

# Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Jesus Messiah

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## Abstract

The consensus of New Testament scholars that the appellation Χριστός in Paul's letters is a personal name and devoid of messianic convictions is increasingly questioned. Moving beyond philological, tradition-historical, exegetical, and common-sense arguments, the following can be demonstrated. When we treat Paul as a real person who read and studied the Hebrew Scriptures, who proclaimed the gospel in both Greek and Aramaic, using some Hebrew in the synagogues, who taught in local congregations in both Greek and Aramaic, who maintained contact with the Aramaic-speaking Jesus followers in Jerusalem throughout his ministry, and who sang and prayed in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, the assumption that, for Paul, Χριστός always stood for מְשִׁיחָא/הַמְּשִׁיחַ, the Messiah of God and the Messiah of God's people, is highly plausible.

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## 1. Introduction

The discussion of titles, traditions, and motifs often seems strangely detached from the reality of Paul's personal life, from the realities of his missionary proclamation, and from the realities of his teaching in congregational settings. The historical context of Paul's letters has always drawn the attention of New Testament scholars, but Paul's life less so, especially by scholars who remain sceptical of solid evidence for the historical Paul. The apostle Paul was a pious Jew who daily prayed to God. He was a trained expert in the interpretation of Israel's Scriptures who continued, after his conversion to following the crucified and risen Jesus, to read, analyse, and explain the sacred texts. This he did not only to Jews but also to Gentiles, to believers and unbelievers; he understood himself as an envoy of Jesus, a missionary who proclaimed his convictions about God's revelation in Jesus to Jews and Greeks. He was also personally involved in the

life of local congregations of believers in Jesus, both in congregations he himself had established (e.g. the congregations in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia) and in congregations others had established (e.g. Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome). In these variegated settings, Paul spoke Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew. Consideration of Paul's oral proclamation and teaching, his participation in congregational singing, and his personal prayers are crucial in understanding the connotation of the phrase Ἰησοῦς Χριστός in Paul's letters.

## 2. Beyond Χριστός Understood as a Personal Name

It has been something of a consensus to argue that when the two nouns Ἰησοῦς and Χριστός were first conjoined by followers of and believers in Jesus, Χριστός was a title added to the name Ἰησοῦς, and that 'the original titular significance of Χριστός was rapidly lost, so that it became a proper name and the two words together, in either order, formed a single name'.<sup>1</sup> Many scholars have agreed with this assessment, although some have been more circumspect regarding the nuances the term Χριστός might have in some passages. Thus Martin Hengel argues that the appellative Χριστός has become, in Paul's letters, a *cognomen* – that is, a part of Jesus' personal name, suggesting that the titular meaning in the sense of Hebrew מְשִׁיחַ (ha-mashiakh) or Aramaic מְשִׁיחָא (meshikha) – 'the anointed one' – may be dimly present ('durchschimmern') in a few passages. But, Hengel argues, the double name ('Doppelname') Ἰησοῦς Χριστός has entirely absorbed, for Paul and his churches, the title ὁ Χριστός, the Anointed One,<sup>2</sup> while he insists that 'Χριστός expresses the 'inalienable uniqueness' of Jesus.'<sup>3</sup>

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1. Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 129, referring to Werner Kramer, *Christ, Lord, Son of God*, trans. B. Hardy; SBT 50 (London: SCM, 1966), 203–214; ET of Werner Kramer, *Christos Kyrios Gottessohn. Untersuchungen zu Gebrauch und Bedeutung der christologischen Bezeichnungen bei Paulus und den vorpaulinischen Gemeinden*, AThANT 44 (Zürich: Zwingli, 1963). See also Andrew Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation: Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology*, WUNT 207 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 382–383, <https://doi.org/10.1628/978-3-16-151496-8>, and many others.

2. Martin Hengel, 'Jesus der Messias Israels', in *Der messianische Anspruch Jesu und die Anfänge der Christologie*, ed. M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer; WUNT 138 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 1–80, here 1 (edited and substantially expanded version of Martin Hengel, 'Jesus der Messias Israels. Zum Streit über das "messianische Sendungsbewußtsein" Jesu [1992]', in *Studien zur Christologie. Kleine Schriften IV*, ed. C.-J. Thornton (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 259–280, ET Martin Hengel, 'Jesus the Messiah of Israel', in *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 1–72, here 1.

