity that is depicted with independent personhood of varying degrees."[69] The Wisdom and Logos of God are included in this final category, and are frequently mentioned throughout Jewish literature. Proverbs, Wisdom of Solomon, and Sirach, for example, describe Wisdom in vividly personal

67. See also Fossum, who argues that the Angel of the Lord in Exod 23:20 is "an extension of YHWH's personality, because the proper Name of God signifies the divine nature. Thus, the Angel of the Lord has full divine authority by virtue of possessing God's Name . . ." (*Name of God*, 86).

68. Gieschen does make this distinction between divine hypostases (see below) and angelic beings who have the divine NAME in them.

69. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 45.

terms.[70] In addition, Philo frequently personified the Wisdom and Logos of God, and at times even referred to Logos as the "second god."[71] Scholars disagree on how to interpret these descriptions of God and the degree of independence from God that these personifications achieve.[72] But it is precisely this degree of independence which could have a significant effect on monotheistic faith and Christology. On the one hand, simple personifications do not appear to affect Jewish monotheistic belief in any way, since these are simply portraying highlights of God's identity.[73] On the other hand, the notion of a hypostasis poses intriguing implications for Christology, perhaps providing a framework for the earliest Christians to embrace as they considered Christ's identity.

Nonetheless, the argument that Jews understood these personifications to have semi-independent status remains unconvincing for two reasons. First, the interpretive shift from personification to hypostasis does not adequately take into account the genre of Hebrew poetry and its often metaphorical language. Poetry is not intended to convey literal, factual descriptions (e.g., that Wisdom is an independent being); rather, it intends to evoke an emotional response (e.g., that God's wisdom is powerful and should be sought after diligently).[74] Sirach 24, for example, is clearly a poem that borrows heavily from Proverbs not only in content, but also in poetical structure.[75] The vivid imagery of this poetry is intended not

70. See, for example, Prov 1:20–33; 4:6–9; 8:1—9:12; Wis 1:6; 7:22—8:1; 9:9–11; 10:1—11:1; Sir 24. See also *1 En.* 42.

71. Philo *QG* 2.62.

72. Moore, e.g., states, "The Jews identified the divine wisdom with the Torah, which is also sometimes personified. Wisdom and Torah, like the word, were for them realities, not mere names or concepts; but they never gave them personal existence" (*Judaism in the First Centuries*, 1:415–16). Similarly, Hurtado (*One God*, 46) does not regard these personifications as establishing the Wisdom or Logos as separate entities alongside God. Gieschen (*Angelomorphic Christology*, 70–123), on the other hand, believes that the Wisdom and Logos, among others (Name, Glory, Power, and Spirit) are hypostases that have a degree of distinct personhood. These figures take part in creation and rule.

73. Bauckham (*God Crucified*, 17, 21–22) also includes the Word, Spirit and Wisdom in God's identity as personifications. He notes that both the Word and Wisdom take part in creation and are intrinsic to the unique divine identity.

74. Stein states, "The use of poetry in ancient times, as in our own, indicates that the writer is less concerned with precise description or scientific accuracy than with evoking emotions and creating certain impressions. Poetry is clearly 'commissive' rather than 'referential' in nature . . ." (*Playing by the Rules*, 102).

75. For an analysis, see Skehan and Di Lella, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 331–38.

to promote worship of a hypostatic being but to describe in a picturesque manner an aspect of God's being. Indeed, the language itself is ambiguous and flexible. On the one hand, Wisdom is described as covering the earth like a mist (24:3), calling to mind the image of God's creative Spirit in Gen 1:2; on the other hand, the author characterizes Wisdom as a created being (24:8–9). Ultimately, Ben Sira identifies Wisdom with the Torah in 24:23, thus further emphasizing the metaphorical, fluid nature of the language.

Second, the understanding of what a hypostasis might have meant in first-century Judaism is nebulous at best. How does an attribute bear *partial* personhood? Rather, personhood, by its very nature, must be distinct.[76] The difficulty in determining whether any given text describes merely a personification of a divine attribute or an actual semi-independent hypostasis suggests that we seek external criteria in order to resolve the dispute. Hurtado's focus on cultic devotion thus becomes instructive. There is no evidence that the Logos and Wisdom were worshipped as separate deities apart from YHWH, especially given the monotheistic context.[77] If these descriptions truly had attained an independent identity that nonetheless involved ontological divinity, then why were these beings never worshipped as such? Where are the cultic rituals, the offerings, the prayers dedicated to these beings?

Ultimately, then, the category collapses back to one of simple personifications. Furthermore, it would not have been simple for early Jewish Christians to use this category to aid in their interpretation of the significance of Christ, since the human Jesus clearly was an independent person. That is not to say that Christians could not equate Christ with Wisdom and Logos (for clearly they did), but in order to do so, the early Christians would be making a particularly bold and radical claim about Jesus's identity, since the Wisdom and Logos were considered to be part of God's very identity.

