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TRACING A TRADITION:
THE LINKING OF PSALMS 110 AND 8 IN WRITINGS OF THE EARLY CHRIST MOVEMENT

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Abstract

Tracing a Tradition:
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By Jeffrey M. Dale

A number of early Christ-movement texts attest to a widespread, dynamic tradition which linked Pss 110 and 8 and was part of a nexus of traditions speaking of Christ's exaltation. The psalmic exaltation tradition developed at an early stage as followers of Christ sought to understand and communicate his present elevated status. The tradition was transmitted orally and later found expression in multiple written texts. Although certain terminology from the psalms ("seated at the right hand" and "subjection of all things") became standard in such discourse, the tradition never took on a completely fixed form. Rather, it found expression in different ways alongside many other exaltation traditions. These various exaltation traditions were employed together for a variety of argumentative and hortatory purposes. Why did the psalmic exaltation tradition meet with such success? One reason seems to be that it resonated with certain Greco-Roman notions. I highlight parallels with the deity Isis, who was viewed as a supreme ruler impacting a person's destiny in the afterlife.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the key elements of the kerygma of the early Christ movement[1] was the claim of Christ's exaltation. Christ followers believed and taught that the story of Jesus did not end with his death, but that following death he was vindicated and exalted by God.[2] A number of texts provide a window into this oft-repeated proclamation (e.g., Matt 28:18; Acts 2:33; 3:13; 5:31; Rom 1:4; Phil 2:9–11; 1 Tim 3:16). In most cases, the authors of these texts share in tradition not merely in the general sense of participating in the same stream of ideas but also in the more specific sense of employing discrete sets of material that were circulating among Christ followers. For example, the exaltation passage of Phil 2:9–11 is commonly regarded as part of a pre-Pauline hymn that Paul incorporated into his letter.[3] Thus, my use of the term "tradition" will generally conform to the following definition: a specific set of material (including but not limited to hymnic, credal, or catechetical material) transmitted among individuals and/or communities in the early Christ movement.

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[1] In an effort to avoid terms anachronistic to the first century CE, such as "Christianity" and "Christian," I employ terms throughout that are admittedly somewhat awkward: "Christ movement," "Christ follower," etc.

[2] For a discussion of various exaltation paradigms in the writings of the early Christ movement, see A. W. Zwiep, *The Ascension of the Messiah in Lukan Christology*, NovTSup 87 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 119–44.

[3] See Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 42–62.

Throughout this thesis, I seek to identify one specific exaltation tradition and trace its appearances in the writings of the early Christ movement from the mid-first century to the mid-second century CE. I argue that a number of early Christ-movement texts attest to a widespread, dynamic tradition which linked Pss 110 and 8 and was part of a nexus of traditions speaking of Christ's exaltation.[4] As discussion throughout will make clear, different iterations of the tradition could employ different elements from the psalms, but in general the following extracts were the ones of interest:

> The Lord said to my lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. (Ps 110:1)
>
> You subjected all things under his feet. (Ps 8:7b)[5]

Psalm 110 was especially popular, having the designation of being the most-referenced OT text in the NT.[6] And Ps 8 frequently was given a voice alongside it. Throughout the project, I focus on Christ-movement texts dating from the mid-first century to the mid-second century which reference the two psalms in tandem.

Following this introductory chapter, the project will proceed in two main stages. The first stage (chapters 2–3) consists of exploring texts that combine elements from both psalms. I will demonstrate that the psalmic exaltation tradition was both widespread and

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[4] Note that in this statement I reverse the canonical order of the two psalms. I do so in my discussion throughout because the early Christ-movement writings generally reference Ps 110 first and Ps 8 second.

[5] Unless otherwise noted, biblical citations are my translation. OT citations are generally translated from the LXX and follow its numbering system. I have made an exception in referring to Ps 109 LXX as Ps 110, however, because it is much more commonly known by its Hebrew/English number. There are significant textual issues in Ps 110, with the LXX and other ancient versions differing from the MT and from one another. The issues are mostly limited to vv. 3 and 6 of the psalm, however, and need not detain us here. See Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101-150*, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 141.

[6] Martin Hengel, "'Sit at My Right Hand!': The Enthronement of Christ at the Right Hand of God and Psalm 110:1," in *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 133.

dynamic. On the one hand, it was coherent enough to be traceable as a distinct tradition that spread widely in a variety of texts and, prior to those texts, in oral transmission. On the other hand, it was fluid enough to be expressed in different ways, typically alongside other exaltation traditions, and to be used for different theological and hortatory purposes. Having demonstrated the widespread influence of the tradition, I turn in the second main stage of the project (chapter 4) to the question of why it became so widespread. I attempt not to provide a comprehensive answer but to turn the conversation toward Greco-Roman parallels that, I suggest, help illuminate why this tradition, with its thoroughly Jewish way of speaking, met with such success.

Before surveying past studies in this area, I propose to pursue a brief definitional and methodological discussion. Throughout the project, when I speak of exaltation traditions, I am referring to traditions portraying Christ's present elevated status or the moment when he attained this status. When I mention the psalmic exaltation tradition, I am describing a tradition that appropriated Pss 110 and 8, setting them in relation to one another to describe Christ's exaltation. This latter category is a subset of the former; it is one exaltation tradition among others. Regarding my method for identifying traditions in written texts, I agree with indicators commonly accepted by NT tradition critics. The best indicator is the presence of technical terms for "handing on" and "receiving" tradition, but these shows up only rarely. Other indicators are a rhythmic cadence of language (which often stems from a hymn or creed) and material common to multiple passages.[7]

[7] Cf. a similar list of criteria in E. Earle Ellis, "Traditions in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 32 (1986): 485. As Ellis points out, "Not all of these criteria can be expected in each passage, and those that are present may be evaluated differently by different students. But they may at least serve as a check on subjective judgements and provide some useful guidelines."

These indicators provide a general basis for locating exaltation traditions, but some additional principles are helpful for tracing the psalmic exaltation tradition specifically: (1) linguistic connections to the psalms are paramount, (2) conceptual connections can also be considered, (3) both the number of connections and their proximity within a given passage are important, and (4) the passages ought to be considered together, not in isolation. The way these principles function will become clearer as individual passages are treated in the chapters that follow.

History of Scholarship

Throughout the past century, scholars have engaged in discussions regarding use of the Jewish scriptures by early Christ followers, ways in which texts were linked, and traditional linking of Pss 110 and 8 in particular. J. Rendel Harris made an important contribution with his study of "testimonies."[8] He proposed that, prior to any of the NT writings, one or more "testimony books," consisting entirely of proof-texts gathered from the OT, had been composed for use in Jewish/Christian debate. He briefly mentioned the connection between Pss 110 and 8 as traceable to a testimony book, noting the way in which several passages follow "the very same current of thought" in linking the two psalms.[9]

Decades later, C. H. Dodd built on the work of Harris in identifying certain OT texts as *testimonia*, but he did not accept Harris's idea of a "testimony book." Instead of supposing the existence of an "anthology of isolated proof-texts," he argued that early

[8] J. Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916–1920).

[9] Harris, *Testimonies*, 2:38.

Christians selected "certain large sections of the Old Testament scriptures" and gathered *testimonia* from them in an oral tradition process while understanding them as "*wholes*."[10] Dodd, in other words, agreed with Harris's thesis regarding OT texts used as *testimonia*, but he differed from Harris in seeing an oral, rather than written, process and in seeing large blocks of material rather than single verses. With regard to Pss 110 and 8, Dodd asserted that they were associated with one another "early."[11] The two psalms offer different titles for Christ, and these different titles point to his different functions. The Son of Man of Ps 8 (as well as Ps 80 and Dan 7) is the "inclusive representative" of the people of God, while the Lord of Ps 110 (and other kingly texts) is set over the people as sovereign.[12]

Barnabas Lindars followed Harris and Dodd in seeing a predominantly anti-Jewish use of scripture by early Christians. He refined this viewpoint in a lengthy study, which advanced the argument about the linking of Pss 110 and 8. Lindars asserted, "Ps. 8:7 is nowhere expounded without the aid of Ps. 110:1."[13] He clearly articulated the basic reason for seeing the linking of the two psalms as the work of early tradition: "As literary dependence between the Paulines, Hebrews and I Peter can hardly be supposed, we must conclude that all three writers are drawing on the common stock of exegetical material."[14] According to Lindars, early Christians started with messianic psalms (including Pss 2 and

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[10] C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952), 126 (italics original).

[11] Dodd, *According*, 120.

[12] Dodd, *According*, 116–21.

[13] Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 50.

[14] Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 50.

110) and supplemented their christological views with Ps 8. Lindars followed Dodd in seeing the latter as providing the notion of an "inclusive representative."[15]

Ferdinand Hahn advanced still another perspective. He argued that Mark 14:62 preserves an early tradition from the Palestinian church in which the right hand motif of Ps 110:1 was interpreted as still awaiting fulfillment: "The messianic enthronement, like the coming on the clouds of heaven, is an eschatological event; the handing over of power and the parousia belong together."[16] As the exaltation motif was developed, Hahn claimed, a radical transformation took place so that Jesus's ascension became associated with enthronement and significance was seen in his present heavenly work. The latter part of Ps 110:1 ("until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet") could then be used to express what still awaited future fulfillment. Subsequently, a "complete de-eschatologizing" took place in which Ps 110:1b ceased to be connected with the right hand motif and instead became connected with notions of realized lordship in Ps 8:7. Hahn pointed to Eph 1:20–22a as a clear example of this phenomenon.[17] In Hahn's view, then, traditions associated with Ps 110 experienced an evolutionary development, and a connection with Ps 8 took place at a relatively late stage.

The classic study on the use of Ps 110 by early Christ followers is David M. Hay's *Glory at the Right Hand*, published in the 1970s on the basis of a dissertation from the previous decade.[18] Hay surveyed both Jewish and early Christian interpretation of the

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[15] Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 168–69.

[16] Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*, Lutterworth Library (New York: World, 1969), 130.

[17] Hahn, *Titles of Jesus*, 130–32.

[18] David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity*, SBLMS 18 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973).

psalm. He found that some Jewish sources interpreted it as vindication of a pious individual while others applied it to Hasmonean leaders and supernatural figures. Later rabbinic writers often interpreted the psalm messianically, and although there is no definitive evidence for this sort of interpretation in first-century Judaism, Hay found it likely that it was present, even if not widely accepted.[19] Surveying Christian writings, Hay listed thirty-three quotations and allusions in the NT plus seven more in other Christian writings up to the mid-second century.[20] Having studied each of these references, he found a range of ways that the psalm was appropriated, which he categorized under a few headings: "(1) vindication or glory of Jesus, (1a) glory or empowerment of Christians, (2) support for christological titles, (3) subjection of powers to Jesus, (4) intercession or priesthood of Jesus."[21]

Hay also observed the linking of Pss 110 and 8 in early Christian writings. He particularly noted that the quotation of Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:36 // Matt 22:44 reflects conflation with Ps 8:7 and that the reference to both texts in 1 Cor 15:25–27 seems to reflect a deliberate change in wording of both (whether by Paul or a predecessor) so as to make them coincide.[22] Hay did not press the connection between the two psalms too closely; Ps 8:7 is the text most often linked with Ps 110:1, but others are as well. This fact caused him to caution against exaggerating the extent to which engagement with Ps 110 was based on its presence in testimony collections. Yet he did believe that many texts

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[19] Hay, *Glory*, 22–33.

[20] Hay, *Glory*, 15, 45–47.

[21] Hay, *Glory*, 45.

[22] Hay, *Glory*, 35–36.

with Ps 110 in the background were based on indirect engagement through testimony collections as well as confessions and hymns.[23]

Writing shortly after Hay's study was published, Pauline Giles spoke in terms of a connection not primarily between the two psalms but between Ps 110 and the Son of Man tradition. She pointed to three son of man texts (Dan 7 and Pss 8 and 80) in which the son of man seems to be a corporate figure, and she noted the frequent combination of Ps 110 with the former two of them.[24] For Giles, this suggested an "early date" for an established link between Ps 110 and the various son of man passages. The NT authors who reference these texts in conjunction with one another must have been "drawing on a common stock of testimonia."[25] Giles also suggested that the link between the texts was not artificial. Instead, she saw a common pattern in the texts (in Pss 8 and 110 and implicitly in Dan 7) of the human figure moving from degradation to exaltation.[26]

Richard B. Hays suggested yet another approach for considering the use of scripture in early Christ-movement writings. In *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, he argued that scripture suffuses the writings of Paul in the form of "echoes" that should be understood as metaleptic (i.e., they place "the reader within a field of whispered or unstated correspondences"[27]). Paul's christological presentation of Pss 110 and 8 in 1 Cor

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[23] Hay, *Glory*, 44–45.

[24] Pauline Giles, "The Son of Man in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *ExpTim* 86 (1975): 330–31.

[25] Giles, "Son of Man," 331. As is standard, Giles capitalizes the expression when it is christological title and leaves it in lower case when referring to OT texts. I follow the same practice throughout this project.

[26] Giles, "Son of Man," 329.

[27] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 20.

15:25–27 displays the way in which Paul references scripture allusively, according to Hays. And it is precisely this allusiveness that made Hays unsure whether Paul originated the christological reading of these psalms or was citing a previous tradition, although he thought the latter more probable.[28]

In what was the most significant treatment of Ps 110 since the study by Hay, Martin Hengel in the 1990s discussed the connection of Pss 110 and 8 and argued that because of christological concerns they were "woven together" at an early date.[29] As he attempted to discern just how far back the tradition is to be traced, he concluded that christological use of both psalms and the right hand motif "go back to the Jerusalem congregation."[30] Hengel also suggested that the combination of texts points to fluidity in the titles for Christ. Psalm 110 speaks of the κύριος while Ps 8 refers to the υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου. He saw Ps 80 (79 LXX) as a potential connector between the two with its reference to a son of man at God's right hand. In Hengel's view, a significant degree of interpenetration of texts and traditions should be acknowledged. Paul's statements in 1 Cor 15:45, 47 derive from the son of man tradition. Luke's reference to the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God points to mingling of Pss 8 and 110.[31] Finally, Hengel

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[28] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 84. Hays made the same argument, but with less hesitancy, in "Christ Prays the Psalms: Israel's Psalter as Matrix of Early Christology," in *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 109.

[29] Hengel, "Right Hand," 165. This chapter is an English translation of Hengel's study which he originally presented in a 1991 lecture and subsequently published in a 1991 Festschrift for Ferdinand Hahn.