3. Martin Hengel, "'Christos' in Paul [1982]", in *Between Jesus and Paul*, trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM, 1983), 65–77, here 74, quoting W. Grundmann, *TDNT* 9:540; an edited and

Walter Grundmann allows more than glimpses of the titular meaning. He points out: ‘Whether Paul says ὁ Χριστός or Χριστός he has this uniqueness in view. Whereas his non-Jewish readers would take it as a proper name, Paul himself is fully acquainted with the title originally meant by the term.’<sup>4</sup> He goes on to argue that Paul belongs to the earliest phase of the history of the early church, which differed from the Jewish world as ‘it knows the Messiah whom the latter expected. This Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth.’ Here, he surmises that for the Gentile churches that were founded as a result of Paul’s ministry, ‘the Messiah-Christ is not related to the divine promise which makes Him God’s supreme proxy. When Χριστός is used with the name Jesus they regard it as a double name. Caesar Augustus is a parallel.’ He continues:

Since one should not underestimate the Jewish Christian influence on the Gentile Christian churches, or their knowledge of the Septuagint, in their use of Ἰησοῦς Χριστός they probably caught something of the titular significance of the second name as well. Χριστός is thus a second name which can replace the real proper name and which may to some indeterminable degree bear also the suggestion of worth, function and title. This is supported by the fact that Paul avoids using κύριος and Χριστός together without the name Jesus ... since this would merely combine two titles.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, Nils Dahl qualifies his assertion that in Paul’s letters Χριστός is a proper name. He states: ‘it is not a colorless proper name, however, but an honorific designation, whose content is supplied by the person and work of Jesus Christ’.<sup>6</sup>

Ferdinand Hahn goes a step further when he asserts regarding the term Χριστός:

On the basis of the word’s OT and Jewish history it is first of all a designation of function. The legitimate appropriation of a commissioned task is associated with the motif or act of anointing (even where the anointing ritual recedes or is only fig[urative]). The word refers to a predication applicable to a figure

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expanded version of the original German essay is found in Martin Hengel, ‘Erwägungen zum Sprachgebrauch von Χριστός bei Paulus und in der ‘vorpaulinischen’ Überlieferung [1982]’, in *Paulus und Jakobus. Kleine Schriften III*, WUNT 141 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 240–261 (reference and quotation p. 257). Cf. Dieter Zeller, ‘Zur Transformation des Χριστός bei Paulus’, *JBTh* 8 (1993): 155–167: in Paul, only traces of the tradition-historical significance of Davidic messianology are present.

4. W. Grundmann, Art. χρίω κτλ., *TDNT* 9:540.

5. W. Grundmann, Art. χρίω κτλ., *TDNT* 9:542. For κύριος used with Χριστός see Rom 16:18; Col 3:24

6. Nils A. Dahl, ‘The Messiahship of Jesus in Paul [1953]’, in *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine*, ed. D. H. Juel (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 15–25, here 37.

from Israel's own history or from the eschaton. The predication also makes an assertion concerning majesty. This is esp[ecially] the case where it is used of a concrete person within the context of confessional statements with  $\sigma\upsilon\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\ \eta\ \sigma\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ . Here the predication acquires titular character, esp[ecially] where  $(\acute{o})\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$  represents or replaces the proper name, as occurred with  $\acute{o}\ \upsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omicron\upsilon$ . Where  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$  is used with  $\text{\textprime}\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ , it is not simply a proper name, but rather an epithet (*cognomen*); the predicative character does recede, but the titular meaning is preserved in its entirety, even when other statements of a titular character are added. Hence nowhere is a simple double name presupposed.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, Udo Schnelle attempts to treat  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ , as used by Paul, as both a title and a name:

For Paul,  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma\ \text{\textprime}\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  is a titular name, both title and name. The apostle knows that  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$  was originally an appellative and that  $\text{\textprime}\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  is the real *nomen proprium*, for he never speaks of a  $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ . When combined with  $\text{\textprime}\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ,  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$  is thus to be understood as a cognomen (surname) that also always has the overtones of its original titular significance. At the same time, the title is fused so closely with the person of Jesus and his specific destiny that it soon became simply a name for Jesus.<sup>8</sup>