As this preliminary overview shows, no ready-made, easy category of Jewish intermediary figures existed for Christians to use in explaining

76. Gunton, e.g., emphasizes the importance of this distinctiveness ("particularity") as constitutive of personhood within the Trinity: "Father, Son and Spirit through the shape—the *taxis*—of their inseparable relatedness confer particularity and freedom on each other. That is their personal being" ("Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology," 56).

77. As noted by both Hurtado (*One God*, 48) and Dunn (*Christology in the Making*, 170). Ringgren, although he identifies hypostases within Israelite religion, nonetheless states that "the strict monotheistic belief did not allow the hypostases to become real deities" (*Word and Wisdom*, 192).

the identity of the exalted Christ. Although many intermediary figures of high status existed in Jewish traditions, no distinct entities reached a clear status of divinity alongside God. Thus, we are left in somewhat of a quandary. Three options present themselves: either 1) Christ did not achieve divine status in the eyes of the first Christians because of Jewish monotheistic beliefs;[78] 2) the first Christians ascribed divinity to Jesus through an intentional departure from a traditional Jewish understanding of the One God;[79] or 3) early Christians believed Jesus was divine, and in affirming this belief, they came to understand the parameters of Jewish monotheism in a new way while simultaneously believing they remained faithful to the tenets of Judaism. A thorough investigation of the strongest one-God texts in Paul's undisputed letters will help to resolve this dilemma.

If it is accurate that Paul understands Jesus to be in some way divine, then we must also consider how Paul specifically envisions the relationship between God and Christ. Throughout his letters, Paul clearly attributes to Jesus a high status.[80] But to what level, exactly, is Christ exalted? If Paul raises Jesus to the level of divinity, does he simultaneously limit Jesus's divinity through some sort of hierarchy? Does Paul subordinate Christ to God, and if so, how far does this subordination go? 1 Cor 3:23 and 15:24–28 both seem to indicate such a hierarchy. The question must be asked, then, what is the nature of this subordination? This relates to the question of deity itself—is it possible to be considered part of the Jewish understanding of Yahweh and yet not be "over all," since Christ is not over God? Or is this a false distinction between two equal members of the divine identity? Is Paul even consistent in his presentation of the relationship between God and Christ?

In addressing these questions, it is helpful to begin by noting that Paul considers Christ's lordship to include everything except God himself (1 Cor 11:3, 15:27). This seems to be a consistent theme—in the hymn in Phil 2, every knee bows to Christ "to the glory of God the Father" (v. 11). Thus, by emphasizing these texts, one could conclude that (for Paul) Jesus never attains the same status as Yahweh. Indeed, this is the position taken by Dunn, who argues that Paul's use of the term κυριος was not so much

78. Dunn reaches this conclusion. See below.

79. Bousset, e.g., takes this position.

80. See, e.g., Phil 2:5–11; Gal 1:1; Rom 1:3–4, 9:5; 1 Cor 1:24, 8:6.

a way to identify Jesus with God as it was a way to distinguish Christ from God. He also maintains that Paul was reluctant to use the term "God" for Jesus and never prayed directly to Jesus.[81] In Dunn's view, the full-fledged deification of Christ occurred only later in the Christian church.

By emphasizing other texts, however, one may also find it possible to argue that Paul elevated Jesus to the level of deity, making him fully equal with God. Phil 2:6, 1 Cor 8:6, and Rom 9:5, for example, appear to place Jesus on par with Yahweh. Jesus also shares the functions of Yahweh, such as sitting on the judgment seat (2 Cor 5:10). In addition, it is important to consider that God's functions are intimately tied to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Yahweh is the God who sent his Son, the God who raised Jesus from the dead. It is just such a dynamic relationship that leads Francis Watson to argue that divine identity and divine action are inseparable, and thus God's own identity is determined by his relationship to Jesus, just as Jesus's identity is determined by his relationship to God.[82] "God is indeed still one and sovereign, but the oneness and the sovereignty are not extraneous to the mutually constitutive relation of 'Father' and 'Son.'"[83]

A third interpretation is also possible. Clearly Paul wrote both kinds of texts: those that appear to exalt Christ to the level of deity, and those that appear to subordinate Christ to God the Father. What if he is not being inconsistent, but rather holds both to be true; that is, Christ is divine but does not achieve the same status as Yahweh? Donald Hagner, for example, argues that Paul considered Jesus to be divine, yet at the same time created a "subordination of economy" to preserve Jewish monotheism.[84] Jesus the Son is the agent of God and himself directly represents deity to the people, Hagner argues. He does not, however, go into detail regarding the nature and extent of the subordination of Christ. He merely states

81. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, 53.