[30] Hengel, "Right Hand," 173.

[31] Hengel, "Right Hand," 168–70.

gave attention to Jewish interpretation, noting combination of Dan 7 and Ps 110 as well as heavenly throne traditions.[32]

In the mid-1990s, two major studies appeared which dealt with Ps 8 in the NT. Mark Stephen Kinzer focused on situating NT use of the psalm within the milieu of Jewish interpretation. While he voiced his agreement with the dominant view that this psalm was linked with Ps 110 early on, he questioned certain conclusions derived from this view, including that Ps 8 was applied to Jesus only because of the link with Ps 110. Kinzer's attention to Jewish interpretation led him to note ways in which the NT authors, following Jewish exegesis, saw Ps 8 as significant in its own right, independent of Ps 110.[33] He concluded on the basis of his study of Jewish texts that a widespread Jewish reading of Ps 8 interpreted it on the basis of Gen 1–3. In this reading, the psalm speaks of Adamic exaltation and angelic jealousy, which resulted in loss of glory and yet subsequent renewal of the initial status in certain of Adam's descendants.[34] As Kinzer discussed NT passages, he referred to specific parallels with Jewish exegesis. For instance, he argued that the author of Hebrews draws on at least two elements of Jewish tradition: attributing the quoted words to an angel and applying the psalm to Moses.[35]

In the second study of Ps 8 in the NT, Wenceslaus Mkeni Urassa used various historical and literary approaches to explore re-interpretations of the psalm. Like Kinzer, he also gave considerable attention to Jewish interpretations, arguing that early

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[32] Hengel, "Right Hand," 185–214.

[33] Mark Stephen Kinzer, "'All Things under His Feet': Psalm 8 in the New Testament and in Other Jewish Literature of Late Antiquity" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 1995), 212–14.

[34] Kinzer, "All Things," 285–86.

[35] Kinzer, "All Things," 270–74.

translations and development of son of man traditions prepared the way for messianic reading of the psalm.[36] In addition, Urassa pointed to specific aspects in the NT passages which arguably reflect the influence of Jewish thought. One example is his contention that Paul's interpretation of Ps 8 in 1 Cor 15 reflects the influence of Philo's idea of a primal archetypal man vis-à-vis Gen 1.[37] Urassa did not deal extensively with the linking of Pss 110 and 8, but one statement of his posits a high degree of specificity for the link: "They [Pss 110:1 and 8:7] seem to have been part of an early Christian hymn containing catechetical credal formulations used in a baptismal *Sitz im Leben*."[38]

Martinus C. de Boer proposed that the tradition linking Pss 110 and 8 was one with some very specific elements. In a study on 1 Cor 15:20–28, he argued that the shape of this passage could best be explained by supposing that several portions come from a christological tradition known to Paul and the Corinthians.[39] Paul is not citing scripture when he uses the language of these psalms, de Boer suggested, but is citing a tradition in which the psalmic language "had already come to play a prominent and relatively fixed role."[40] He pointed to three other passages (Eph 1:20–23; Heb 1:3, 13; 2:8; 1 Pet 3:21b–

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[36] Wenceslaus Mkeni Urassa, *Psalm 8 and Its Christological Re-Interpretations in the New Testament Context: An Inter-Contextual Study in Biblical Hermeneutics*, European University Studies 23/577 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1998), 59–113.

[37] Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 169.

[38] Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 222.

[39] Martinus C. de Boer, "Paul's Use of a Resurrection Tradition in 1 Cor 15,20–28," in *The Corinthian Correspondence*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, BETL 125 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 639–51. This work is an expansion of arguments de Boer previoiusly put forward in *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5*, JSNTSup 22 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 117–20.

[40] de Boer, "Resurrection Tradition," 642.

22) which display multiple parallels.[41] Not only does each passage juxtapose language from the two psalms, but each one also has Christ's resurrection as its context and speaks of angels or other powers. de Boer concluded that there was a specific tradition that used language derived from Pss 110 and 8 and that "understood Christ's resurrection to entail his exaltation to heaven above the angelic principalities and powers."[42]

The *testimonia* hypothesis that originated with Harris was given new life through a work by Martin C. Albl, who reexamined the idea of the existence of collections of scriptural excerpts which served as "proofs." Albl found the idea to be well-supported not only through analysis of the NT, but also through consideration of Jewish, patristic, and Greco-Roman practices.[43] Albl concluded that when Paul references Pss 110:1 and 8:7, he makes use of them as "established *testimonia*." He believed that the link between the psalms could be explained on the basis of "oral worship tradition" inasmuch as they often appear in hymns and confessions.[44] Albl suggested that each psalm made a distinct contribution: "Psalm 110:1 supplied the imagery of glorification/vindication. … Psalm 8:4–6 provided an Adam-Christ typology."[45] Arguing against Hengel, Albl distinguished between two Son of Man traditions. In his view, "Christ as the Heavenly Son of Man" was based on Dan 7, while "Christ as Human Representative" came from Ps 8.[46]

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[41] See de Boer's chart which displays the parallels in "Resurrection Tradition," 643.

[42] de Boer, "Resurrection Tradition," 644.

[43] Martin C. Albl, *"And Scripture Cannot Be Broken": The Form and Function of the Early Christian* Testimonia *Collections*, NovTSup 96 (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

[44] Albl, *Scripture Cannot*, 236n111.

[45] Albl, *Scripture Cannot*, 228.

[46] Albl, *Scripture Cannot*, 228–29.

In a very recent study, N. T. Wright made use of Hays's metaleptic approach to explore echoes of Ps 8 in the gospels.[47] He argued that several passages (Pss 8; 110; 118; Dan 7) became linked early on because of evident connecting points, and together these passages were crucial for christological reflection. Wright proposed that the link between passages was not imposed arbitrarily but arose naturally. Similar to Giles, he detected a pattern in Ps 8 and Dan 7 of a son of man who is first humiliated and then given ultimate authority. More uniquely, he suggested that there are several intrinsic parallels between Pss 8 and 110: the opening lines of the two psalms sound similar, both have the motif of something placed underfoot, and both mention enemies.[48] For Wright, the way NT texts reference Ps 8 in a cryptic, allusive manner points to an incorporation of earlier tradition: the psalm "was there earlier on and, being taken for granted, lost emphasis in the retelling."[49]

The Present Project

Two significant threads emerge from the survey of previous studies, helping to provide a way forward for the present project. First, scholars have disagreed on whether the link between Pss 110 and 8 was part of a tradition that was relatively fixed or relatively fluid. Although they have not really framed the issue in this way, the various studies tend to place themselves toward one end of the spectrum or the other based on the

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[47] N. T. Wright, "Son of Man – Lord of Temple? Gospel Echoes of Psalm 8 and the Ongoing Christological Challenge," in *The Earliest Perceptions of Jesus in Context: Essays in Honor of John Nolland on His 70th Birthday*, ed. Aaron W. White, Craig A. Evans, and David Wenham, LNTS 566 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 77–96.

[48] Wright, "Son of Man," 79–82.

[49] Wright, "Son of Man," 93.

way they speak about the use of the psalms. Harris and Albl assumed a fairly fixed form in speaking of collections of *testimonia*, and Urassa and de Boer also posited a tradition with a high degree of specificity. Most of the other scholars referenced above presented the use of the psalms as something that was more fluid or dynamic. I agree with the main contours of this latter conclusion but find a gap in the literature in that none of these studies seeks to comprehensively trace the tradition in the early Christ-movement writings. I attempt to fill this lacuna through my analysis in chapters 2–3.

Second, the Jewish milieu has often been part of discussion about the use of the two psalms in early Christ-movement writings. Earlier studies—those by Harris, Dodd, and Lindars—framed the subject in terms of the psalms used as Christian polemic against Judaism. Later studies, perhaps in accordance with trends toward understanding the Christ movement as an entity not distinct from Judaism, focused instead on the ways in which the exegesis of Christ followers paralleled that found in other Jewish writings. Hay and Hengel examined parallels with Jewish interpretation of Ps 110 while Kinzer and Urassa did the same for Ps 8. Such studies mount a persuasive case for viewing the psalmic exaltation tradition as a thoroughly Jewish religious expression. This prompts the question of how this tradition achieved such success within the wider Greco-Roman world. I give attention to this question in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 2

CLEAR INSTANCES OF THE TRADITION

In this chapter, we begin tracing the psalmic exaltation tradition by considering passages in which the use of Pss 110 and 8 is fairly clear. Five passages will occupy our attention: 1 Cor 15:20–28; Eph 1:20–23; Heb 1:3–2:8; 1 Pet 3:21–22; and Pol. *Phil.* 2.1. I argue that all these texts are instances of the psalmic exaltation tradition and also indicate the prior existence of the tradition in oral form. Moreover, the nature of the tradition becomes clearer by considering these passages together. The tradition was not something that existed in fixed form; it was a dynamic entity that could be expressed in a range of ways. The only aspects that were fixed were the association of the two psalms with one another and the interpretation of them with regard to Christ's exaltation. Furthermore, one way in which the psalmic exaltation tradition was dynamic was in its expression alongside other exaltation traditions. In each of the five texts we will examine, it operates in concert with a variety of traditions to contribute to that text's message about Christ's exaltation. Thus, our discussion of each text will be carried out under three headings: the psalmic exaltation tradition, other exaltation traditions, and the function of exaltation traditions in that passage.

As an initial point of reference, I highlight the work of de Boer. He is the only author who has attempted to trace the tradition in any sort of detail. Most of the studies discussed in the previous chapter alluded briefly to a tradition linking the psalms, but

only de Boer has dealt with the instances of the tradition more systematically. In selecting the texts to analyze in this chapter, I have adopted de Boer's list of four NT texts (1 Cor 15:20–28; Eph 1:20–23; Heb 1:3–2:8; 1 Pet 3:21–22),[50] only adding to the list a fifth text from outside the NT corpus (Pol. *Phil.* 2.1). Thus, I consider myself to be building on de Boer's careful work to a significant extent.

While I find de Boer's work immensely helpful, I disagree with two major conclusions of his: the tradition was relatively fixed, and the passages independently drew on the tradition. In a study on 1 Cor 15, he argues that the language of the psalms "had already come to play a prominent and relatively fixed role"[51] so that Paul could quote it as an established christological tradition[52] and the Corinthians would be familiar with it as tradition even more than as scripture.[53] In a separate monograph, he describes the fixed nature of this tradition in more detail, proposing that it contained four very specific elements which Paul either "quotes" or "rewrites": Christ is (1) at God's right hand above (2) every ruler, authority, and power, because (3) all things were subjected to him, meaning that (4) he is all in all.[54] In addition to arguing that the tradition existed in a relatively fixed form, de Boer also argues that the various passages drew on it independently. For example, after a comparison of 1 Cor 15 and Eph 1 he concludes that the former was not a source for the latter but that the fixed tradition was a source for

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[50] de Boer, "Resurrection Tradition," 643.

[51] de Boer, "Resurrection Tradition," 642.

[52] This is de Boer's term. Although he does not offer a precise definition, it appears that for him it means a transmitted set of material focusing on Christ.

[53] de Boer, "Resurrection Tradition," 639–42.

[54] de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 119–20.

both.[55] I will address these points in greater detail in the discussion below. I have introduced them here in order to frame the context for the analysis that follows.

1 Corinthians 15

The Psalmic Exaltation Tradition

The presence of Pss 110 and 8 is quite evident in this passage. As Paul sketches an eschatological scenario and describes Christ's exalted status, he uses language that clearly has its source in the two psalms:

> For he must reign until he puts all the enemies under his feet [Ps 110:1]. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he subjected all things under his feet [Ps 8:7]. (1 Cor 15:25–27)

Although Paul's references differ slightly from the LXX, they come very close to being direct quotations. There are multiple linguistic connections.[56] Furthermore, these evident psalmic references appear in close proximity to one another (within the space of three verses). Thus, assuming dependence on tradition can be shown, this passage is clearly an instance of the psalmic exaltation tradition.

As the above citation shows, Paul has integrated the psalmic references into the passage.[57] He does not introduce the references as quotations (with an introductory

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[55] de Boer, "Resurrection Tradition," 644–48.

[56] θῇ, τοὺς ἐχθροὺς, and τοὺς πόδας connect with Ps 110; πάντα, ὑπέταξεν, and τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ connect with Ps 8.

[57] "No doubt, Paul does use scripture here and he must have supposed that his readers would realize it. But it is his own train of thought which in vv. 23–28 is prevalent." Jan Lambrecht, "Paul's Christological Use of Scripture in 1 Cor. 15.20–28," *NTS* 28 (1982): 511.

formula such as "it is written"), nor does he cite the LXX verbatim.[58] As a result of his integration, three types of differences between the LXX and the references as they appear in 1 Cor 15 can be observed. First, there are incidental differences. In the quotation of Ps 110, ἕως is switched to ἄχρι and the pronoun following "enemies" is removed. Second, some differences are the result of the psalms being integrated into the flow of the passage. In particular, the first- and second-person references become third-person references. Third, two changes serve to enhance the passage's argument: (1) πάντας is added before "enemies," matching with the logic that death will be defeated since "all" the enemies are subdued, and (2) both quotations are modified so as to end with an identical expression (ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ).[59] In addition to enhancing Paul's argument, these last two modifications also seem to reflect a conscious attempt to link the two psalms to one another. Paul can insert "all" into the quotation of Ps 110 because Ps 8 speaks of the subjection of "all things." And he finds it appropriate to make the ending of the two quotations harmonize precisely since he interprets them to be speaking of the same reality.[60] Table 1 summarizes the differences.

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[58] Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, SP 7 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 549; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 573.

[59] The footstool metaphor disappears from Ps 110 and is replaced simply with the preposition ὑπὸ, while the preposition ὑποκάτω in Ps 8 is also replaced with ὑπὸ. By harmonizing the two psalmic texts, Paul is able to use the Jewish interpretive principle *gezerah shawah* to link them (Collins, *First Corinthians*, 550).

[60] It is conceivable that these modifications were introduced by someone prior to Paul and he is simply following a source, but two considerations make it more likely that Paul has shaped the psalmic references. First, they make sense especially in terms of the logic of this particular passage. Second, they are not present in any other instances of the psalmic exaltation tradition.