Martin Karrer argues that name ('Jesus' meaning 'Yahweh/the Lord saves') and title (the 'Anointed') morphed into each other, demonstrated by the variations in linguistic use ( $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$  with/without article, before/after  $\text{\textprime}\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ) which happen when a predicate is used as an apposition to a semantic name.<sup>9</sup>

Other scholars have suggested that Paul retains the term  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ /Messiah but deliberately de-emphasises its meaning. Andrew Chester argued that Paul defused, or neutralised, the meaning of the term since the messianic kingdom 'was in practice incapable of being realised in society, and also potentially politically embarrassing'.<sup>10</sup> Magnus Zetterholm argues that Paul de-emphasised Jesus' messiahship and emphasised his lordship because he wanted to prevent the

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7. F. Hahn, Art.  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ , *EDNT* 3:479; cf. Ferdinand Hahn, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 1:204.

8. Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology*, trans. M. E. Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 439.

9. Martin Karrer, *Der Gesalbte: Die Grundlagen des Christustitels*, *FRLANT* 151 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 48–81, <https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666538339>; cf. Martin Karrer, *Jesus Christus im Neuen Testament*, *GNT* 11 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 140, <https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666513800>.

10. Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation*, 385.

Gentile believers (in Galatia, and elsewhere) from identifying with the salvation history of the Jewish people.<sup>11</sup>

Some scholars argue that Paul's reference to Χριστός should be read as 'Messiah'. One of the first to challenge the consensus was N. T. Wright, who argued on salvation-historical, tradition-historical, and philological grounds that Paul retained the messianic meaning of Χριστός.<sup>12</sup> Matthew Novenson has consolidated and expanded the arguments of Wright and G. Oegema,<sup>13</sup> focusing on onomastic conventions, especially Greek honorifics, on philological considerations (phrases using Χριστός: 'Jesus Christ' and 'Christ Jesus'; appellative; predicate of the verb 'to be'; genitive modifiers; the article with Χριστός; subject of a sentence; 'Jesus', 'Christ', and 'Lord'; 'in Christ'; 'the people of Christ'; 'the faith of Christ'), and provides a close reading of selected passages in Paul's letters.<sup>14</sup> His detailed arguments do not need to be rehearsed here. Joshua Jipp builds on recent scholarship calling for a reassessment of the centrality of the messianic identity of Jesus for the New Testament texts. Without evaluating tradition-historical or philological data, he suggests that 'one can often safely conclude' that an author is 'engaging in messianic discourse' when he refers to Jesus using a royal honorific (e.g. Christ, Son of David, Branch, the Lion of Judah, shepherd, King), cites or alludes to Scriptural texts which speak of a messianic king or the good/ideal ruler, and/or activates a messianic image, motif, or scenario (e.g. a king engaging in military battles, one who rules his people with justice, one who protects his people from threats to safety).<sup>15</sup> Common sense arguments have been suggested

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11. Magnus Zetterholm, 'Paul and the Missing Messiah', in *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. M. Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 33–55.

12. N. T. Wright, 'The Messiah and the People of God: A Study in Pauline Theology With Particular Reference to the Argument of the Epistle to the Romans', D.Phil. Thesis (Oxford: Oxford University, 1980); cf. N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992), 18–40 ('Adam, Israel and the Messiah'), and 41–55 ('ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ as "Messiah" in Paul: Philemon 6') with an investigation of prepositional phrases which employ Χριστός.

13. Gerbern S. Oegema, *The Anointed and His People: Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kokhba*, JSPSup 27 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) collated citations of and allusions to Scriptural texts in Jewish and Christian messiah texts, finding that they rely on relatively few source texts, esp. Gen 49:10; Num 24:17; 2 Sam 7:12-13; Isa 11:1-2; Dan 7:13-14, texts which do not actually contain the word 'messiah'.

14. Gal 3:16; 1 Cor 15:20-28; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Rom 9:1-5; 15:3,9,7-12; 1 Cor 1:23; 2 Cor 5:16-17; Rom 1:3-4. Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199844579.001.0001>.