82. Watson, "Triune Divine Identity," 105. While Watson's work offers an important corrective to Dunn, problems may arise for Watson when the early Jewish literature is consulted. Does the attribution of a divine function to an intermediary being, such as an angel or prophet, therefore mean that the intermediary being is divine? If Watson does not intend such an implication, then he needs to define his parameters more closely.

83. Ibid., 117–18.

84. Hagner, "Paul's Christology," 29.

that, given 1 Cor 8:6, "the deity of Christ is an unavoidable conclusion," and also asserts that the same time Christ was subordinate to God.[85]

In order to characterize further Paul's understanding of the relationship between God and Christ, we will look closely not only at the strongest one-God texts in Paul's letters, but also at the surrounding context. Does the use of strongly monotheistic language cause Paul to limit his descriptions of Christ elsewhere in the letter, or does Christ's exalted status remain unaffected? Which is more prevalent—passages that appear to exalt Christ or passages that appear to subordinate him to God? Did Paul regard Jesus as divine in all contexts? Or did Paul's monotheistic framework prevent him from stating that Jesus would ever be equal with God? Just what did Paul mean in those verses where he speaks of Jesus's relationship to God the Father? Resolution of these questions is central to understanding Paul's overall theology.

One aspect of Paul's writing that will help us get to the center of these difficult issues is an exploration of his use of Jewish Scriptures as they apply to God and to Jesus. Paul frequently refers to the Old Testament and uses a variety of texts to support his positions. Of interest for this study is the observation that Paul takes a number of Old Testament texts that originally referred to God and transforms them into texts that refer to Jesus. David Capes has analyzed these Yahweh texts—the Old Testament texts that include the Divine Name, YHWH—in order to determine when Paul uses "Lord" to keep the original referent (God) and when he uses the term to substitute Jesus in the reference normally attributed to God.[86] In fourteen specific citations of Yahweh texts, Paul refers to God seven times, while seven times he refers to Jesus. Furthermore, Capes finds that in all allusions to Yahweh texts Jesus is the referent.[87] He concludes: "The evidence from Paul's letters and particularly his use of Yahweh texts suggests that he identifies Jesus as Yahweh manifest and thus his Christology is already 'high.'"[88]

Capes's analysis is convincing, but it results in the difficult question of how to explain Paul's shift in referents. How could a Jew (presumably) committed to the one God of Scripture suddenly apply these texts to

85. Ibid.

86. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts*.

87. Ibid., 160.

88. Ibid., 183.

a human who very recently had died a shameful death? What justifies Paul's radical reconceptualizing of Scripture? A recent study by Francis Watson may help to solve this dilemma. In *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, Watson provides an illuminating analysis of Paul's interpretive approach to the Jewish Scriptures.[89] Through comparisons with Jewish exegetes roughly contemporary with Paul, Watson demonstrates that many of the apparent contradictions in Paul's thinking originate within the Torah itself. Thus, Paul's pessimistic view of humanity's ability to fulfill the requirements of the Law is not a Pauline invention, but originates in Deut 30 and Israel's own history of rebellion. Paul's hermeneutic is "fundamentally antithetical" in the way that it exploits the tensions inherent in the story of Israel.[90] Watson argues that Paul does not simply start with christological convictions that he then reads back into the Old Testament; rather, Scripture provides the matrix within which Paul's Christology takes shape. The one informs the other, and vice versa: "The Christ who sheds light on scripture is also and above all the Christ on whom scripture simultaneously sheds its own light."[91]

Watson's study primarily focuses on Paul's view of the Law, but his analysis can be used to inform our understanding of Paul's view of the one God. Are there tensions inherent in the Jewish Scriptures regarding the oneness of God? Does Paul exploit these tensions when he uses exalted language to describe Christ? The tentative answer is yes. Psalm 110:1 provides a good example. The interpretive significance of this psalm for the early church has been long recognized.[92] Indeed, Hengel finds three main Old Testament texts connected to the use of Ps 110:1—Isa 52:13, Isa 14:13, and Dan 7:9–14. The last of these contains the most significance for this study. Hengel argues that in Dan 7 the one like a man almost takes the place of God; divine authority and judgment are transferred to this figure, who then participates directly in God's reign.[93] Paul uses this suggestion

89. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*.

90. Ibid., 24.

91. Ibid., 17.

92. Hengel, for example, argues that the Psalm already significantly influenced the Church by the early 50s CE, because Paul in his writings assumes that his congregations understand the concepts associated with the reference (*Studies in Early Christology*, 172).

93. Ibid., 185.

of heavenly authority in Rom 8:34 and 1 Cor 15:25.[94] Thus, the significance he places on Christ's identity is grounded in the Jewish Scriptures.