Table 1

Types of differences	*Ps 110*	*Ps 8*	*1 Cor 15*
Incidental	ἕως		ἄχρι
	pronoun		–
Integrative	first and second person	second and third person	third person
Argument-enhancing	τοὺς ἐχθρούς	πάντα	πάντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς
	ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου	ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ	ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ

In addition to the brief extracts Paul cites from each of these psalms, it appears that the broader context of each also informs his train of thought in this passage. Paul explicitly makes use of Ps 110:1b to speak of enemies being subdued under Christ's feet, but there are additional verses in the psalm with similar motifs. Even if there are no further linguistic parallels, these motifs resonate with Paul's statements. Paul characterizes the reign of Christ as a process of coming to reign more fully over the enemies; his reign leads to the end (τέλος) when the hostile powers are brought to their proper place (1 Cor 15:24–25). The "until" language of Ps 110:1b is important for communicating this idea of Christ's reign as a process leading to the eschatological goal of subdued enemies, but v. 2b gives further momentum to his logic: "come to power in the midst of your enemies." Also, the defeat of "every ruler and every authority and power" (1 Cor 15:24) parallels descriptions in the psalm of "kings" and "heads" being shattered (Ps 110:5–6). With regard to Ps 8, there is also a strong basis for the idea that Paul is informed by the broader context of the brief statement he quotes. In this passage, Paul presents Christ as a second Adam (1 Cor 15:21–22) who acts as God's vice-regent (vv. 24–25). His logic here is likely based on Ps 8, a psalm celebrating God's creation

and speaking of a "human being" whom God places "over the works of [his] hands" (Ps 8:5–7). It is natural to understand this "human being" as Adam, to whom God gives authority as his vice-regent.[61] Because Paul interprets the psalm christologically, however, he can naturally attribute the Adamic role to Christ. Thus, it seems that Paul not only references brief statements from each psalm but also engages with their broader themes.

Having examined the presence of Pss 110 and 8 in this passage, we now inquire regarding Paul's dependence on tradition. Did the linking of the two psalms with reference to Christ's exaltation originate with him or precede him? One indication that Paul is drawing on an established tradition is his allusive manner of reference.[62] As mentioned above, he does not explicitly indicate that he is quoting scripture and he provides no introductory formula. At the same time, however, he expects his audience to recognize that he is quoting from a text when he immediately follows up his reference to Ps 8 with the words ὅταν δὲ εἴπῃ ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται ("now when it says that all things have been subjected") (v. 27). As de Boer rightly notes, Paul expects the audience to distinguish between the voice of the text ("it says") and his own voice.[63] The combination of an indistinct reference with an expectation that it will be recognized suggests that Paul is making use of commonly known material.

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[61] For evidence of widespread Jewish interpretation of Ps 8 with reference to Adam and the creation narratives, see Kinzer, "All Things," 40–95.

[62] Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, IBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 265.

[63] "Paul here signals that the sentence πάντα ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ in v. 27a is a quotation, something he knows his original Corinthian readers will recognize as such." (de Boer, "Resurrection Tradition," 640).

Even if the material was known because Paul taught it to the Corinthians when he was present with them, his in-person instruction was likely based on an established tradition. The opening of the chapter offers a parallel in this regard. Paul states that he is "reminding" the Corinthians of a tradition that he previously "handed on" to them (15:1–4). In the same way, Paul is probably reminding them of a psalmic exaltation tradition that he transmitted at an earlier time. It is noteworthy that the tradition to which he refers at the beginning of the chapter is a creed about Christ's death, burial, and resurrection "according to the scriptures" (vv. 3–4). Paul does not state which scriptures are in view, but the two psalms, which he understands to speak of the exalted status Christ gained through resurrection, may be among them.[64]

Other Exaltation Traditions

Was the psalmic exaltation the driving force behind this passage, or did it operate in tandem alongside other traditions? de Boer and others are inclined to see a single, fixed tradition from which Paul reproduced large chunks of material.[65] Part of de Boer's rationale is that there are multiple elements that are shared among the texts we are examining. His argument would be convincing if each passage did actually contain all or at least most of the same shared elements. Our analysis throughout this chapter of the various passages will demonstrate that there is significant variation, however. One does

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[64] Hays, *First Corinthians*, 265.

[65] Fitzmyer seems to regard de Boer's position favorably (Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 573). A similar position has been staked out by Walter Schmithals. Finding it a rule that Paul "transmits fixed traditions in their complete form," he argues that this passage attests to a detailed tradition with three elements: (1) God resurrected Jesus, (2) the resurrected Christ was elevated to God's right, and (3) Christ overcomes the ungodly powers. Walter Schmithals, "The Pre-Pauline Tradition in 1 Corinthians 15:20–28," *PRSt* 20 (1993): 368–70.

need a way to account for the similarities, but in light of the differences, positing a single tradition is an inadequate way to do so. I propose instead that a variety of traditions were in play in the early Christ movement and that some were frequently associated with one another. This explains why similar aspects would show up alongside one another in multiple passages.

There seem to be at least three other strands of tradition at work in 1 Cor 15:20–28. First, when Paul declares in v. 20, "Christ has been raised from the dead," he is echoing the ἐγήγερται of the creed mentioned in v. 4.[66] It is evident that Paul is invoking tradition in that instance inasmuch as he employs technical terms for tradition transmission: he speaks of having "received" (παρέλαβον) something which he then "handed on" (παρέδωκα) to the Corinthians (v. 3). The second and third traditions are suggested by concepts pertaining to exaltation that also appear in other Christ-movement writings. Second, the mention of "every ruler and every authority and power" (v. 24)[67] seems to be an expression of a common tradition about Christ's elevation above the powers. Similar lists of powers appear in other passages (Rom 8:38–39; Eph 1:21; Col 1:16; 2:10, 15) and the pre-Pauline Christ hymn presupposes a similar idea when it speaks of every knee bending to Christ (Phil 2:10). Third, the depiction of Christ reigning (v. 25) probably reflects a tradition that portrays Christ's exaltation by assigning a royal

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[66] Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 267; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 569.

[67] The precise identity of these powers has been a significant point of discussion. In addition to the common idea of angelic/demonic forces, other hypotheses include imperial powers and gentile deities. See Hays, *First Corinthians*, 265; Emma Wasserman, "Gentile Gods at the Eschaton: A Reconsideration of Paul's 'Principalities and Powers' in 1 Corinthians 15," *JBL* 136 (2017): 727–46.. Paul's point here does not depend on the precise identity, however. He is speaking of the powers as a comprehensive whole ("*every* ruler and *every* authority and power"), and he mainly wants to emphasize the power θάνατος. Cf. de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 122; Jeromey Martini, "An Examination of Paul's Apocalyptic Narrative in First Corinthians 15:20–28," *CTR* 8 (2011): 65.

status to him. Similar ideas can be seen statements that Christ was exalted as chief/prince (ἀρχηγός) (Acts 5:31) or that his resurrection meant designation as Davidic "Son of God" (Rom 1:3–4).

Function of the Exaltation Traditions

The various exaltation traditions that appear in 1 Cor 15:20–28 contribute toward Paul's purpose in this passage. His intent throughout 1 Cor 15 is to combat a denial of resurrection among some Corinthian believers (see v. 12). As I argue elsewhere,[68] Paul sees this denial as stemming from spiritualizing tendencies that minimize the importance of the body and of the physical creation (cf. 6:13–14), and so he responds by presenting in 15:20–28 a narrative that he hopes will challenge this perspective. In his narrative, death is a hostile power that, along with other powers, entered and marred God's good world, but God is at work in Christ to bring about their defeat. Paul is making an argument that death is a power that ought to be overcome and that will be overcome. The exaltation traditions, and Pss 110 and 8 in particular, enable him to make this case. As Paul interprets these psalms, they portray Christ being elevated over the enemy powers and reclaiming God's authority over the cosmos. If *all* the powers are subjected, Paul reasons, then death loses its dominion and the resurrection is assured.

[68] Jeffrey M. Dale, "First Corinthians 15:20–28 as an Eschatological Counter to Spiritualizing Tendencies," *Conversations with the Biblical World* 38 (2018): 76–98.

Ephesians 1

The Psalmic Exaltation Tradition

The appearance of the two psalms in Eph 1 is similar to their appearance in 1 Cor 15. In this passage as well, there are two brief references in close proximity to one another that are integrated into the flow of the passage. The author speaks of God's power

> which he put into operation in Christ, having raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand [Ps 110:1] in the heavenly places far above every ruler and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come, and he subjected all things under his feet [Ps 8:7] (Eph 1:20–22)

The parallels between this passage and 1 Cor 15 are significant enough that scholars have discussed a possible relationship between them, with at least three positions being articulated. First, some see direct dependence of Ephesians on 1 Corinthians as likely.[69] Second, others argue that the texts are related only as they independently make use of the same tradition.[70] Third, still others argue that prior tradition was responsible for linking the two psalms referenced in these passages, but that Ephesians is still dependent on 1 Corinthians.[71]

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[69] Stephen Francis Miletic, *"One Flesh": Eph. 5.22–24, 5.31; Marriage and the New Creation*, AnBib 115 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1988), 80–81; C. Leslie Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin, and Purpose* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 246–47; Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*, SNTSMS 69 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 206.

[70] Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 181; de Boer, "Resurrection Tradition," 644–47; Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 50.

[71] Lambrecht, "Paul's Christological Use," 508; Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians," *JSNT* 14 (1982): 40–42.

To begin adjudicating these views, it is important to acknowledge the striking similarities between the two passages and also to note their differences. They both (1) reference Pss 110 and 8; (2) refer to God's action in raising Christ; (3) use the terms ἀρχή, ἐξουσία, and δύναμις; (4) have the expression πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν ("all in all") as they reach their conclusion. Yet the differences are also significant. de Boer observes the following differences: (1) 1 Corinthians describes Christ's resurrection using a perfect passive indicative (ἐγήγερται) while Ephesians uses an aorist active participle (ἐγείρας); (2) Ps 110:1b appears in 1 Corinthians but not Ephesians; (3) Ps 110:1a appears in Ephesians but not 1 Corinthians; (4) some of the verbs taken from the psalms have ambiguous subjects in 1 Corinthians while God is clearly the subject in Ephesians; (5) "all in all" applies to God in 1 Corinthians and to Christ in Ephesians.[72] The differences can be described as slight variations within the parallels, as table 2 illustrates.

Table 2

Parallels between 1 Cor 15 and Eph 1	*Variations within the Parallels*	
	1 Cor 15	*Eph 1*
Christ's resurrection	ἐγήγερται	ἐγείρας
Ps 110	"until he puts all the enemies under his feet"	"seated him at his right hand"
Ps 8		
ἀρχή, ἐξουσία, and δύναμις		
verbs	ambiguous subjects	clear subjects
πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν	applies to God	applies to Christ

Two of the parallels are quite exact and lend credence to the idea that Ephesians is drawing on 1 Corinthians: both passages use identical powers terminology (ἀρχή,

[72] de Boer, "Resurrection Tradition," 645–46.

ἐξουσία, and δύναμις)[73] and quote Ps 8 identically (πάντα ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ).[74] This latter parallel is especially significant because Ephesians is reproducing Paul's modification of the LXX. As discussed above, Paul replaced ὑποκάτω with ὑπὸ to make the pair of psalms harmonize precisely.[75] By contrast, the modification to Ps 8 is superfluous in Ephesians since a different portion of Ps 110 is referenced. Still, Paul's wording for the Ps 8 reference is retained. The fact that there is an identical modification to the LXX even though it makes no difference for the argument in Ephesians provides compelling evidence that the author is reproducing wording from 1 Corinthians.[76]

One must adopt a nuanced position regarding Ephesians vis-à-vis 1 Corinthians, however. In light of the differences, de Boer is justified in rejecting the idea "that the author of Ephesians simply copied and annotated material taken from 1 Cor 15,20–28."[77] Yet it does not necessarily follow that the author was unfamiliar with the passage from 1 Corinthians, as de Boer apparently concludes. Most of the differences are fairly minor, such as a verb appearing in a different form or an expression having a different referent.[78] The most substantial difference is that the passages refer to different elements of Ps 110. In 1 Corinthians, the focus is on subjection of enemies; in Ephesians, the reference is to

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[73] Other passages have similar lists of powers, but none mirror one another so closely as these. Colossians 1:16 and 2:10 have ἀρχή and ἐξουσία; 1 Pet 3:22 has ἐξουσία and δύναμις. Only 1 Corinthians and Ephesians have all three terms (Ephesians also adds a fourth, κυριότης).

[74] The word γὰρ is inserted in 1 Corinthians, but it interrupts the citation only because it is a postpositive.

[75] The fact that no other passages display this modification suggests that it is Paul's change (followed in Ephesians), rather than something more widespread in tradition.

[76] Cf. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 66.

[77] de Boer, "Resurrection Tradition," 646.

[78] Both passages have the identical πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν. For comparison, Col 3:11 has the similar yet not identical expression πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν.

exaltation at God's right hand. It appears that the author of Ephesians recognized Paul's reference to Ps 110 but chose not to reproduce it. Instead, he used ἐν δεξιᾷ, an expression ultimately based on Ps 110 but differing from the LXX's ἐκ δεξιῶν. This is a standard variation that appears in many of other Christ-movement texts (Rom 8:34; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22), suggesting that the author is familiar with wider traditions.[79] In short, the differences are not so great as to preclude literary dependence, and the precise parallels noted above are difficult to account for without assuming this dependence. It is sensible to conclude that Ephesians is dependent on both 1 Corinthians and other sources of tradition.

Other Exaltation Traditions

The author's dependence on multiple sources of tradition is further indicated by the presence of other exaltation traditions alongside the psalmic exaltation tradition. It seems the author wishes to communicate the reality of Christ's elevated status in as many ways as possible. There is a fairly rhythmic quality to many of the lines in this passage, perhaps suggesting incorporation of hymnic or credal material.[80] Also, three elements are especially likely to have been sourced from tradition since they can be found either in multiple passages or in hymnic passages. First, the notion that Jesus's exaltation involves a heavenly location ("at his right hand in the heavenly places," Eph 1:20) is in line with

[79] Best, *Ephesians*, 172.