15. Joshua W. Jipp, *The Messianic Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 16–17; on Paul's 'messianic christology' see pp. 148–256. Note J. Thomas

by Sean McDonough, who argues that it ‘beggars belief’ to assume that a Pharisee (or former Pharisee) could casually use the term Χριστός ‘without importing much theological significance into the designation’ and with no particular explanation what this strange designation, rendered as ‘the smeared’,<sup>16</sup> might imply.<sup>17</sup>

A minor but perhaps not unimportant point should be noted here as well. Personal names with the element Χριστός – Χριστός by itself never appears as a name – were used at the earliest over two hundred years after Paul. Χριστίνα is attested once (Syracuse, third to fifth century), Χριστόδουλος four times (Argos, Thessalonica, Bargylia, all in the fifth/sixth century, once in Syros in the Byzantine period), Χριστοφόρος seven times (in Amathous, perhaps fourth century; in Chersonesos, in the fifth/sixth century; in Rhegion and Prusias ad Hypium, both in the Byzantine period, and three times in Korykos, also in the Byzantine period).<sup>18</sup> If Χριστός had become a personal name around AD 40–50, one might expect that believers committed to ‘Jesus Christ’ might use ‘Christ’, Χριστός, as their name, or at least as part of their name. The former never happened, the latter only several centuries later.

### 3. Biographical Realities of Paul’s Life in Geographical and Chronological Perspective

New Testament scholars know, of course, Paul’s assertion that he ‘advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age’ because he was far more zealous for the traditions of his ancestors (Gal 1:14). In view of the fact that he was a diaspora Jew from Tarsus, he was proud to call himself a ‘Hebrew born of Hebrews’ and ‘as to the law, a Pharisee’ (Phil 3:5). This statement can be regarded as a commentary on his brief biographical remarks in Galatians,<sup>19</sup> specifically his

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Hewitt, *Messiah and Scripture: Paul’s ‘In Christ’ Idiom in Its Ancient Jewish Context*, WUNT 2.522 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1628/978-3-16-159229-4>, who seeks to understand Paul in the context of the broader Jewish messiah discourse and argues that Paul generated the expression ἐν Χριστῷ ‘to indicate the instrumentality of the messiah in God’s purposes and to indicate the inclusion of individuals and communities in God’s people’ arising ‘from his interpretation of Abrahamic traditions’ (243, as summary of his thesis).

16. Cf. Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1983), 167, n.9.

17. Sean M. McDonough, *Christ as Creator: Origins of a New Testament Doctrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 14, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199576470.001.0001>.

18. For references cf. Peter M. Fraser and Elaine Matthews, ed., *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987–2006). See <https://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/>.

19. Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater*, 5th ed., KEK 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 79, <https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666515453>.

zeal for the ancestral traditions, which was characteristic for the Pharisees.<sup>20</sup> In the context of Paul's assertion that he knew the Law (Rom 7:1; cf. Phil 3:6), his biographical statements indicate that he was trained as an expert in the Law and its interpretation in a Pharisaic context. Before AD 70, this was possible only in Jerusalem and required the knowledge of Hebrew, the language of the Scriptures, as well as of Aramaic, the language of Judea. The statement that he was a 'Hebrew born of Hebrews' (cf. 2 Cor 11:22) thus indicates that Paul knew Hebrew and Aramaic.<sup>21</sup>

Paul's citations of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures – Paul's letters contain over ninety direct quotations, besides numerous allusions<sup>22</sup> – and his use of Scriptural proof in his teaching in Greek-speaking diaspora synagogues imply that he must have memorised large sections of the Greek Scriptures.<sup>23</sup> For some Old Testament citations in Paul's letters it can be demonstrated that the *Vorlage* of the Old Greek text that Paul used had been revised with the intention of bringing it into line with the Hebrew text.<sup>24</sup> Paul might have used a 'revised'

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20. See Josephus, *Ant.* 13.297, 408.