The question of whether the first Christians deified Christ is not without controversy, however, and the texts investigated are open to a number of interpretive possibilities. Dunn, for one, agrees that Ps 110:1 significantly influenced the early church, but he would not go so far as to state that the first generation of Christians deified Christ. This is a development that came only later (see discussion above). For Dunn, the exaltation of Christ in Paul's writings can be explained in other ways. For example, the Christ hymn in Phil 2, which references Isa 45:23, is an expression of Adam Christology and not an expression of Christ's deification.[95] Foundational to Dunn's argument is the conviction that Jewish monotheistic beliefs would not permit such an understanding. But Watson's analysis of Paul's hermeneutic suggests that Paul is willing and able to identify tensions within the Jewish Scriptures and exploit these in developing his Christology. What I propose here is that Paul, aware of scriptures such as Dan 7 and Ps 110:1 that describe another exalted figure alongside God, is able to use one-God language while simultaneously exalting Christ. Paul's antithetical hermeneutic suggests that we should avoid ruling out a priori the possibility of Christ's deification within a Jewish (Christian) context.

Understanding Paul's interpretive matrix thus helps to clarify how he is able to use Yahweh texts interchangeably for Jesus and God. Certainly a former Pharisee, a zealous Jew, like Paul would understand the theological implications of such statements. If Paul had wanted to avoid any misunderstandings, if he had wanted to preserve a strictly numerical understanding of the one God, he would have taken great care to avoid any confusion between God and Christ when making these formulations. Yet what we see in Paul's writings is an affinity for blurring the lines between God and Christ. Although Paul's Jewish contemporaries appear to have avoided the possibility of interpreting Ps 110:1 or Dan 7 in such a manner as to alter their understanding of the one God, it appears that Paul may not have had any such reservations. His hermeneutic elsewhere, as

94. See also Eph 1:20 and Col 3:1.

95. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 118.

Watson shows, allows him to interpret the Jewish Scriptures in atypical yet thoroughly Jewish ways.[96]

Closely related to the question of Paul's use of the Jewish Scriptures is the question of the titles that Paul uses for Jesus and the ramifications of those names. The titles Paul uses most frequently are "Christ," "Lord," and "Son of God." Of these, the latter two have generated the most discussion. "Christ" (Cristoj) started as a messianic title but quickly developed into a proper name for Jesus. This may have occurred because "Christ" did not have a personal meaning in Greek (i.e., "to be rubbed in"), whereas its equivalent in Hebrew meant "anointed" and thus referred to the Messiah. The confession "Jesus is Messiah," therefore, quickly turned into "Christ Jesus."[97] The Hebrew understanding of the Messiah, it appears, did not include a view that the Messiah was divine, and thus the term "Christ" *in and of itself* does not make a statement about Jesus's divinity. Nonetheless, the statements that the early church made about this Christ, such as his exaltation to the right hand of God, did involve audacious new claims about the Christ. As Hengel states, "That Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah/Son of Man, who was hanged on the tree of shame and was resurrected by God, was exalted to the right hand of his heavenly father and is participant in his divine power, was a claim of fanatic boldness; it was intellectual dynamite which could sound like blasphemy in the ears of Jewish listeners."[98] Thus, while the term *originally* did not have connotations of divinity, it may have come to be understood that way as the result of its specific attachment to the exalted Jesus.

The term "Lord" (kurioj), however, contains within the title itself the capacity for exalting Christ to the level of God. It is commonly known that kurioj was used in the LXX for the divine Tetragrammaton. It must be noted, however, that in pre-Christian Jewish Greek documents, the Tetragrammaton was either left in untranslated Hebrew or was written as ΠΙΠΠ; the term "Lord" was not inserted into these manuscripts until

96. This is not to say that Paul would not have been regarded as a heretic by many of his Jewish contemporaries. Rather, it is to say that Paul did not simply import ideas from Hellenistic philosophies or religions in order to achieve his understanding of Christ. His foundation was the Jewish Scriptures themselves, even if he interpreted them in a radically new way.

97. Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology*, 384–85.

98. Ibid., 174.

a post-Christian date.[99] Such information, however, does not change the fact that regardless of the written form, when the text was read, κυριος was spoken in place of the Divine Name.[100] Despite the manuscript evidence, then, it is appropriate to conclude that synagogue-attending Jews would have been aware of the divine implications of the term. Given this evidence, it is significant that Paul uses the term some 230 times to refer to Jesus.[101] It is equally important to note, however, that κυριος was not a term that was used exclusively for God; it could also be used of humans to mean teacher, master, or king.[102]

The question arises, then, whether Paul's continual references to Jesus as "Lord" meant more than simply a revered human. That "Lord" can designate a god, combined with Paul's affinity for ascribing Old Testament Yahweh texts to Jesus, certainly suggests that deification was his intended connotation. In addition, the formula "to call on the name of the Lord" (1 Cor 1:2) is a regular Old Testament formula for worship and prayer to God.[103] As will become evident throughout this investigation, Paul continually ascribed functions to Christ that normally resided with God. Unless Paul was extremely careless to the point of being absentminded, it is difficult to believe that he was unaware of the implications of his word choice.