[80] This fact has even prompted discussion about the possibility of a distinct hymn underlying this passage. Most scholars find this idea unpersuasive, however, and speak of the incorporation of multiple credal, kerygmatic, catechetical, and/or liturgical elements. See, e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 157; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 50–52; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. Helen Heron (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 72.

traditional ideas expressed in many other NT texts (cf. Acts 1:9–11; 2:34; 3:21; Phil 3:20; 1 Thess 1:10; Heb 1:3; 4:14; 8:1; 1 Pet 3:22). Second, the description of elevation above "every name that is named" (Eph 1:21) is strikingly similar to the line from the Christ hymn about receiving "the name that is above every name" (Phil 2:9). Third, the mention of Christ as "head over all things in the church, which is his body" (Eph 1:22–23) matches with a different hymnic line: "And he is the head of the body, the church" (Col 1:18).[81]

Function of the Exaltation Traditions

The tradition appears in Eph 1 in a lengthy sentence that constitutes the author's thanksgiving and his prayer for the letter's recipients (vv. 15–23). In a pleonastic expression, the author prays that the readers might come to know "the surpassing greatness of [God's] power for us, the believers, according to the operation of the might of his strength" (v. 19). He then launches into describing how this power was put into effect in Christ's exaltation (vv. 20–23). The end of the paragraph zeroes in on the implications of this event for the church: "he subjected all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things in the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all in all" (vv. 22–23). Thus, the author is praying for believers to understand God's power as expressed in Christ in particular and how that power impacts their existence as a community.

[81] On these second and third elements, cf. Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, SP 17 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 219–21.

This prayer seems to prepare the way for the discourse of ch. 2, and I suggest that Pss 110 and 8 continue to play a role in that discourse. First, the author again echoes the language of Ps 110 but in this instance applies it to believers. Just as God "raised" Christ from the "dead" and "seated" him "in the heavenly places" (1:20), so also when we were "dead" in trespasses, God "raised" us and "seated" us "in the heavenly places" with Christ (2:5–6).[82] Second, the author employs language that resonates with the creation setting of Ps 8 as he seeks to promote unity among Jews and gentiles. He conceives of new creation as the work of Christ to bring diverse groups of people into a corporate whole, united as a new humanity in himself: "Having nullified the law of commandments in decrees, in order that in himself he might create [κτίσῃ] the two into one new humanity [εἰς ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον], making peace" (2:15; cf. v. 10). There seems to be an underlying pattern between 1:22–23 and 2:15. In the former, Christ and his church form a head-body entity in accordance with Christ's exaltation over creation. In the latter, there is a new ἄνθρωπος, consisting of the people of God in Christ, existing because of his creative activity. It is thus possible to interpret the prayer of 1:15–23 as preparing the way for the exposition of Jew-gentile unity in ch. 2.

We can thus see how exaltation traditions function in Eph 1. The author is praying that the letter's recipients would understand their place in God's plan, so he stresses Christ's exalted status because he sees it as having profound implications for their place in that unfolding plan. For them to understand that Christ is an exalted ruler over creation means understanding that Christ is at work to establish a new form of humanity. In this

[82] Thomas G. Allen, "Exaltation and Solidarity with Christ: Ephesians 1:20 and 2:6," *JSNT* 28 (1986): 103–20.

new humanity, a united people of God, consisting of both Jews and gentiles, can exist as the body of Christ in the world. In this passage, exaltation traditions demonstrate that Christ is Lord of this new form of humanity.[83]

Hebrews 1–2

The Psalmic Exaltation Tradition

The two psalms are used in Hebrews in a manner substantially different from what we have observed in the previous passages. Their presence is even more overt, but they are spread out over a larger section. In Heb 1:3, the influence of Ps 110:1 can be seen as the author states that once Christ completed his work of purification, "he sat at the right hand of the majesty in the heights." Then he provides a fuller citation of the psalm in v. 13:

> Sit at my right hand,
> until I put your enemies as a footstool for your feet.

This section is characterized by numerous quotations from the scriptures; the quotation in v. 13 comes at the end of a catena of citations (vv. 5–13) intended to demonstrate Christ's superiority over angels.[84] After a brief exhortation (2:1–4), the author quotes from Ps 8 at even greater length in 2:6–8:[85]

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[83] Cf. Urassa's comments on this passage: "The Risen Christ remains always an assuring hope for an eschatological true Adamic humanity. … The exalted Christ has been presented not only as an exalted redeemer over all the cosmic powers, but also enthroned as head of a New Covenantal People." Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 226, 229.

[84] Most of these citations are from the psalms and most are cited verbatim from the LXX: Ps 2:7; 2 Sam 7:14 // 1 Chron 17:13; Deut 32:43 with Ps 96:7; Ps 103:4; Ps 44:7–8; Ps 101:26–28; Ps 110:1.

[85] He cites three verses of Ps 8, although he omits v. 7a. "The omission may have been accidental, or the author may have abbreviated the text to focus on what was most important for interpretation." Craig

> What is the man that you remember him,
> or the son of man that you care for him?
> You made him lower for a little while than angels,
> with glory and honor having crowned him;
> all things you subjected under his feet.

These references give evidence of dependence on tradition as well as on the LXX. The brief "right hand" allusion in 1:3 is expressed in terms of the traditional formulation ἐν δεξιᾷ (see above discussion of this expression in Ephesians), whereas the more extended quotations match word-for-word with the LXX.

The presence of Pss 110 and 8 in this passage is clear, but is it fair to say that this is an instance of the two psalms being joined? The link is not so obvious because the two references are separated by several intervening verses and because a number of other texts are also cited, yet there is still reason to see the two as cited in tandem. First, it is clear that chs. 1 and 2 are part of the same discourse, since in 2:5 the author refers back to 1:6 "the coming world, concerning which we are speaking" (cf. οἰκουμένη in both texts). The words "concerning which we are speaking" imply that the discussion of ch. 1 is continuing in ch. 2. Second, Pss 110 and 8 are not merely two texts added to a host of others. Rather, Ps 110:1 is the epitome of the catena of passages about exaltation over angels, inasmuch as it surrounds the catena as an *inclusio* (Heb 1:3, 13).[86] Psalm 110 sums up the author's discourse about Jesus's exalted status, and then Ps 8 is added to

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R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 214.

[86] Psalm 110 is, of course, crucial for Hebrews in general: "While it is an exaggeration to say that the whole of Hebrews is a midrash on Ps 110, this scriptural text is of capital importance both for the literary structure and for the conceptuality of Hebrews." Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 46.

speak of the process by which Jesus was raised to that status.[87] Table 3 illustrates the way in which the psalmic references frame the author's discourse.

Table 3

1:3 Exaltation	Ps 110 allusion
1:4 Superiority over angels	
1:5–13 Demonstration of superiority	catena of quotations
1:13–14 Summation of exaltation	Ps 110 quotation
2:1–4 Hortatory interlude	
2:5–9 Process of exaltation	Ps 8 quotation

Other Exaltation Traditions

Psalms 110 and 8 play an important role in this passage in depicting Christ's exaltation, but, as is typical, they work in concert with other exaltation traditions. Some of the traditional motifs found in the previous passages we have examined are also present here. As in Ephesians, there is a heavenly tradition, which is expressed in this text in terms of Jesus taking his seat "in the heights" (1:3).[88] As in 1 Corinthians, there are traditions about the powers and a royal status. The former is presented here through references to "angels" (cf. Rom 8:38); the latter is expressed as the author designates Jesus a royal "son" (1:2)[89] and uses the terms "throne," "scepter," and "kingdom" (v. 8). Furthermore, the catena of passages in vv. 5–13 may come from a traditional source,

[87] Cf. Koester: "The movement from Ps 110:1 in Heb 1:13 to a proposition based on Ps 8 in Heb 2:5–9 may reflect a common connection between these texts" (Koester, *Hebrews*, 204).

[88] Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1993), 130.

[89] On "son" as a royal status gained by appointment, see G. B. Caird, "Son by Appointment," in *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke*, ed. William C. Weinrich (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 1:73–81.

since a very similar catena appears in 1 Clem. 36.3–5.[90] Even if the connection in this case is the result of 1 Clement following Hebrews, it is still likely that the linking of many of this catena's passages was present in earlier tradition.[91]

Function of the Exaltation Traditions

Exaltation traditions play an important role in this passage. The author is intent on establishing the supremacy of Christ, and he uses various traditions to present a narrative of temporary sub-angelic status and subsequent exaltation above the angels. When Christ assumed his exalted position, it was because he had "become" superior to the angels (1:4). At a specific point in time, he was appointed to an elevated position. For the author, Ps 110 (along with the other passages in the catena) makes the elevation above the angels clear: Christ enjoys a unique position at the right hand of God himself. Yet the reason he has attained this lofty position is that he became "lower for a little while than angels" (2:7). The author finds Ps 8 to show that humanity is destined to rule (vv. 5–8), so Christ comes to be exalted precisely because he is the representative human who has tasted death on behalf of all (v. 9). David M. Moffitt captures the logic of this passage:

> The thoroughgoing emphasis on the Son's humanity *serves as the explanation* for how the Son became eligible to be exalted to the divine throne and receive the worship of the angels. … Because the Son is a kind of second Adam to whom all things are subjected, God commands all the angels to worship him as he enters his rightful inheritance and takes his place on the throne promised to him.[92]

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[90] Martin C. Albl argues for this, observing that the two documents have different conceptions of Christ's high priesthood and that positing direct dependence does not account for 1 Clement's "abbreviations and adaptations." Albl, *Scripture Cannot*, 204.

[91] Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 50.

[92] David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NovTSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 142–43 (italics original).

1 Peter 3

The Psalmic Exaltation Tradition

The psalmic exaltation tradition makes a brief appearance at the very end of 1 Pet 3. The author declares that baptism saves believers

> through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God [Ps 110:1], who has gone into heaven, with angels and authorities and powers having been subjected to him [Ps 8:7]. (1 Pet 3:21–22)

Although this passage does not have abundant linguistic connections with the two psalms, it does contain the expressions that are most commonly associated with each of the two. There is the characteristic "right hand" (ἐν δεξιᾷ) reference, coming from Ps 110. Then immediately on its heels comes the mention of various powers "having been subjected" (ὑποταγέντων) to Christ, pointing to Ps 8. The fact that these standard terms appear in such close proximity in a passage about Christ's exaltation suggests that this is an instance of the psalmic exaltation tradition.

It is possible that this instance of the tradition was influenced by other written texts from the Christ movement. The author's dependence on a plethora of sources characterizes the letter in general.[93] The influence of Ephesians is especially plausible,[94] and Hebrews is another potential source.[95] In the case of the psalmic exaltation tradition,

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[93] The author is a "collector and transmitter of traditions," but "his creativity in shaping them into a coherent, powerful form of witness" is also evident. Carl R. Holladay, *Introduction to the New Testament: Reference Edition* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2017), 752.

[94] Parallels between the two letters: divine selection of believers (Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:1; 2:9), inheritance (Eph 1:14, 18; 5:5; 1 Pet 1:4), and household codes (Eph 5:22–6:9; 1 Pet 2:18–3:7).

[95] Parallels between the two letters: the motif of exiles (Heb 11:13; 1 Pet 1:1; 2:11), Christ as leading shepherd (Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 5:4), his once-for-all death (Heb 7:27; 9:26; 1 Pet 3:18), and his suffering on behalf of others (Heb 2:9; 1 Pet 3:18).

it may be that 1 Peter combines language from Ephesians and Hebrews in listing the powers that are subjected to Christ (1 Pet 3:22). In this text, the mention of "angels" matches with Hebrews while the reference to "authorities and powers" echoes the language of Ephesians.[96] Another resonance Ephesians is the conception of union with Christ in his exaltation. The implicit logic of this passage is that believers experience triumph over the powers along with Christ because his exalted status is something they share through baptism (v. 21). In other words, not only is Christ at the right hand of God (v. 22), but he has also brought believers to God (v. 18). As we saw above, the notion of union with Christ is an important feature in Ephesians: God "raised" Christ and "seated him at his right hand" (Eph 1:20) and also "raised us with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places" (2:6).

Other Exaltation Traditions

The psalmic exaltation tradition is not, in fact, the primary tradition in this passage. The passage appears to quote a hymn (3:18–19) and then interpret it (vv. 20–22).[97] The psalmic references appear only at the very end of the interpretation. The hymn reads as follows:

> For Christ also suffered once for all concerning sins,
> righteous one on behalf of unrighteous ones,
> in order that he might bring you to God,
> having been put to death in flesh,
> having been made alive in spirit,
> in which also to the spirits in prison

[96] These terms are plural in 1 Peter and singular in Ephesians, however.

[97] For surveys of the extensive discussion of traditional influences in this passage, see Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 241–43; Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter*, ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 247–50.

he went and proclaimed. (vv. 18–19)

Although this passage has many interpretive cruxes with which I cannot engage here, I will briefly present my understanding of the passage's logic. In the interpretation portion, the author explains the hymn by setting up a type/antitype schema that makes sense of triumph over the "spirits." When the spirits "disobeyed … in the days of Noah" (an apparent reference to the "sons of God" of Gen 6),[98] the situation was addressed when Noah and those with him "were saved through water" (1 Pet 3:20). In the same way, baptism is what "saves" Christ followers, and it does this through Christ's exaltation over "angels and authorities and powers" (vv. 21–22), which are presumably equivalent to the "spirits." Jesus's proclamation to the spirits seems to be explained in terms of subjugation of the powers to him. Also, it is through baptism that the believer comes to share in that triumph over the spirits. Christ's domination over powerful forces is key to the passage's logic, and this concept is supported by the various exaltation traditions working together.

Function of the Exaltation Traditions

The author of 1 Peter thus uses exaltation traditions to exhort believers to follow the pattern set by Christ. The purpose of the letter as a whole is to encourage perseverance through suffering, and this passage contributes to that purpose by pointing to Christ's suffering and exaltation. The verse immediately preceding it asserts, "It is better to suffer for doing good, if it is the will of God, than for doing evil" (1 Pet 3:17). This claim is then supported by pointing out that "Christ also suffered" as a "righteous

[98] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 256; Lewis R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 112.

one" (v. 18). The narrative does not end with suffering, however, but with exaltation. If followers of Christ are united with him in suffering, they can also confess their anticipation of union with him in exaltation.[99] Furthermore, because the systems of power have been subjected to Christ, believers can submit to human authorities without alarm. They are to accept that divine ordering is at work, even when they encounter rulers who persecute them (2:13–14) or slave-masters who treat them harshly (v. 18). If believers endure such suffering in the present time, they can be assured that God will exalt them at the proper time (5:6).

Polycarp, *To the Philippians* 2

The Psalmic Exaltation Tradition

The final text we consider in this chapter is one outside the NT, yet still within the stream of writings from the early Christ movement. Polycarp composed his letter, *To the Philippians*, in the wake of the death of Ignatius (cf. 9.1), who was probably martyred during the emperorship of Trajan (98–117 CE) or possibly that of Hadrian (117–138 CE).[100] This letter, then, was written not long after many of the NT documents and perhaps prior to a few of them. Before launching into the main topics of the letter, Polycarp mentions reasons why he rejoices (ch. 1) and then offers an exhortation

[99] "The vindication of Christ lays the basis for the vindication of the Christian believer, and Christ's vindication is total." J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC 49 (Waco: Word, 1988), 220–21.