21. Hebrew: Otto Betz, 'Paulus als Pharisäer nach dem Gesetz. Phil. 3,5–6 als Beitrag zur Frage der frühen Pharisäismus [1977]', in *Jesus. Der Herr der Kirche: Aufsätze zur biblischen Theologie II* (WUNT 52; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 103–113, here 106; Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, BNTC 11 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 196; Hebrew and/or Aramaic: Joachim Gnllka, *Der Philipperbrief*, 4th ed., HThK X/3 (Freiburg: Herder, 1987), 190; Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, *Heidenapostel aus Israel: Die jüdische Identität des Paulus nach ihrer Darstellung in seinen Briefen*, WUNT 62 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 106–107; Aramaic: John Reumann, *Philippians*, AYB 33B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 513. Cf. Martin Hengel, 'Der vorchristliche Paulus [1991]', in *Paulus und Jakobus: Kleine Schriften III*, WUNT 141 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 68–192, esp. 111–113, 128, who argues that Paul was fluent in Hebrew as the language of the Scriptures and of liturgy, and in Aramaic as the lingua franca of Jewish Palestine (ET Martin Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, trans. J. Bowden [Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991], 26–27, 68); thus also Stanley E. Porter, 'The Language(s) Jesus Spoke', in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus III*, ed. T. Holmén and S. E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 2455–2471, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004210219\\_081](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004210219_081), here 2470. Markus Tiwald, *Hebräer von Hebräern: Paulus auf dem Hintergrund frühjüdischer Argumentation und biblischer Interpretation*, Herders biblische Studien 52 (Freiburg/New York: Herder, 2008), 144–164, remains sceptical; see the critical review of Tiwald by M. Bachmann in *BZ* 53 (2009) 286–289.

22. Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums. Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus*, BHT 69 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986).

23. Hengel, 'Der vorchristliche Paulus', 124–126 (Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 35–36).

24. 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), 340, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511896552>; see *ibid.*, 171–173 for the citation of Deut 32:35 in Rom 12:19.

Greek text directly, or he could have revised the *Vorlage* of the Greek text on the basis of the Hebrew text himself.<sup>25</sup>

Paul's use of Hebrew can be assumed. His upbringing and education in the synagogue of Tarsus, where Jewish boys aged five to twelve studied the Hebrew Scriptures and the legal traditions, would have taken place in Hebrew, even if the language of the synagogue(s) in Tarsus was Greek. Paul's advanced education in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel the Elder,<sup>26</sup> mentioned in Acts 22:3,<sup>27</sup> implies serious study, and memorisation, of substantial portions of the Hebrew Scriptures. Paul asserts that when he was in Jerusalem before his conversion, he 'advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age', the reason being that he was 'far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors' (Gal 1:14). It has been suggested that Paul, as a student in Jerusalem, may have been involved in the revision of Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>28</sup> If Paul was born in the first century AD, and if the date of his conversion is ca. AD 31/32, he would have spent his formative years, perhaps ca. AD 20–31, in Jerusalem. Aramaic was the language of the Judaeans, a language that Paul the diaspora Jew learned from his parents, who were 'Hebrews' (Phil 3:5); he would have spoken Aramaic in Jerusalem during his studies under Gamaliel. He would have been capable of providing a targum in Aramaic following the reading of the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogues. Luke depicts Paul as speaking Aramaic (Acts 21:40; 22:2; cf. 26:14–

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25. For the latter cf. Martin Hengel, 'Der vorchristliche Paulus', 125; Martin Hengel, 'Die Septuaginta als 'christliche Schriftensammlung', ihre Vorgeschichte und das Problem ihres Kanons', in *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum*, ed. M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer, WUNT 72 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 182–284, here 266; Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of its Canon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 108; Hengel argues that this assumption is more plausible than the assumption that Paul accidentally came into possession of such revised Greek texts and was not aware of the peculiarity of this revised Greek text, which is what Koch, *Schrift*, 81, assumes. See also E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 19–20, 139–141.

26. For the rabbinic traditions about Gamaliel I, cf. Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 1:341–376; Jacob Neusner and Bruce D. Chilton, 'Paul and Gamaliel', in *In Quest of the Historical Pharisees*, ed. J. Neusner and B. D. Chilton (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 175–223.

