



FHS 3102: PAUL AND PAULINE TRADITION

Handout for Lecture 3
Professor Jenn Strawbridge
Week 3, Hilary 2025

Paul's Christology

1. Paul's Christology: Introduction

“high” and “low” Christology – approaches: titles vs narrative – Paul and Christ

2. Approach

“Titles”: Son, Lord, Christ/Messiah, Adam

Other attributes: human, Jewish, sinless, faithfulness, intercessor, model to imitate

Major debates: earthly Jesus and Paul, pre-existence, divinity

Christology and soteriology

3. “Titles”

“Son”: Romans 1.2-4, also Gal 1.15-16; Rom 1.3, 9; 2 Cor 1.19

“Lord”: Romans 14.8-9; “The day of the Lord” (1 Thess 5.2; 1 Cor 5.5, 1.8; 2 Cor 1.14)
connection with LXX and the name of God (see Rom 10.13/Joel 2.32; 1 Cor 1.31 and
2 Cor 10.17/Jer 9.23-24); the “Lord’s supper” in 1 Cor 11.17-34

“Christ”: Jewish expectation and tradition; simply a name/title; honorific (Novenson)

“Adam”: 1 Cor 15.22 and Rom 5.12-21

4. Attributes and Defining Characteristics

Jesus was human: Gal 4.4; 1 Cor 15.21; Rom 5.15, 8.3

Jesus was a Jew: Gal 4.4, 3.16; Rom 1.3, 9.5

Jesus is sinless: 2 Cor 5.21; Rom 8.3 (?)

Jesus’s “faithfulness”: Rom 3-4; Gal 2-3

Jesus as intercessor: Rom 8.34

Jesus as model to imitate: 1 Cor 11.1; 1 Thess 1.6; Gal 6.2; Phil 2.6-11

5. Philippi and Philippians

Philippi

Small city in eastern Macedonia

16km inland from Neapolis; on Via Egnatia

Roman Rule in 167 BCE; Roman *kolonia* in 31 BCE under Octavian, settled by veterans

Romans and Greeks (Epaphroditus, Euodia, Syntyche, Clement); Lydia (Acts)

Gentile community with involvement of women in leadership; any evidence of Jews?

Philippians: Community

Evidence from Paul’s letter and in Acts 16.12-40

Paul’s initial visit ~49 CE, marked by conflict? (Phil 1.30; 2.22; 3.18; 4.9; 1 Thess 2.2)

Exorcism of a slave girl and its consequences (Acts 16.16-24)

Conversion and baptism of Lydia (Acts 16.13-15) and of jailer (16.25-34) and their households

Generous with material possessions (Phil 4.16) and sent Epaphroditus to assist Paul (Phil 2.25-30; 4.14)

Theme: Unity (Phil 1.27; 2.1-4)

Insight into Paul's history and mindset as he faces possible death

Insight into Philippian community: external persecution (?) and internal discord

Philippians: Controversies

“Opponents” (Phil 1.28):

1. not resident in Philippi (1.15-18);
2. threaten unity (1.27-28);
3. “enemies of the cross of Christ” (3.18-19);
4. “dogs” and “evil doers” (3.2)

Internal division between Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4.2)

6. Major Debates/Issues

Pre-existence:

Incarnation: Phil 2.5-11; 2 Cor 8.9

Creation: 1 Cor 8.6; Col 1.16 (?)

Israel: 1 Cor 10.4

Paul and the earthly Jesus: is Paul interested?

Divinity: Rom 9.5; Titus 2.13 (?); 1 Cor 8.6; Phil 2.6-11

7. Paul's Christology and Soteriology

Intimately connected

1 Cor 15.3-4 (see also Rom 5.9-10; 1 Thess 1.10)

Drawing on sacrificial language and images:

“sin offering” (Rom 8.3); “Passover lamb” (1 Cor 5.7); “mercy seat” (Rom 3.25);

“sin” and “curse for us” (2 Cor 5.21; Gal 3.13); “first fruits” (1 Cor 15.20-23)

Goblet Practice: 1 Corinthians 15.45-49

Thus it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living being’; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Next Week: Paul's Soteriology

Texts Referred to in the Lecture (in order of reference)

Philippians 3.1-10: I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Galatians 2.19-20: I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me

Jesus as “Son”

Romans 1.2-4: the gospel he [God] promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who according to the flesh was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared to be the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 8.3: For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh...

Jesus as “Lord”

Romans 14.8-9: If we live, we live to the Lord, if we die, we die to the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord...

I Corinthians 11.20-27: When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! ... For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread... For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord.

Jesus as “Christ”

Romans 15.8-12: For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,...As it is written, ‘Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name’; and again he says, ‘Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people’; and again, ‘Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him’; and again Isaiah says, ‘The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.’

I Corinthians 15.3-4: For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures...

Jesus as “Adam”

I Corinthians 15.22: As in Adam all die, so in Christ will all be made alive

Romans 5.12-14: Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned— sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

Romans 5.20-21: ... but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus was human and a Jew

Galatians 4.4: But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law...

I Corinthians 15.21: For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being..

Romans 5.15: For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many.

Romans 1.3: the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh...

Galatians 3.16: Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring; it does not say, 'And to offsprings', as of many; but it says, 'And to your offspring', that is, to one person, who is Christ.

Jesus is sinless

2 Corinthians 5.21: For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Romans 8.3: For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh...

Intercessor

Romans 8.34: It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

Jesus as model to imitate

I Corinthians 11.1: Imitate me, as I imitate Christ.

I Thessalonians 1.6: And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit

Galatians 6.2: Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

Philippians 2.5-11

Let the same mind (φρονεῖτε) be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form (μορφῇ) of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited (ἀρπαγμὸν), but emptied (έκένωσεν) himself, taking the form (μορφὴν) of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

2 Corinthians 8.9: ...though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty, you might become rich.

I Corinthians 8.6: ...yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Colossians 1.16: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 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.

I Corinthians 10.4: I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. *For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.*

Romans 9.5 (three different translations of the Greek)

To them (the Israelites) belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is *Christ, who is God over all, be blessed for ever!* Amen.

To them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is *the Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever!* Amen.

To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, *comes the Messiah (Christ), who is over all, God blessed for ever.* Amen.

Compare:

Deuteronomy 6.4: Hear, O Israel, The *Lord our God, the Lord* is one. (the Shema - שְׁמָה)

I Corinthians 8.6: yet for us there is but one God, the Father... and one *Lord, Jesus Christ.*

Philippians 2.9-11: Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Isaiah 45.21-24: ...for I am God and there is no other. By myself I have sworn... before me every knee will bow, by me every tongue will confess. They will say of me, In the Lord alone are righteousness and strength.

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