[100] On the date of the letter, see Michael W. Holmes, "The Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians, Introduction," in *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 275–76.

regarding serving God (ch. 2). It is in this exhortation that he invokes the psalmic tradition:

> Therefore, having girded up the loins, serve God in fear and truth, leaving behind the empty, vain talk and the error of the masses, believing in the one who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and gave him glory and a throne at his right hand [Ps 110:1],
> to whom were subjected all things [Ps 8:7] heavenly and earthly,
> to whom every breathing creature renders service,
> who comes as judge of living and dead,
> whose blood God will require from those who disobey him. (*Phil.* 2.1)

In describing the exaltation of Christ, Polycarp includes the standard description from Ps 110 of Christ as at God's right hand. He also includes the traditional language about the subjection of all things, which originates in Ps 8. It is noteworthy that the reference to Ps 110 is phrased not as ἐν δεξιᾷ (as in Eph 1:20, Heb 1:3, and 1 Pet 3:22) but as ἐκ δεξιῶν, matching with the LXX. Either Polycarp intentionally used the LXX wording or he employed a source that harmonized with the LXX.

There is clear evidence that Polycarp, throughout his letter, was drawing on a plethora of traditions and writings from other early Christ followers. In the words of Bart D. Ehrman, "Polycarp devotes almost the entire letter to quoting or alluding to other early Christian authorities."[101] These authorities include some of the texts we have already considered. Dependence on 1 Peter is without question; several phrases in *Phil.* 2.1–2 are drawn directly from 1 Peter or borrowed with slight adaptation (see table 4 below).[102] The fact that several phrases in Polycarp's letter in the immediate context of the psalmic references are drawn from 1 Peter makes it highly probable that Polycarp was also

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[101] Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 481.

[102] In addition, some themes resonate strongly with 1 Peter: "judge of the living and the dead" (Pol. *Phil.* 2.1; cf. 1 Pet 4:5); "his will" (Pol. *Phil.* 2.2; cf. 1 Pet 2:15; 3:17; 4:2, 19).

influenced by 1 Peter in using the psalmic exaltation tradition. In addition, Polycarp was likely familiar with certain other texts containing the tradition, namely, 1 Corinthians and Ephesians.[103] For example, the vice list of *Phil.* 5.3 appears to draw from 1 Cor 6:9–10, and the statement "by grace you have been saved, not from works" (*Phil.* 1.3) quotes from Eph 2:8–9.[104] Polycarp, then, was at least aware of multiple letters that contain references to Pss 110 and 8 in tandem. It may be worth noting that Polycarp emphasizes resurrection, which is the main theme of 1 Cor 15, and he even states in succinct form what is the basic argument of that lengthy chapter: "The one who raised him [Christ] from the dead also will raise us" (*Phil.* 2.2).

Table 4

Pol. Phil. *2.1–2*	*1 Peter*
Διὸ ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὀσφύας (2.1)	Διὸ ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὀσφύας (1:13)
ἐν φόβῳ (2.1)	ἐν φόβῳ (1:17)
ἀληθείᾳ (2.1)	ἀληθείας (1:22)
πιστεύσαντες τὸν ἐγείραντα τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ δόντα αὐτῷ δόξαν (2.1)	τοὺς δι᾽ αὐτοῦ πιστοὺς εἰς θεὸν τὸν ἐγείραντα αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ δόξαν αὐτῷ δόντα (1:21)
μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας (2.2)	μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας (3:9)

Other Exaltation Traditions

In addition to drawing on written sources, Polycarp appears to have incorporated oral tradition as well. The rhythmic language in 2.1 is almost certainly an excerpt from a

[103] "As for early Christian writings, Polycarp seems to be particularly familiar with 1 Peter and *1 Clement* and also uses 1 Corinthians and Ephesians" (Holmes, "Polycarp," 273).

[104] Polycarp also explicitly signals his familiarity with other early Christ-movement writings when he mentions "Paul" and his "letters" in 3.2.

hymn or creed that was recited in worship. Albl explains: "The lengthy adjectival phrases describing Christ and God's work in Christ are not directly relevant to the context and indicate that Polycarp is quoting a fixed formula."[105] The psalmic language, in fact, appears as part of this rhythmic sequence. The hymnic/credal formula portrays Christ's exaltation in three moments. First, there was the point in the past at which Christ was raised from the dead and elevated to God's right hand, with all things subjected. Second, this past moment has ongoing implications for the present: "every breathing creature" renders service to Christ. Third, at a future eschatological moment he will come as judge, and people will be accountable to him.[106]

Function of the Exaltation Traditions

The function of exaltation traditions in Polycarp's letter is rather similar to their function in 1 Peter. This is not surprising, of course, given the general dependence of the former on the latter. In 1 Peter, the traditions were used as part of an exhortation to follow Christ's example, specifically in the context of suffering persecution. Polycarp carries over that same aspect (and quotes 1 Peter) as he calls the Philippians to avoid "repaying evil for evil and insult for insult" (*Phil.* 2.2). Yet he also broadens the concept of following the pattern set by Christ; followers of Christ are to "love the things he loved" (2.2). If believers follow the example of Christ in their present lives, they can expect a future glory that also corresponds with Christ's glory: "Serve God in fear and truth, … believing in the one who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and gave

[105] Albl, *Scripture Cannot*, 225; cf. Hay, *Glory*, 40.

[106] Hengel, "Right Hand," 167.

him glory and a throne at his right hand, to whom were subjected all things heavenly and earthly. … The one who raised him from the dead also will raise us, if we do his will and follow after his commandments and love the things he loved" (2.1–2). In other words, an exaltation such as Christ's offers a motivation for following him at the present time.

Conclusion

To sum up, this examination of five passages from writings of the early Christ movement suggests the existence of an identifiable tradition that linked Pss 110 and 8 as a means of speaking of Christ's exaltation. It was widespread enough to find a place in these several writings from different authors, and it was dynamic enough to be expressed differently in each text. The tradition must have begun as a result of the initial exegetical moves of positing that the two psalms (1) could be profitably be read as informing one another and (2) should be understood christologically. The early Christ followers probably engaged in this exegesis not primarily as an apologetic strategy but in a quest for greater understanding. As they sought to make sense of their convictions that the crucified one was also the exalted Christ, they mined their scriptures for insight.[107] The initial exegetical step then resulted in certain language from the two psalms becoming part of standard discourse about Christ's exaltation. The prevalence of "seated at the right hand" (Ps 110) and "subjection of all things" (Ps 8) terminology in the passages we have

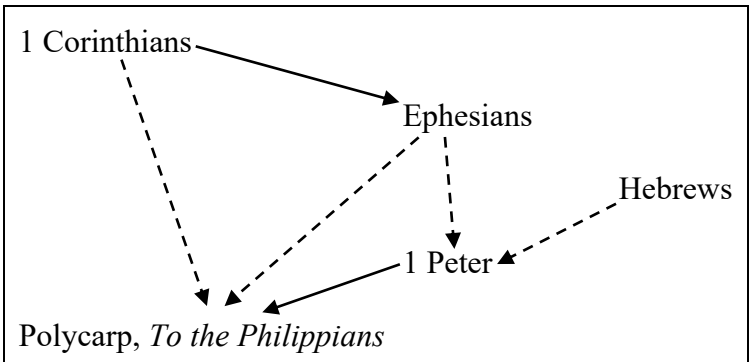
[107] "What stands at the heart of the kerygma—and thus at the beginning of Christian tradition—is the surprise that God's Messiah should appear as one who died on a cross. The resurrection did not efface the problem but placed it squarely in the path of those who sought to follow the crucified and risen Christ. God had vindicated the one who died as the King of the Jews. Their task was to understand how such things could be and what the implications were, and it led them to the Scriptures with a specific agenda." Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 29.

explored suggests that these motifs became the standard ones connected with this psalmic exaltation tradition.

The tradition, however, never became completely fixed or standardized. In the five passages we have explored, it was expressed in different ways and used for different purposes. Most of the texts include just a few key words in allusion to the psalms, but Hebrews quotes both psalms at length. Most texts reference Ps 110 to speak of the "right hand," but 1 Corinthians focuses on the "enemies" motif in this psalm. Some texts also seem to show an interest in the broader context of the psalms. In particular, the motifs of creation and humanity from Ps 8 appear to be important in 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Hebrews. Also, the psalmic exaltation tradition generally was used alongside other exaltation traditions, but the specific ones vary from passage to passage. For instance, 1 Peter quotes a hymn at length, while other texts briefly mention traditional concepts like Christ's royal status. Finally, the five passages employ exaltation traditions for a variety of ends. Paul in 1 Corinthians argues that Christ's exaltation guarantees future resurrection. The author of Ephesians sees his exaltation as a basis for Jew/gentile unity. In Hebrews, exaltation traditions establish the supremacy of Christ. For 1 Peter and Polycarp, similar traditions are useful in exhorting believers to follow the pattern of Christ.

While I appreciate de Boer's work in identifying NT instances of this tradition, my analysis of the texts suggests that he is incorrect in describing the tradition as both relatively fixed and independently accessed by the various authors. The four fixed elements he puts forward are simply not found consistently throughout the texts. The only text, in fact, that contains all four elements is Eph 1. It is difficult to describe the tradition

as fixed if one frequently resorts to speak of authors "rewriting" elements of it. de Boer construes the tradition as fixed because he finds many common elements among passages, but then he undercuts his own argument when he notes the significant differences in making a case that the passages are independent of one another. This argument about independence is also one that my analysis of the passages calls into question. There is a strong basis for concluding that Ephesians was dependent on 1 Corinthians and Polycarp on 1 Peter. In addition, other connections at least seem possible. (I have diagramed probable and possible connections in the figure below.) In short, I account for differences by positing that the psalmic exaltation tradition was dynamic, and I explain similarities by suggesting that certain text drew from earlier texts and that other distinct traditions were frequently associated with this tradition.



Notes:
1. Solid lines denote probable connections; broken lines denote possible connections.
2. Vertical position represents the approximate sequence of writings; horizontal position is arbitrary.

CHAPTER 3

POSSIBLE INSTANCES OF THE TRADITION

In this chapter, we consider passages which are possible instances of the psalmic exaltation tradition linking Pss 110 and 8 in order to assess more fully the impact these psalms had in the early Christ movement. Inasmuch as the majority of the references we examined in the previous chapter were indirect echoes rather than precise quotations, it has become apparent that these psalms were generally used in an allusive manner. What this means is that even passages with faint echoes can legitimately be considered instances of the tradition we have been tracing. In the course of examining the texts in this chapter, I make two distinct arguments. First, two additional Pauline passages (Phil 3 and Rom 8) ought to be considered instances of the psalmic exaltation tradition. Second, certain passages in the gospels and related literature are not instances of the tradition but nevertheless attest to its influence.

Philippians 3

In a hortatory passage at the end of Phil 3, Paul calls upon the Philippians to become "joint-imitators" along with him (v. 17) as he seeks to counter the influence of certain opponents. He characterizes these opponents as people "whose god is their belly and whose glory is in their shame" (v. 19). Paul sets up a series of three contrasts between the opposing sides, depicting them in parallel but starkly opposite terms. First,

his side consists of people who "walk" in imitation with him (v. 17) while the opposing side contains those who "walk" as "the enemies of the cross of Christ" (v. 18). Second, the opponents are "those setting their minds on earthly things" (v. 19) while he and his supporters are those whose "citizenship is in the heavens" (v. 20). Third, there is an eschatological contrast. For the opponents, their "end is destruction" (v. 19). For those with citizenship in heaven, it is from there that "we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humiliation, making it conformed to the body of his glory according the power which enables him to subject to himself all things" (v. 21). Let us now consider how Paul employs exaltation traditions in this passage.

It is important to acknowledge that the primary exaltation tradition exerting an influence is the pre-Pauline Christ hymn which Paul cited in Phil 2. Paul made that hymn an important piece of his exhortation in ch. 2, and now in ch. 3 he continues to exploit its language. The hymn was framed in terms of imitating Christ ("have the same mindset in you which was also in Christ Jesus," 2:5), and now Paul exhorts the Philippians to become "joint-imitators" with him (3:17).[108] The hymn presented the cross as the nadir in Christ's experience of humiliation (2:8), so Paul here denounces "the enemies of the cross of Christ" (3:18). He is characterizing his opponents, in other words, as people who fail to imitate the Christ-pattern of cruciform existence. The hymn concluded with the confession, κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς (2:11), and now Paul uses the same expression to

[108] "The understanding of the hymn lies behind Paul's references to becoming a fellow imitator with him." Steven J. Kraftchick, "A Necessary Detour: Paul's Metaphorical Understanding of the Philippian Hymn," *HBT* 15 (1993): 27.

refer to Jesus (κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, 3:20). Finally, the exalted existence of Christ (2:9–11) can be appropriately summarized in terms of a "body of his glory" (3:21).[109]

Although the Christ hymn is primary for communicating Christ's exaltation here, there also seem to be echoes of Pss 110 and 8. Echoes of Ps 8 are fairly discernible in the statement about "the power which enables him to subject to himself all things" (v. 21). This expression contains the verb ὑποτάσσω and the term τὰ πάντα, which are the two terms most characteristic of references to Ps 8 in early Christ-movement texts.[110] As in 1 Cor 15, so in this passage the psalm is used to portray the expectation of transformed eschatological existence, which is made possible as Christ comes to exercise dominion over "all things." The human body is redeemed from a state of "humiliation" and becomes like Christ's resurrected body. The description of Christ's existence with the words "the body of his glory" (τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης) (Phil 3:21) may not stem directly from Ps 8, but it does at least resonate with the post-resurrection status of "glory" that Christ enjoys according to the christological reading of the psalm.[111]

The presence of Ps 110 is much less obvious, yet a case can be made for its influence here.[112] Paul depicts his opponents as "the enemies" (τοὺς ἐχθροὺς) (Phil 3:18),

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[109] For additional parallels, see Neal Flanagan, "A Note on Philippians 3,20–21," *CBQ* 18 (1956): 8–9.