Nonetheless, we should consider whether a difference exists between the evidence of worship of God and the evidence of worship of Christ in the Pauline Epistles. According to P. M. Casey, texts where Paul refers to calling on the name of the Lord or uses Yahweh texts to refer to Jesus are not as clear-cut as some scholars would have us believe: "The transference of items from God to an intermediary figure . . . does not imply their deification. At one level, the mere transference of a passage alters its meaning, and we may never assume that there is no other change in meaning."[104] Furthermore, Casey notes the variety of meanings for the term κυριος

99. Kahle, *Cairo Geniza*, 222.

100. De Lacey, "'One Lord' in Pauline Christology," 193. De Lacey supports his argument with testimony from Origen, including statements about the "Hellenes" reading the Tetragrammaton as *kyrios* while the Hebrews pronounce it *adonai*.

101. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 17.

102. Foerster, "κυριος."

103. France, "Worship of Jesus," 30.

104. Casey, "Monotheism, Worship," 225. See also Casey's monograph, *Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*.

and states that this diversity is precisely the reason that the term was so useful during a period of rapid christological development. As a result, one should not be too specific about the term's meaning. Certainly it indicated Christ that was a superior being with authority, but "it does not equate him with God, and its exact force could be differently perceived by different people."[105]

Although Casey provides an important caution that the process of transferring a text inherently alters the meaning, this does not change the fact that Paul *intentionally* transferred these texts, which originally referred to God, to the risen Christ. Such a transfer happened in multiple instances, not just on one or two occasions as one might expect if Paul had absentmindedly transferred these texts to Jesus. In addition, despite the diversity of possible meanings for the term, kurioj in the Old Testament Yahweh texts contained no ambiguity. Furthermore, Paul's strong Jewish background as a Pharisee suggests that he was fully aware both of the fundamental importance of monotheistic beliefs and of the meaning of the texts in their original context. He certainly could have used another term for Jesus (such as "rabbi") and avoided transferring Yahweh texts to Christ, had he intended to maintain a conventional understanding of the one God. We must not confuse the diversity of *possible* meanings of kurioj with an ambiguity in *intended* meaning. Although Paul's readers could certainly interpret the term kurioj in a variety of ways, it does not follow that Paul lacked a *specific* meaning when he used it.

The final title we will consider is "Son of God." The concept occurs only fifteen times in Paul's writing; compared to Paul's usage of the term "Lord," "Son of God" may appear to be of relative insignificance for Paul. Nonetheless, Hengel asserts that the places where Paul does use the term are climactic in Paul's argument.[106] We will study some of these occurrences more fully in the investigation that follows. For now, however, I will note in general that this concept, like "Lord," has a wide range of meanings, including righteous individuals, angels, kings, and the people of Israel.[107] Thus, the term does not necessarily connote divinity. Within Judaism, however, the use of "Son of God" is connected to such traditions as Enoch and divine Wisdom. As such, the term can involve ideas of preexistence,

105. Casey, "Monotheism, Worship," 225–26.

106. Hengel, *Son of God*, 14.

107. Schneemelcher, "uioj."

mediation at creation, and sending into the world.[108] Hengel argues that because Christianity provided its own original stamp for these ideas, this caused friction with Judaism: "We cannot therefore over-exaggerate the scandal of Pauline Christology and soteriology, precisely *because* it was fed from Jewish sources."[109]

But Paul's use of "Son of God" is decidedly more ambiguous than his use of "Lord."[110] A. E. Harvey, for instance, argues that human, and not divine, categories were used to express Jesus's unique authority.[111] Harvey finds three aspects of the title "Son of God" to be significant: it connoted Jesus's obedience to his father, his position as apprentice and conveyor of the teachings of the Father, and his service as the agent and representative who held the authority of the Father.[112] "To this extent, the phrase 'Son of God' as applied to Jesus acquired new precision and a new range of meaning; but there was nothing new in the conceptions it made use of."[113] Furthermore, Jewish monotheistic beliefs were effective in restraining a broader application of this term.[114]

Certainly Harvey is correct that Jesus's obedience (some would say "faithfulness"), teachings, and authority are integral to his designation as son. But if Paul elsewhere ascribes terms and functions to Jesus that are reserved for God, then it is certainly *possible* (especially given the connection with Wisdom) that Paul does the same with the phrase "Son of God." We cannot simply rule out this possibility a priori on the grounds that Judaism would not allow it.