[110] John Reumann states that Paul is quoting from Ps 8 and from "himself at 1 Cor 15:27," since he previously used these psalmic terms in that text. Reumann rightly points out, however, that there is a difference between the two Pauline texts: in 1 Corinthians God is the one who subjects all things, while in Philippians it is Christ who performs this action. John Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 600.

[111] Cf. Kinzer: "Phil 3:21 alludes to Ps 8 in its portrayal of Christ's resurrection glory and in its description of his authority over all things" (Kinzer, "All Things," 224).

[112] I recognize that most interpreters do not see a reference to Ps 110 in this passage. Kinzer, for example, finds it significant to note that "Ps 8 is employed apart from Ps 110:1" here (Kinzer, "All Things," 224). C. E. Hill, on the other hand, thinks that both psalms are referenced. See C. E. Hill, "Paul's Understanding of Christ's Kingdom in I Corinthians 15:20–28," *NovT* 30 (1988): 313.

a crucial term from Ps 110. Not only does this term appear in another Pauline passage making use of the psalmic exaltation tradition (1 Cor 15:25–26), but it is the aspect that Paul particularly stresses in that passage. Furthermore, Paul conceives of the enemies here in a cosmic sense. In a confrontation between earth and heaven, they are on the earthly side opposing the heavenly Christ. This matches with the christological reading of Ps 110, in which Christ has been exalted to God's right hand to subdue the enemies. When Paul speaks of "the heavens … from where also we await a savior" (Phil 3:20), he is presupposing the heavens as the location associated with Christ's present exaltation.

To sum up, there is a strong basis for considering Phil 3 to be an instance of the psalmic exaltation tradition. It is clear that the primary impetus for exaltation language in this passage is the Christ hymn from the previous chapter, but it appears that Paul is also echoing the two psalms along with his reflections on that hymn.

Romans 8

Whereas in Phil 3 an allusion to Ps 8 is fairly clear and echoes of Ps 110 are more obscure, the reverse is true for Rom 8. A reference to Ps 110 is evident as Paul uses the standard "right hand" language as a shorthand for Christ's present exalted status: "Christ Jesus is the one who died, and even more, who has been raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes on our behalf" (Rom 8:34).[113] Echoes of Ps 8 in Rom 8 are less certain, but three appear probable: v. 18 speaks of "glory" (δόξαν), v. 20 uses

[113] As do other authors (see discussion in chapter 2), Paul uses language from tradition (ἐν δεξιᾷ) rather than the language of the LXX (ἐκ δεξιῶν).

subjection language (ὑπετάγη, ὑποτάξαντα), and v. 32 makes a statement about "all things" (τὰ πάντα).

These echoes admittedly are fairly faint, but they are made probable by the fact that the psalm's creation motif matches with the focus in Rom 8 on redemption as renewal of creation.[114] The subjection in v. 20 is unusual among passages echoing Ps 8 in that creation is here subjected not to humanity or to Christ but rather "to futility." This is equivalent to creation being enslaved to decay (v. 21); creation has come under the power of disorderly forces that undermine its goodness. Yet all this is part of the long-range plan of redemption. Subjection to futility is a step toward the eschatological renewal. In Paul's terms, creation has been subjected in hope that it will eventually be set free and enjoy the glorious destiny of God's children (vv. 18–21). The presence of this eschatological horizon makes it likely that Paul is deliberately using the language of Ps 8 in this passage, since elsewhere he interprets the psalm with reference to the eschatological work of Christ (1 Cor 15:26–28; Phil 3:20–21). In the present passage, Paul is not expositing the psalm but is simply using its language to construct a narrative about God's cosmic plan. Kinzer aptly captures the way Paul uses the psalm as he describes Rom 8:18–21 as "an eschatological meditation on Ps 8."[115]

The echoes in vv. 18–21 prepare the way for further resonances in the chapter's closing paragraph, vv. 31–39. τὰ πάντα ("all things") in v. 32 is best understood here not in a generic sense but more specifically as a reference to creation, inasmuch as this reading matches with the preceding context as well as with the sense of τὰ πάντα

[114] The noun κτίσις appears four times in vv. 19–22 and is repeated again at the close of the passage in v. 39.

[115] Kinzer, "All Things," 239.

elsewhere in the Pauline corpus (Rom 11:36, 1 Cor 8:6, 11:12, 15:27–28).[116] And if τὰ πάντα refers to creation, it is probably a further echo of Ps 8. This idea is strengthened by the general thrust of the paragraph, which resembles the logic connected with Ps 8 in other passages. Paul offers assurance that nothing is powerful enough to separate the believer from Christ, and he makes this assurance more concrete by enumerating various cosmic realities ("neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor present things, nor coming things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing," vv. 38–39). The implicit reasoning is that none of these things can cause separation because Christ is supreme over them, a notion that sounds very much like interpretations of Ps 8 in other early Christ-movement writings.[117]

Although the two psalms appear here in dissimilar ways—Ps 110 makes a brief appearance while Ps 8 subtly suffuses much of the passage—there are grounds for seeing this text as a manifestation of the exaltation tradition linking them. First of all, we know that Paul employed the tradition elsewhere (certainly in 1 Cor 15 and likely in Phil 3). Additionally, the logic of the passage depends on the joining of language from both psalms. According to v. 32, God gives "all things" because the gift of "all things" is bound up with the gift of Christ (τὰ πάντα is given σὺν αὐτῷ). And the believer can be assured of permanent union with Christ precisely because Christ's right-hand location (v. 34) guarantees his supremacy over anything that would threaten to separate the believer

[116] James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, WBC 38A (Dallas: Word, 1988), 502.

[117] Note especially that many of these other writings include a similar list of cosmic powers (e.g., 1 Cor 15:24–28; Eph 1:21–22; 1 Pet 3:22). Paul likely incorporates various traditions in this passage. Arland J. Hultgren rejects the idea that the passage itself is an appropriated hymn, but he suggests that "the passage contains liturgical, hymnic, and confessional elements which have been brought together by the apostle." Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 335.

from him (vv. 35–39). In short, Christ's exaltation is what ensures that the believer is united with him and therefore shares in that exaltation. The "all things" and "right hand" echoes from Pss 8 and 110 work in tandem to supply the logic for this argument. As James D. G. Dunn explains, the two psalmic texts merge together to describe "a sharing in Christ's lordship."[118]

Mark 12 and Matthew 22

These parallel gospel passages do not merely contain allusive references; they are ostensibly citing Ps 110:1 directly. The larger narrative context is a controversy scene in which Jesus is depicted outmatching the various groups that challenge him with difficult questions. As a climax, he poses his own riddle, a question about how the Messiah can be David's son if David calls him lord (Mark 12:35–37 // Matt 22:41–45). In the course of explaining that David acknowledges the lordship of the Messiah, Jesus cites what appears simply to be Ps 110:1. Closer examination, however, reveals a divergence from that psalm that likely reflects the influence of Ps 8:7. A comparison of the LXX and the Matthean/Markan citation reveals two differences (see table 5). The first is insignificant: the article before κύριος in the first line is absent. The second is more substantial: ὑποπόδιον is replaced with ὑποκάτω in the fourth line. To state it in English, the psalm's "until I put your enemies as a *footstool* for your feet" becomes "until I put your enemies *under* your feet." This alteration first appears in Mark, and then it is carried over in Matthew. Luke, by contrast, does not follow Mark but reverts to the ὑποπόδιον terminology of the LXX (Luke 20:42–43).

[118] Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 502.

Table 5

Ps 110:1	*Mark 12:36 // Matt 22:44*
Εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου	εἶπεν κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου·
Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου,	κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου,
ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου	ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου
ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου.	ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν σου.

This second change might also appear fairly insignificant at first glance, but it is important in providing a window into the ubiquity of the connection between Pss 110 and 8. It is not simply that the footstool metaphor is replaced with something less concrete; what is crucial to recognize is that ὑποκάτω is a term from Ps 8:7.[119] It is also worth noting that ὑποκάτω is by no means a commonly-used preposition; it appears only eight times in the NT other than in these texts and in an explicit quotation of Ps 8 in Heb 2:8. How should its appearance here be explained? One possibility is that Mark is intentionally bringing Ps 8 into his ostensible citation of Ps 110. This is unlikely, however; there is no particular contribution that Ps 8 makes to the passage, since the reason for the citation is to bring out the lordship dimension that is a feature only of Ps 110. What seems more probable than Mark purposefully including an echo of Ps 8 is that he quotes Ps 110 from memory and, without realizing it, includes a word belonging to Ps 8. One can easily imagine that he was so used to hearing the two psalms referenced together that he lapsed into the wording of one while quoting the other.[120] It seems, then,

[119] Hay finds the possibility that the difference is based on a divergent underlying text to be unlikely: "This deviation in Mark and Matthew may betoken the use of different Greek versions, but more probably it reflects conflation of Ps 110.1 and Ps 8.7." Hay, *Glory*, 35. Cf. Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 579; Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 846–47.

[120] If one supposes the existence of collections of *testimonia*, still another possibility is that Mark is quoting from a collection that conflates the two psalms. See Albl, *Scripture Cannot*, 227, 236n111.

that we find in Mark 12 and Matt 22 further evidence that the linking of the two psalms was widespread. Although these passages do not deal directly with exaltation and probably do not intend to join the two psalms, they provide indirect attestation to the prevalence of the psalmic exaltation tradition.

Right Hand and Son of Man

Several early Christ-movement texts contain a pair of motifs that possibly reflect the influence of the tradition linking Pss 110 and 8. Each text in this cluster contains the expression "right hand" along a reference to Jesus as "Son of Man":

> And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power and coming with the clouds of heaven." (Mark 14:62)
>
> Jesus said to him, "You said. Nevertheless I say to you, from this time you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matt 26:64)
>
> But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." (Acts 7:55–56)
>
> And he answered with a loud voice, "Why do you ask me concerning the Son of Man, who also is sitting in heaven on the right hand of the great power, and who is about to come on the clouds of heaven?" (Hegesippus, cited in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.13)

The "right hand" references, of course, ultimately go back to Ps 110. The "Son of Man" references, on the other hand, require more discussion. The expression "son of man" does appear in Ps 8:5, so it is possible as a source. Yet Dan 7:13–14 is a more likely candidate, especially since most of the above texts mention "clouds," an important image from Dan 7.

What seems even more likely, however, is that these authors' use of "Son of Man" terminology is not driven directly by either Ps 8 or Dan 7. Since this term became a common christological title, many Christ followers would have employed it on the basis of traditions that were not explicitly connected to specific passages. At an earlier stage, probably both texts contributed to the development of a "Son of Man" tradition, but eventually the tradition would not have been so closely tied to these passages. Albl posits that there were two distinct Son of Man traditions—a "heavenly" Son of Man tradition based on Dan 7 and a "representative human" Son of Man tradition based on Ps 8[121]—but this distinction seems to reflect a modern desire for precision that did not necessarily characterize the practices of first- and second-century interpreters. Instead, since early Christ followers read Pss 110 and 8 and Dan 7 in similar ways (i.e., as exaltation texts with reference to Christ), they likely viewed these texts as sharing the same set of ideas and did not draw sharp distinctions between them.[122] Their language then became an integral part of christological discourse and came to function apart from explicit textual references. So while some authors of the above texts may have in mind psalmic and/or Danielic passages, the majority are probably drawing on ideas they recognize as scriptural but do not necessarily associate with specific passages.

Even if the psalmic references in these texts are very indirect, there is a sense in which they can still be regarded as significant. They attest to the fact that certain expressions such as "Son of Man" and "right hand" became so ingrained in the discourse of Christ followers that their scriptural origins perhaps often went unacknowledged. Yet

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[121] Albl, *Scripture Cannot*, 228–29.

[122] Cf. the discussion of shared patterns in these texts in Giles, "Son of Man," 329; Wright, "Son of Man," 79–82.

the very fact that such language became ubiquitous attests to the prominence of scriptural traditions. The psalms and other passages provided a substratum for discourse about Jesus, appearing in many different texts from the Christ movement. The texts considered in this section are not to be regarded as instances of the psalmic exaltation tradition, but they do provide indirect evidence of its widespread influence.

Conclusion

The analysis of these passages further confirms that the psalmic exaltation tradition was widespread and dynamic. Concluding that Phil 3 and Rom 8 to be instances of the tradition, we find two additional extant texts in which it found expression. We also find further evidence of its widespread geographical reach, since these writings were sent to Philippi and Rome. Furthermore, the fact that these passages contain only faint echoes reinforces the notion that this tradition was not fixed but could be employed in different ways. Finally, a Markan/Matthean text and a cluster of texts combing "right hand" and "Son of Man" terminology provide evidence that the psalmic exaltation tradition exerted an influence in ways that go beyond its explicit expression. We can conclude that the two psalms—especially in conjunction with one another—came to be deeply implanted in the thinking and theological expression of early Christ followers, especially as they sought to articulate their christological understandings. What came to be traditional ways of telling the Christ narrative were so indebted to the psalmic language that it would have seemed unnatural to think of this narrative without reference to such language. In a word, Pss 110 and 8 came to have a bedrock influence in the early Christ movement, such that traces of both psalms could show up even in texts not explicitly making reference to them.

CHAPTER 4

THE PSALMIC EXALTATION TRADITION AND THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD[123]

The tradition in the early Christ movement that linked Pss 110 and 8 was apparently quite successful, even among gentile audiences. Why did this very Jewish tradition continue to meet with success as it went out to the largely non-Jewish audiences of these Christ-movement writings? The Jewishness of the tradition has been amply demonstrated by a number of scholars. For example, Kinzer surveyed ancient Jewish engagement with Ps 8 and noted specific ways in which NT authors appear to draw on Jewish exegetical traditions.[124] While scholars have devoted considerable attention to exploring the psalmic tradition against its Jewish background, Greco-Roman parallels remain largely unexplored. Hay ventured into the Greek world, but only in a brief footnote. As he dealt with a cluster of NT texts that use the "right hand of God" imagery in connection with the eschatological judgment, he observed a potential parallel in the frequent depictions of Dike, the goddess of justice, sitting at the right hand of Zeus.[125]

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[123] Throughout this chapter, classical writings and their translations are taken from the Loeb Classical Library and inscriptions are sourced from the Packard Humanities Institute database "Searchable Greek Inscriptions: A Scholarly Tool in Progress."

[124] Kinzer, "All Things." Also, the very fact that it was psalms from the Hebrew scriptures which early Christ followers co-opted to speak about Christ attests to the distance from that with which Greco-Roman audiences were familiar. Hengel points out, "The Jewish ψαλμός was fundamentally different from the Greek hymn to the gods with its strict metre." Martin Hengel, "Hymns and Christology," in *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), 78.

[125] Hay, *Glory*, 127n16.

Hay's analysis of a Greek parallel is the exception among studies of the psalmic tradition, yet it seems that devoting attention to the Greco-Roman background could yield new insights. Such study might be particularly helpful in shedding light on why such a thoroughly Jewish tradition was favorably received by certain non-Jewish audiences.

I suggest that one reason the psalmic tradition continued to be successful was because of resonances with Greco-Roman notions that helped mitigate the strangeness of the tradition. Gentile audiences could see the tradition as a meaningful way to speak about Christ's significance because it paralleled notions with which they were familiar. This chapter can be regarded as a foray into an area that would benefit from more detailed consideration. Here I explore the fruitfulness of considering the psalmic tradition against Greco-Roman backgrounds by looking at one NT text, 1 Cor 15:20–28,[126] and one Greco-Roman cult, that of Isis. After briefly introducing the Pauline text and presenting evidence for the influence of the cult in Corinth, I will propose two ways that conceptions of Isis resonate with 1 Cor 15: both involve a focus on the afterlife and notions of supreme, exalted rulership. I do not argue that Paul deliberately crafted his letter with these parallels in mind; I suggest, rather, that Christ followers at Corinth could have noted the parallels and could have been more receptive to Paul's claims as a result.[127]

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[126] As discussed in chapter 2, this is the earliest surviving passage attesting to linking of the two psalms in the early Christ movement.

[127] My interests differ from those of many other studies comparing the mysteries and the early Christ movement. Much space has been devoted to discussing the possibility of a genetic relationship between the two. While older works frequently posited a dependence on the mysteries for early Christian doctrine and practices, more recent studies generally argue against this sort of direct influence. See, e.g., Jan N. Bremmer, *Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World*, Münchner Vorlesungen zu Antiken Welten 1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 147–54; Terri Moore, *The Mysteries, Resurrection, and 1 Corinthians 15: Comparative Methodology and Contextual Exegesis* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress

A Corinthian Text and a Corinthian Cult

Having already discussed 1 Cor 15:20–28 in chapter 2, we consider it here only briefly. These verses are part of Paul's lengthy argument for the resurrection of the dead that spans the entire chapter. In this particular portion of the argument, he presents an eschatological scenario in which God is at work to bring about the defeat of death and other hostile powers. According to Paul, subjugation of the powers occurs by means of Christ's post-resurrection reign, and it is psalmic language that communicates this:

> For he must reign until he puts all the enemies under his feet. (1 Cor 15:25; cf. Ps 110:1)
>
> For he subjected all things under his feet. (1 Cor 15:27; cf. Ps 8:7)

The "all" language is crucial for Paul's argument. "All the enemies" are defeated; "all things" are subdued under Christ's feet. Paul reasons that if *all* powers are brought into their proper place, then even death, the "last" (ἔσχατος) or ultimate enemy (v. 26), loses its dominion. Thus, Paul makes use of the psalmic tradition as part of his larger resurrection argument. The dead will be raised because death is a power over which Christ comes to reign supreme.

We turn now to a discussion of the Greco-Roman cult of Isis. Devotion to this Egyptian deity spread throughout the Mediterranean world during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Isis worship in the Greek world began as early as the archaic period, but it was during the time when the Ptolemies ruled Egypt that a thoroughly Hellenic Isis cult emerged, with the Isis/Osiris pair eventually becoming an Isis/Sarapis duo.[128] Yet there

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Academic, 2018), 111–12. In the present chapter, I make no attempt to consider such issues. My focus is simply on understanding the environment in which the message about Christ was received.

[128] See R. E. Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 46–58.

was a deliberate attempt to maintain Egyptian elements. For example, as Greek temples for Isis appeared in the fourth and third centuries BCE, they were constructed next to rivers or at least water sources such as wells in order to perform rites that reflected Isis's connection with the Nile.[129] Two developments should be noted that occurred as Isis moved beyond the initial Egyptian context. First, Isis devotion took on the expression of a mystery cult. This fact is evident from various sources (Plutarch, *Is. Os.*; Apuleius, *Metam.*; aretalogies of Maroneia and Kyme), but the one that describes initiation in greatest detail is Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*, a Latin novel also known as *The Golden Ass*. Our discussion below will prioritize this source both because of its connection with Corinth and because it makes sense to concentrate on a written text when engaging in comparative study with other texts (i.e, writings from the early Christ movement).[130] Another change was the syncretistic identification of Isis with other divine figures, especially Demeter, Aphrodite, Artemis, and Tyche.[131] The identification with Demeter began early and became particularly ubiquitous.[132]

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[129] Martin Bommas, "Isis, Osiris, and Serapis," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, ed. Christina Riggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 428.

[130] Although written in the mid-second century CE, it is still useful for discussions focused on the first century, as Moore argues, because there are similarities between Apuleius and earlier writers and because there was general stability and continuity in Isis devotion during this period (Moore, *The Mysteries*, 59).

[131] Birgitte Bøgh, "The Graeco-Roman Cult of Isis," in *The Handbook of Religions in Ancient Europe*, ed. Lisbeth Bredholt Christensen, Olav Hammer, and David A. Warburton, European History of Religions (London: Routledge, 2014), 229.

[132] "This town is in the middle of the Egyptian Delta, and there is in it a very great temple of Isis, who is in the Greek language, Demeter" (Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.59). "For the rite of Osiris is the same as that of Dionysus and that of Isis very similar to that of Demeter, the names alone having been interchanged" (Diodorus, *Lib. Hist.* 1.96.5). See also Vincent Arieh Tobin, "Isis and Demeter: Symbols of Divine Motherhood," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 28 (1991): 187–200.

There is impressive evidence for the cult of Isis at Corinth, including sanctuaries, inscriptions, coins, statues, and figurines.[133] Pausanias, writing in the second century CE, describes multiple precincts of Isis and Sarapis (*Descr.* 2.4.6). These have not yet been discovered, but Smith surmises that they are in an area that remains unexcavated, a notion supported by a tripod found nearby which was dedicated to Isis and Sarapis. Inasmuch as the tripod is dated to the Hellenistic period, there is an indication of Isis worship in the same location over a considerable period of time.[134] It is also possible that Pausanias's mention of "precincts" indicates a focus "on the location itself rather than any structure."[135] Two Isis shrines that have been excavated are a small "chapel" connected to a shop in Corinth and a sanctuary at nearby Kenchreai. Pausanias mentions the Kenchreai sanctuary as well (*Descr.* 2.2.3). Additionally, numismatic evidence from the second and third centuries involves four types of images which appear on eleven coins.[136] Finally, attestation to the importance of Isis at Corinth in the second century comes from Apuleius's novel. This narrative, which involves the character Lucius becoming a donkey and finally being transformed into a human again, climaxes with his transformation when he arrives at Kenchreai in the "territory of the Corinthians" (*Metam.* 10.35) and encounters Isis herself (11).

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[133] Dennis Edwin Smith, "The Egyptian Cults at Corinth," *HTR* 70 (1977): 201–31.

[134] Smith, "Egyptian Cults," 212, 217–18.

[135] Moore, *The Mysteries*, 87.

[136] See Laurent Bricault and Richard Veymiers, "Isis in Corinth: The Numismatic Evidence; City, Image and Religion," in *Nile into Tiber: Egypt in the Roman World; Proceedings of the IIIrd International Conference of Isis Studies, Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University, May 11–14 2005*, ed. Laurent Bricault, Miguel John Versluys, and Paul G. P. Meyboom (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 392–413.

Clearly, the Isis cult was successful at Corinth in the second and third centuries CE, but can the same be said for the first century? The evidence is slimmer, but an inscription and two terracotta figurines are dated to the first century CE.[137] Since such figurines were often mass-produced, they are indicative of widespread use. Furthermore, consideration of networks adds support for the influence of Isis at Corinth. The primary way in which the cult of Isis spread was through travelers such as merchants, mercenaries, and sailors.[138] And Corinth, with easy access to multiple ports, was certainly a place that maritime merchants frequented.[139] It is not just that some merchants happened to be Isis devotees; rather, colleagues would form voluntary associations that incorporated religious rituals in order to ensure success and safety at sea. Isis was important in this regard especially for the transport of Egyptian grain.[140] In short, the evidence does not permit us to speak conclusively about the influence of Isis in first-century Corinth, but there is reason to suspect it was appreciable. As we now consider the afterlife and supreme rulership, we will first examine Apuleius as evidence for Isis at Corinth and then move to broader evidence suggesting that Corinth was not unique but participated in understandings shared throughout the Greco-Roman world.

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[137] Smith, "Egyptian Cults," 217–18, 224.

[138] Jodi Magness, "The Cults of Isis and Kore at Samaria-Sebaste in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods," *HTR* 94 (2001): 162.

[139] Note the description of "the many who each year put in at Cenchreae as traders or pilgrims or envoys or passing travellers" (Dio Chrysostom, [*Cor.*] 8). At the head of this list stands ἔμπορος, the trader or merchant.

[140] Sandra Blakely, "Maritime Risk and Ritual Responses: Sailing with the Gods in the Ancient Mediterranean," in *The Sea in History: The Ancient World*, ed. Philip de Souza and Pascal Arnaud (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2017), 364. For a detailed study of Isis networks, see Robert A. Wortham, "Urban Networks, Deregulated Religious Markets, Cultural Continuity and the Diffusion of the Isis Cult," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 18 (2006): 103–23.

Isis and the Afterlife

The role of Isis as it pertains to the human afterlife is a feature of the Isis mysteries. And our best-preserved source for her mysteries is, in fact, Apuleius's novel. The story describes in significant detail the various preparations for initiation: following priestly directions, bathing, abstaining from certain foods and from wine, and being clothed in a linen robe (*Metam.* 11.20–23). Then, although prevented from revealing the secrets of the initiation itself, Apuleius alludes to it as he mentions reaching "the boundary of death" and "in the middle of the night" seeing "the sun flashing with bright light" (11.23). The expression "boundary of death" provides a hint that the post-mortem dimension is involved, but the clearest expression of the impact of initiation on the afterlife was stated earlier. Prior to undergoing the experience of initiation, Lucius has been assured by Isis herself, "You will live in happiness, you will live in glory, under my guardianship. And when you have completed your life's span and travel down to the dead, there too, even in the hemisphere under the earth, you will find me" (11.6). From this text it is clear that the mysteries of Isis involved multifaceted benefits—success and satisfaction throughout life and continued existence in the afterlife.[141] In this way, the cult of Isis was similar to many other mystery cults. One feature that Jan N. Bremmer identifies as characteristic among mystery cults is "rewards promised for this life and that of the next."[142]

Moving beyond Corinth, there is further evidence for Isis-devotion involving mysteries which bring benefits both before and after death. One important type of

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[141] Cf. Bøgh, "Cult of Isis," 230.

[142] Bremmer, *Initiation*, xii.

evidence for Isis in the Greco-Roman world is a set of aretalogies, hymns praising Isis.[143] Aretalogies from Maroneia (I. Aeg. Thrace E205) and Kyme (IK Kyme 41) both speak of initiation, and the former also refers to "salvation" (σωτηρίας), which probably encompasses all the multifaceted benefits she brings. Regarding the post-mortem role of Isis, consider a comment by Plutarch that Isis's power is "greatest in the regions above the earth and beneath the earth" (*Is. Os.* 27). The underworld power of Isis likely indicates her ability to affect the destinies of individuals in the afterlife. Finally, a Bithynian tomb inscription (IK Prusa ad Olympum 1028) from the late Hellenistic to early Roman period attests to this sort of conviction. The inscription declares that, thanks to Isis, someone named Meniketes went to the harbor of happiness rather than the dark road to Acheron (river of woe) upon death.

Regarding the afterlife component, comparison with the Eleusinian mysteries of Demeter and Persephone is also instructive. Demeter and Isis were frequently associated, as discussed above, and Plutarch associates Isis with Persephone as well (*Is. Os.* 27). The worship of these deities was also very prominent at Corinth.[144] As with Isis, the mysteries of Demeter and Persephone provided benefits for both the present and the future.

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[143] "An aretalogy is a laudatory description of the miraculous power (*arete*) of a god." H. S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 173 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 283. For an accessible introduction to the different types of Isis aretalogies, see Paraskevi Martzavou, "Isis Aretalogies, Initiations, and Emotions: The Isis Aretalogies as a Source for the Study of Emotions," in *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World*, ed. Angelos Chaniotis, Alte Geschichte (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2012), 268–71.

[144] A sanctuary on the slopes of Acrocorinth was well-established by the end of the sixth century BCE at the latest. It appears to have been abandoned following Corinth's fall to Rome, but after the founding of the colony worship was restored and several new buildings were constructed in the second half of the first century CE. Thus, the time of Paul's correspondence with the Corinthian believers may have also been a time when Corinthian Demeter devotion was beginning to experience an upsurge. See Nancy Bookidis and Ronald S. Stroud, *Demeter and Persephone in Ancient Corinth*, Corinth Notes 2 (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1987), 10–11.

Isocrates, an orator of the classical period, identifies the twin favors bestowed by Demeter as "the fruits of the earth, which have enabled us to rise above the life of the beasts, and the holy rite which inspires in those who partake of it sweeter hopes regarding both the end of life and all eternity" (*Paneg.* 28). The afterlife component was an important feature, given the myth of Persephone descending to "the misty dark" (*Hymn to Demeter* 337) of the underworld and then returning.[145] We thus find a pattern shared by the mystery cults of Isis and Demeter/Persephone; an all-encompassing salvation was offered to initiates, spanning this life and the next. It is not surprising, then, that Isis and Demeter could be connected. Yet one never became completely subsumed into the other. Both cults apparently thrived at Corinth and were seen as complimentary, not in competition.