As we progress through our study of texts, therefore, it is necessary to keep Paul's usage of these terms in mind. Paul at times does appear to ascribe divine titles and functions to Christ; nonetheless, some of these terms have multiple possible meanings and we must not assume that Paul's use of a phrase in one context indicates that he always intends the term to be used in such a manner. We should take care, however, not to rule out from the beginning the full range of possible meanings, both di-

108. Hengel, *Son of God*, 57.

109. Ibid., 74.

110. Obviously there are no Yahweh texts in this instance which transfer a description of Yahweh as "son of God" to Jesus.

111. Harvey, "Son of God," 158.

112. Ibid., 159–62.

113. Ibid., 164.

114. Ibid., 157.

vine and human, simply on the assumption that "Judaism" does not allow such an interpretation. As noted in the discussion of Paul's hermeneutics, the Torah itself contains inherent tensions which Paul may well have exploited to the advantage of his christological theology.

Another tension present in Judaism's concept of the one God is the belief that God is God over all (universalism) and yet simultaneously that God has chosen the people of Israel to receive his special protection and favor (particularism). While first-century Jews tended to emphasize particularism, in Paul's explication of God's plan for salvation history he focused on universalism. Yahweh justifies Jews and Gentiles alike by faith, and thus he is God of the Gentiles too, Paul argued. Paul thus expanded the Jewish understanding of God's blessings, stating that the Gentiles would also share in God's promises.

One of the major avenues of investigation necessary for understanding the correlation between Paul's theology and that of Jews in general, then, is the attitude of first-century Jews toward Gentiles. Were the Jews content to let Gentiles be Gentiles? Or did they aggressively try to convert Gentiles to Judaism? Were Jews antagonistic toward Gentiles, leaving them to God's wrath, or did they perceive a future for Gentiles within the kingdom of God? We will explore this contextual background more fully in chapter 4.

For now I will simply make the observation that Paul actively sought out Gentiles and invited them into the kingdom, into the place reserved for Jews. Not only that, but Paul preached that circumcision was not necessary; certainly this would have made the new faith more attractive to the Gentiles than Judaism. In response, the Gentiles came in droves. As a result, the Jews found themselves asking several unsettling questions about this new movement. If Gentiles were now being allowed to enter the circle of God's blessings, and were allowed to do so without observing Jewish law, then what did this mean for Jews? Were they no longer God's specially chosen people? What, then, was the meaning of Israel's election? How could the Jew receive any special promise, if both Jew and Gentile were treated alike in God's plan? Did God lie about Israel's status?

All of this uneasiness arises from the implications of the nature and scope of the one God's impartiality, justice, and authority. The point I want to emphasize here is that the question of the inclusion of the Gentiles—a major issue in the early church, as evidenced by the regular debates in Paul's letters—cannot be divorced from the theological understanding of

the one God. Paul appears to be stating, especially in Rom 3:30, that the inclusion of the Gentiles is not simply coincidental to God's identity as the one God over all. Rather, Paul maintains that God's identity from the beginning was and is tied to his salvific acts in Christ, and thus the inclusion of the Gentiles is not an added "extra" to salvation history, but was part of God's original plan. Such a thesis was extremely jarring to those Jews who took pride in their special election. Paul's monotheistic beliefs, then, made a great impact on the question of salvation history and thus need to be more fully investigated.

Another issue arising from Paul's monotheistic beliefs, and one that is closely connected to the preceding subject, concerns the horizontal social dimension of God's oneness. Paul's monotheistic assertions frequently appear within the context of a call for Christian unity: 1 Cor 8:6 appears in the midst of calls for the (theologically) stronger in the church to put aside their freedom for the sake of the weaker; Gal 3:20 discusses faith as the basis of salvation, and a few verses later Paul summarizes that all believers—regardless of race, social status or gender—are one in Christ Jesus; and Rom 3:30 concerns the inclusion of the Gentiles into the blessings of God. Thus the question arises as to the extent that Paul's monotheistic framework affected his ethics.

In some respects, it may appear that Paul's ethics are rather haphazard and are not based in the Jewish Scriptures. Certainly Paul does not lay out a systematic list of "thou shall" and "thou shall not." He does not offer a new Pentateuch or present new stone tablets detailing appropriate behavior. Rather, he responds to the current circumstances in his individual churches and exhorts the communities to respectful, loving behavior. Joseph Fitzmyer describes Paul's ethical statements as examples of the Christian principle of "love reacting to communal situations."[115] Unfortunately, this situational aspect of Paul's exhortations has led some scholars to overlook the strength of the connection of Paul's ethics to his one-God theology. Richard Hays, for example, wishes to show the theological underpinnings of Paul's ethics, yet he does little to explicitly address the three strongest monotheistic statements in Paul's writings.[116]

115. Fitzmyer, *To Advance the Gospel*, 198.

116. Hays, *Moral Vision*. Hays fails to mention Gal 3:20 or Rom 3:30. In his discussion of the ethics of eating idol meat in Corinth, he mentions 1 Cor 8:4 only to describe the position of the strong and does not address 8:6 (42–43). He offers a brief comment on 1 Cor 8:6 in his discussion of the ethics of abortion (450).