Isis as Supreme Ruler

In Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* (11.5), when Isis appears to Lucius, she reveals herself as a supreme deity, exalted over others and ruling with unquestioned sway. After introducing herself ("Behold, Lucius, moved by your prayers I have come"), she elaborates on precisely who she is: "I the mother of the universe, mistress of all the

[145] Richard E. DeMaris argues that the chthonic aspect became even more prominent at Corinth during the Roman period, pointing to curse tablets as well as to a snake mosaic at the Corinthian sanctuary and snake vases at a Demeter worship site at nearby Isthmia. Richard E. DeMaris, "Demeter in Roman Corinth: Local Development in a Mediterranean Religion," *Numen* 42 (1995): 108–11. This claim is problematic, however, because the imagery is not as unequivocal as DeMaris suggests. Snake imagery is quite polysemic, as Kevin Clinton notes. Snakes often had non-sinister associations for Greeks and were very frequently "associated with the earth and fertility." Kevin Clinton, "A New *Lex Sacra* from Selinus: Kindly Zeuses, Eumenides, Impure and Pure Tritopatores, and Elasteroi," *CP* 91 (1996): 169. The snake imagery could therefore apply to either of the twin aspects of the cult, or perhaps even be a part of their joining together. One should be hesitant to posit a major distinction between Corinth and elsewhere. It seems more sensible to think of Corinth as participating in a shared understanding of this cult in which afterlife and fertility were inseparable elements.

elements, and first offspring of the ages; mightiest of deities, queen of the dead, and foremost of heavenly beings." Each of these expressions individually designates Isis a powerful ruling deity, and placed together in succession they demonstrate her supremacy all the more. The passage continues, with Isis detailing the specific realms of her dominion: "With my nod I rule the starry heights of heaven, the health-giving breezes of the sea, and the plaintive silences of the underworld." Yet another way in which Apuleius demonstrates the elevation of Isis is through the assimilation of other deities into her essence. Because of her association with so many other deities, she naturally became seen as behind them all. Isis declares, "My one person manifests the aspect of all gods and goddesses." According to the passage, this means that the worship of various deities is ultimately the worship of Isis: "My divinity is one, worshipped by all the world under different forms, with various rites, and by manifold names." In short, the picture of Isis in Apuleius's novel is that of a uniquely elevated deity.

Similar conceptions of Isis can be seen throughout the Greco-Roman world. Epithets of Isis give a strong indication of this. Most obviously, παντοκράτωρ ("ruler of everything") depicts Isis as a supreme, universal ruler (IG V,2 472; also cf. IG XI,4 1234, πάντων κρατούσηι). Yet others also convey the elevated status of Isis. Some epithets capture the concept that other deities were seen as manifestations of Isis under different names; Isis is designated both πολυώνυμος ("many-named") (IK Kios 21) and μυριώνυμος ("myriad-named") (IK Sinope 115).[146] Furthermore, the assimilation of other deities into Isis meant that she could often adopt their epithets. For example, in the Kyme

[146] "The primary claim was that the actual names of innumerable foreign goddesses referred to her, not that she possessed a multitude of epithets." Robert Parker, *Greek Gods Abroad: Names, Natures, and Transformations*, Sather Classical Lectures 72 (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 106.

aretalogy Isis takes on a common epithet of Demeter, θεσμοφόρος ("law-giving") (Kyme aretalogy §52).[147]

The Kyme aretalogy also directly displays conceptions of Isis's supreme power.[148] This text, likely from the first century BCE, purports to be copied from a Memphis temple inscription (Kyme aretalogy §2); this is undoubtedly a means of establishing authority.[149] The aretalogy gives praise to Isis by means of her speaking in the first person (repetition of ἐγὼ), listing her various achievements. In the following portion, Isis presents herself as the one who established cosmic order and determined the way certain things should be:

> I divided earth from heaven.
> I appointed the paths of the stars.
> I regulated the passage of sun and moon.
> I invented fishing and seafaring.
> I made justice strong.
> I coupled woman and man.
> I arranged that women should bring babies to the light after nine months. (Kyme aretalogy §§12–18)[150]

The portrayal of supremacy is summed up at the end of the aretalogy in statements portraying Isis's power in broad terms:

> Whatever I decide is actually accomplished.
> To me everything yields. (Kyme aretalogy §§46–47)

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[147] Also cf. Latin epithets which suggest the great power of Isis: *regina*, *domina*, *augusta*, *invicta* (Bøgh, "Cult of Isis," 234).

[148] The Isis aretalogies are especially valuable since they "express the actual beliefs of ordinary worshipers of Isis." Albert Henrichs, "The Sophists and Hellenistic Religion: Prodicus as the Spiritual Father of the Isis Aretalogies," *HSCP* 88 (1984): 154.

[149] Other sacred texts employ this same trope. See Henrichs, "Sophists," 152n57.

[150] Translations of the Kyme aretalogy are from Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *A Sourcebook*, vol. 2 of *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 297–98.

> I conquered fate.
> To me fate listens. (Kyme aretalogy §§55–56)

Isis here is unquestionably the supreme ruler of all. Everything submits itself to her control. H. S. Versnel aptly sums up the perspective of the Kyme aretalogy: "Isis can achieve what no other god is able to. She is not only great, she is *eminently and uniquely* great."[151]

Comparison and Conclusion

Now that we have explored the role of Isis for the afterlife and conceptions of her as supreme ruler, it remains to draw a comparison with 1 Cor 15. We must first acknowledge, however, the vast differences between the two different religious expressions. Against a world in which a plethora of deities was the norm, Paul insists on Jewish monotheism, albeit a reworked monotheism that makes room for Christ:

> But for us there is one God, the Father,
> from whom are all things, and we for him,
> and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ,
> through whom are all things, and we through him. (1 Cor 8:6)

Paul assumes that the believers in Corinth have fully embraced the Jewish mindset presupposed by this confession; he even refers to their Gentile identity as if it is a thing of the past (ἔθνη ἦτε, 12:2). Paul does not deny the existence of other deities, but he demotes them to being δαιμόνια (10:20). Presumably, for Paul, all these other so-called gods are grouped with the powers that are rendered powerless under the supreme rule of Christ and God (15:24). A further contrast in divine identity has to do with gender. While a female mother figure is an important feature in cult of Isis as well as that of Demeter,

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[151] Versnel, *Coping with the Gods*, 288 (italics original).

worship in Pauline communities centers around a male father/son pair (1:3, 9; 8:6; 15:24, 28).[152]

It is important to note that Paul's idea of the resurrection distances his thought world from that of devotees to Greco-Roman cults. In his resurrection argument, Paul insists on a Jewish conception of re-embodied existence that differs vastly from afterlife in the underworld promised to Isis devotees. Terri Moore points out, "The Mysteries represent an afterlife scheme in which there is no need for resurrection or any desire for a return from Hades or death because of the comfort and benefits provided by the Mystery deities."[153] Also, Paul's discourse stresses that resurrection is reserved for the eschatological future. He views history as moving toward a final climax that he calls the τέλος (15:24). In the case of Isis, there is no cosmic eschatological forecast. Rather, existence in the afterlife is simply part of the rhythm of the world, a reality reflecting natural cycles of birth and death.[154]

There are substantial contrasts between conceptions of Isis and Pauline teaching, to be sure, but there are also noteworthy resonances.[155] In spite of the differences in the

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[152] All of these elements represent a significant shift that took place in in the thinking of Gentiles in Corinth who came to follow Jesus. The question of how this shift came about is an interesting one. We don't know precisely how these converts became convinced to join the Christ movement, and perhaps Paul didn't know either. He would simply say that God "called" these people and they responded to the call (cf. 1 Cor 1:26).

[153] Moore, *The Mysteries*, 71.

[154] This pattern is even more evident in the Eleusinian mysteries, as agricultural cycles are explicitly paired with the human cycle of life (see *Hymn to Demeter*). In the case of Isis, the pattern is more implicit, but it is suggested by Isis's comprehensive cosmic rule and by her association with Demeter. Paul actually does use agricultural language as a metaphor for resurrection (1 Cor 15:20–23, 35–49). There is no indication that he intends this language to have cyclical implications, however. His decided emphasis on an eschatological endpoint undercuts such a possibility.

[155] For a similar discussion of similarities and differences between 1 Cor 15 and the mysteries of both Isis and Demeter with respect to the afterlife, see Moore, *The Mysteries*, 107–11.

way future existence is construed, the fact remains that both Isis and Paul's Christ offer a hope for the afterlife. What is more, in both cases the hope is based on connection to a figure who has power over the realm of death. Isis is "queen of the dead" (*regina manium*) (*Metam.* 11.5) and can therefore impact the destiny of her initiates who go to the underworld. Similarly, Christ rules over a kingdom (βασιλείαν), enabling him to defeat every inimical power, including the ultimate one, death (1 Cor 15:24–26). This means that people joined to Christ (οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ) will experience life beyond the grave (vv. 22–23).

Further, just as Isis's power with reference to death is one facet of her comprehensive rulership, so Christ's dominion over death is just one consequence of his post-resurrection elevation over all things that Paul invokes the psalmic tradition to describe. The imagery from Ps 110 provides language to describe Christ already reigning while he is in the process of subduing enemies: "For he must reign until he puts all the enemies under his feet" (1 Cor 15:25). In other words, Christ has been installed as ruler but is at work to establish his cosmic supremacy even more absolutely. A similar point is made with the reference to Ps 8, but an even more sweeping emphasis on "all things" (πάντα) is added: "For he subjected all things under his feet" (1 Cor 15:27). The end of this paragraph, with its repetition of πάντα six times in the short space of two verses (vv. 27–28), seems strikingly similar to the widespread Greco-Roman notions of Isis as supreme ruler. The statement from the aretalogy, "To me everything yields" (ἐμοὶ πάντ' ἐπείκει) (Kyme aretalogy §47), especially resonates with the notion of all things subjected (πάντα … ὑπέταξεν) under Christ's feet (1 Cor 15:27). Yet the term

παντοκράτωρ does not appear in 1 Cor 15,[156] and for good reason. While Paul sees Christ as having a highly exalted status, he makes sure to maintain the framework of Jewish monotheism. Thus God stands behind Christ as the ultimate authority. Since God is the one who subjected all things to Christ, Paul reasons, even Christ is under his authority; God is πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν ("all in all," v. 28).

What is the significance of these points of intersection? And how should they be explained? It is unlikely that Paul intentionally patterned this text after ideas about Isis. It is more likely that the resonances were noted only by the audience, if they were apparent at all. They still can be seen as significant, however, in helping to explain why a tradition invoking Jewish psalms could achieve success among gentile audiences. The parallels suggest that the christological concepts which Paul and other early Christ followers connected with Pss 110 and 8 would not have been utterly foreign. Whether or not audiences devoted explicit attention to considering the similarities, these concepts that were an integral part of their lives prior to joining the Christ movement could have made them more receptive to this very Jewish message.

[156] The only Pauline text containing this term is 2 Cor 6:18, where it refers to God, not to Christ.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Inasmuch as I have already summed up the main conclusions throughout the course of the study, this final chapter will be brief. I will first summarize the general findings and then discuss their significance.

Summary

Throughout this thesis, I have attempted to trace a psalmic exaltation tradition in the early Christ movement. Psalms 110 and 8 frequently functioned together as a pair that offered language for understanding and explaining the exalted status of Christ. The two texts were linked at an early stage of the Christ movement and became an important piece of oral tradition that was passed on among believing communities. As the followers of Jesus began to compose written documents, the psalmic exaltation tradition found expression in these as well. Examining texts from the mid-first century to the mid-second century CE, I have argued that several passages should be considered instances of the tradition (1 Cor 15:20–28; Phil 3:17–21; Rom 8:18–39; Eph 1:20–23; Heb 1:3–2:9; 1 Pet 3:21–22; Pol. *Phil.* 2.1). In addition to these expressions of the tradition, I suggested that other passages at least reflect its influence (Mark 12:36 // Matt 22:44; Mark 14:62 // Matt 26:64; Acts 7:55–56; Hegesippus).

The way that the psalmic exaltation tradition found expression can be described as widespread and dynamic. It was widespread in that it appears in writings from several different authors addressed to communities in a variety of locations throughout the Mediterranean world, and these writings attest to its further reach through oral transmission. The psalmic exaltation tradition was not something that existed in fixed form but something that was conducive to dynamic expression. While it is true that certain terminology—particularly "seated at the right hand" and "subjection of all things"—became characteristic, not every instance of the tradition included such language. At its core, the tradition was predicated on a link between the passages and on the insight that they should be read as speaking of Christ, rather than on any specific form. Moreover, the tradition was also dynamic in that it was frequently expressed alongside other exaltation traditions and used for a variety of functions, ranging from an argument about resurrection to exhortations to follow the pattern of Christ.

Why did the psalmic exaltation tradition meet with such success? Perhaps the variety of functions for which it could be invoked provides one answer. The tradition proved to be a fruitful catalyst for addressing a variety of theological and practical questions. Another reason it met with success, I suggest, is that it resonated with certain notions in the wider Greco-Roman world. Although a tradition which employs the psalms and speaks about the exaltation of the Messiah is a thoroughly Jewish phenomenon, even gentile audiences could see it as meaningful because some of its key themes paralleled ideas that were ingrained in their thinking before they joined the Christ movement. In this project I explored Greco-Roman conceptions of the deity Isis, but further study in search of other parallels might also be instructive.

Significance

What is the significance of this study for understanding the early Christ movement? In the first place, it serves as a reminder of the tenuous nature of tracing traditions. Although we might wish we could speak more confidently about such matters, the fact remains that we are dealing with subject matter that is elusive. It is important to bear this fact in mind and not claim too much for our reconstructions. John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay put it well: "Isolating distinctive forms of text, arranging them in chronological sequence, and assessing various aspects of the stages of development requires scholarly imagination. In some cases, this can be done confidently; in other instances, the results may be only probable, or even only possible."[157] The present project highlights one reason why it is so difficult to isolate traditions, namely, that they are almost always combined with other traditions. In order to trace a single tradition, one has to account for the entire nexus. As our discussion throughout indicates, that is not a straightforward task, and reaching definitive conclusions is not something to be expected.

Although firm reconstructions may elude us, this process of tracing tradition does at least provide a window into the sort of dialogue that took place in the early Christ movement. Believers were seeking to understand and articulate the significance of Christ, and they did so in conversation with various sources. They looked to the Jewish scriptures as a rich source of ancient traditions, which they interpreted afresh in light of their convictions about Christ. As the Christ movement became a distinct movement within Judaism, it spawned its own particular traditions employed in worship, in

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[157] John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 123–24.

teaching, and in proclamation. Oral traditions in turn became sources that were useful as the conversation continued in the form of written documents. As a growing corpus of Christ-movement writings developed, these also became an important source. Authors drew from these earlier texts as they composed their own documents. And all this took place in implicit dialogue with the broader cultural context. The simultaneous actions of preservation and innovation are at the heart of the tradition process. In short, followers of Jesus were taking something ancient and authoritative and applying it in new ways so that it could continue to speak with relevance. This is the matrix in which Pss 110 and 8 were employed to speak of the exalted Christ.

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