Despite the circumstantial nature of Paul's ethical exhortations, we should keep in mind the Jewish foundations of Paul's belief system. This is borne out by his use of the Jewish Scriptures throughout his letters. Although direct citations may be infrequent in Paul's ethical exhortations, it is clear nonetheless that he relies heavily on his Jewish heritage. Brian Rosner, for example, has demonstrated that the Jewish Scriptures "are a crucial and formative source" for Paul's ethics.[117] In what he considers a representative sample of Paul's ethics, Rosner has investigated 1 Cor 5–7 and determined that not only does Paul directly depend on Scripture, but Paul depends on Jewish moral teaching, which is itself dependent on Scripture.

Any such argument, however, must deal with those texts whereby Paul appears to set aside the Law (e.g., Rom 10:4). In Rosner's interpretation, Paul does not set aside all aspects of the Law; rather, Paul retains the idea of the Law as revealing God's will and the Law as Scripture. In other places, where Paul appears to set aside Scripture, it is important to note that Paul only sets aside those parts that make a distinction between Jew and Gentile and thus restrict God's people to the Jews. In addition, Rosner argues that the reason Paul quotes Scripture so rarely in ethical sections is that these are places where he departs the least from Jewish tradition; he quotes Scripture more frequently when he is defending his radical doctrine.[118]

Furthermore, and especially important for this study, Paul relies quite heavily on Deuteronomy when formulating his ethics.[119] This supports the argument that Paul is aware of and influenced by the Shema.[120] It is not coincidental that the Shema appears in ethical contexts. Indeed, this connection between the unity of the people of God and the unity of the one God is not unique to Paul, and in fact, it has very Jewish roots. Stephen Barton describes the unity of the people as bound up integrally with the oneness of God. Anything that threatens God's oneness, e.g., the worship of idols, threatens the community's unity. Conversely, "anything which divides the people—the activity of false teachers, prophets or mes-

117. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*, 177.

118. Ibid., 182–94.

119. Ibid., 178.

120. Indeed, Rosner notes that Deut 6 was "a prominent text in both the Scriptures and early Jewish literature" and he concludes that it was "on Paul's mind" when he wrote 1 Cor 8:6 (ibid., 164).

siahs, for example—undermines the common witness of the people to the oneness of God."[121]

It is thus easy to see how the unique identity of Jesus caused such uproar within the Jewish community. The definition of God was being uniquely connected to the identity of Jesus, and this in turn raised the question of who comprised the people of God and how to reconstitute that definition without invalidating God's promises to Israel. Furthermore, the everyday behaviors of some members of this new group of people involved a variety of practices that appeared at odds with Jewish tradition. What was at stake in the proclamation of Christ was the very unity of the people of God. It is therefore important to ask how Paul's understanding of God's oneness defined for him the boundaries of God's people. How much diversity was allowed, and of what kind, within a unified body? Who was included among the people of God? What were the expectations of those within the community for community life? To what extent were these decisions derived from an understanding of the identity of the one God? These questions will be addressed throughout the following chapters.

SUMMARY AND TRAJECTORIES

In summary, we have briefly explored several major issues that arise from an inquiry into Paul's use of one-God language; for some of these issues I have offered tentative conclusions, while others remain to be more fully investigated in the following chapters. Although the term "monotheism" has been frequently employed to describe Jewish belief in the one God, this investigation has shown that the term lacks precision and derives from later philosophical approaches. Accordingly, I will attempt to refer to Paul's "one-God language," although at times I may be forced to use the adjective "monotheistic." In those cases, the term is specifically intended to connote the Jewish understanding of the one God, Yahweh, who uniquely is the creator, sustainer, and ruler of the world and who has chosen to maintain a special relationship with the people of Israel. At times this belief in the one God seems to have emphasized a numerical oneness, while at other times it has emphasized God's unique activity. Thus, the following study will need to explore the ways in which Paul navigates this course.

121. Barton, "Christian Community," 290.

In considering the Jewish understanding of the one God, we have surveyed various intermediary figures in Judaism—exalted patriarchs, angels, angelomorphic beings, and divine hypostases. Ultimately, none of these categories has proved satisfactory in providing a ready-made category for explaining the exaltation of the risen Christ. In considering how the first Christians, many of whom were Jews, were able to describe Christ in highly exalted terms and yet believe themselves to be remaining faithful to Judaism, I noted that some passages in the Pauline corpus appear to subordinate Christ to God. Thus, the precise extent of Jesus's exaltation needs to be further scrutinized. Nonetheless, Paul's hermeneutical practices provide optimism for resolving some of these difficulties. Paul was clearly immersed in the Jewish Scriptures and was aware of various tensions contained therein. He exploited these tensions in order to make sense out of his experience of the risen Christ. Thus, Paul was able to take Old Testament texts that originally referred to Yahweh and apply them to Jesus. This usage was intentional, and Paul the former Pharisee certainly understood the significant implications of such reinterpretation of Scripture. In concert with this, Paul's language for Jesus—while at times ambiguous—often intended to convey lordship in the divine sense of the term. Other titles, such as Son of God, are not so clear in their connotations and must be investigated further.

Paul exploited further tensions within the Torah when he argued that the Gentiles should be included in the people of God. This discussion of salvation history cannot be separated from a discussion of the oneness of God, for it is precisely from God's oneness, and thus his universal impartiality, justice and authority, that Paul derives the warrant for the inclusion of the Gentiles. The full rationale for this argument will be explored more completely within the discussion of Rom 3:30.

Finally, I have discussed the connection between Paul's ethical exhortations and his understanding of the one God. Despite the varying contexts of his one-God citations, they all deal with proper relationships between people. Since the rightness of behavior is connected directly to the rightness of one's relationship with God (a link which I will establish more firmly in the next chapter), we must further explore this dynamic. It is important to bring this connection between the oneness of God and ethics into focus, since this underpinning appears to have been deemphasized in recent scholarship.

These issues form the background and context within which to investigate Paul's monotheistic beliefs and their implications. I will thus perform an exegetical examination of those passages that are the most explicitly monotheistic in Paul's writings: 1 Cor 8:4–6, Gal 3:20 and Rom 3:30.[122] In investigating these three texts, I will begin with a brief discussion of previous scholarly approaches, and then proceed to analyze the specific verses within their historical, cultural, and grammatical contexts. I will also explore Paul's understanding of the relationship between Jesus and God throughout each letter in order to determine whether Paul's one-God language affects his theology elsewhere.

In chapter 2 I will explore the extent to which Paul's one-God language in 1 Cor 8:4–6 supports his argument regarding the ethics of the church community. I will also consider the relationship between God and Christ, as described in 8:4–6, and ask how this one-God language affects Paul's portrayal of Christ elsewhere in the letter. In places Christ appears to be exalted to the level of deity, while elsewhere the language seems quite hierarchical. Ultimately I will demonstrate that Paul's one-God language is crucial to understanding his ethics. Furthermore, this study will reveal an underlying coherence in the interplay between Paul's theology and Christology, despite appearances to the contrary.

In chapter 3 I will attempt to unravel the cryptic verse in Gal 3:19–20 regarding the identity of the mediator, and wherein the emphasis lies in Paul's argument. In order to do so, I will explore Paul's angelology and Jewish views of mediation, as well as the role of the oneness language itself. This study will conclude that traditional interpretations, which take issue either with angelic origins of the Law or with the nature of mediation, fail to fully consider a number of issues. In addition, the context of Paul's argument, in which he contrasts the Law and the promise, will help to pinpoint the way in which this passage contrasts two different mediators.

In chapter 4 I will investigate how Paul uses one-God language in Rom 3:29–30 to support his argument for the inclusion of the Gentiles

122. Here I must focus on the undisputed Pauline literature. It is important to examine the core of Paul's monotheistic beliefs in order to provide a baseline against which to judge other, disputed texts, such as Eph 4:4–6 and 1 Tim 2:5. At times, however, this study will cite passages from the disputed literature; the purpose of such citations is to show any potential continuity with the Pauline passages explored here and the beliefs of the early church, especially within the Pauline school.

within the people of God. The importance of the *character* of God for Paul's conclusions will become apparent. In addition, despite Paul's emphasis on God throughout the letter, I will argue that Paul's exaltation of Christ does not diminish. Rather, Paul continually refers to God through Christ and Christ through God, so that the two define one another.

Finally, in chapter 5 I will offer the conclusion that Paul's conception of the one God is not perfunctory, static, or deemphasized. Rather it is vital, dynamic and integral to Paul's argumentation. Paul's concept of the one God lies at the core of, and profoundly influences the rest of, his arguments. If the new Christians he addresses do not behave appropriately, it is because they do not have a proper understanding of what it means to be in relationship with the one God. If the Jews are improperly focused on the old way of doing things, it is because they do not adequately comprehend the fullness of the Christ-event as the defining moment of the one God's plan for Israel and the world. If the Jews do not wish to include the Gentiles in the people of God, it is because they have not fully considered the implications of the impartiality and faithfulness of the one God. Whatever the context, Paul's dynamic understanding of the one God lays the foundation from which the rest of his beliefs emerge.