27. For the reliability of this tradition cf. Hengel, 'Der vorchristliche Paulus', 110–116 (Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 25–29); cf. Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Die Urgemeinde und das Judentum*, Geschichte des frühen Christentums II (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 207–210, <https://doi.org/10.1628/978-3-16-156340-9>; Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012–15), 3:3215–3220.

28. Cf. Martin Hengel, 'Die Septuaginta als "christliche Schriftensammlung"', 243, 249, 266–67; ET Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture*, 82–83, 89–90, 108–109.



15). Thus, Paul was able to speak, read, and write Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew probably since his upbringing in Tarsus, with competence in Hebrew consolidated in Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup>

Since we do not have Aramaic or Hebrew texts written by Paul, Pauline scholarship by necessity analyses his Greek letters, usually with little consideration of Aramaic or Hebrew formulations that he would have employed when he used the content of his letters in his missionary proclamation, congregational teaching, and personal prayers.<sup>30</sup> Analyses of the meaning of Χριστός for the apostle Paul cannot rely on his letters alone, but must also take into account the fact that he used Hebrew and Aramaic both in his public ministry and in his personal devotional life.

In Damascus, the first period of Paul's missionary work (Gal 1:16-17; Acts 9:20-22,25),<sup>31</sup> he probably would have used Aramaic when he explained the significance of Jesus in the local synagogue, and also Hebrew in the readings from and the arguments based on the Hebrew Scriptures. In Arabia/Nabataea (cf. Gal 1:17; 2 Cor 11:32-33), he would certainly have used Aramaic, and in the synagogues also Hebrew. During the following brief stay in Jerusalem (Gal 1:18; Rom 15:19; Acts 9:26-29; 22:17-18; 26:19-20), he would have used Greek when he taught in the local synagogues of the diaspora Jews and when he spoke before the Hellenistic, Greek-speaking believers in Jesus. He would have used Aramaic during his contacts with the people living in the city, including the Judaeans believers in Jesus, and Hebrew when he cited, commented on, and explained the Scriptures in the synagogues and in the assemblies of the believers. While this seems a lot of activity in fifteen days (Gal 1:18), the assumption of three speaking events per day – a fair scenario for an active missionary and teacher – entails forty-five speaking engagements, with ample opportunities to engage different audiences in different languages. During his lengthy work in Cilicia, focused on Tarsus (Gal 1:21; Acts 9:30; 11:25-

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29. Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Paulus zwischen Damaskus und Antiochien. Die unbekanntenen Jahre des Apostels*, WUNT 108 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 193 (ET Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years* [London/Louisville: SCM/Westminster John Knox, 1997], 119), assume that Paul was also capable of speaking some Latin.

30. There are exceptions, of course, e.g. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (1971; repr., London: Chapman, 1997); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays*, SBLMS 25 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979).

31. Cf. Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT 5 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 549, for a list of fifteen phases of missionary work, which replaces the 'three journeys' scheme that goes back to the outline of the Book of Acts suggested by Johann Albrecht Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (Tübingen: Schramm, 1742), 410-411.

26; 15:23,41), he would have used Greek in his everyday contacts and in his missionary proclamation before Cilicians and Jews, Aramaic with his relatives and other Jewish residents who had remained 'Hebrews', and Hebrew in liturgical settings in the synagogues, both in prayers and in the citation of and comments on the Scriptures. In Antioch in Syria, the fifth period of his missionary work (Acts 11:26-30; 13:1), the linguistic situation was the same as in Tarsus in Cilicia, and the same can be assumed for the other cities in which he proclaimed the gospel and established churches: in Salamis and Paphos on Cyprus; in Pisidian Antioch (and perhaps the smaller towns of Iconium, Lystra, Derbe) in Galatia; in Perga in Pamphylia; in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea in Macedonia; in Athens and Corinth in Achaia; in Ephesus in the province of Asia. In all these cities, Paul would have spoken mostly Greek, both on the street and in the synagogues, as well as some Aramaic and Hebrew in the synagogues. When Paul explained the significance of Jesus to the Jews of the city of Rome (Acts 28:17-28), he would have spoken Greek, Aramaic with the 'Hebrews' among the Roman Jews, and Hebrew as he read Scripture and invoked God and Jesus in prayers. Thus, Paul used Hebrew and Aramaic not only in Jerusalem but, at least occasionally, in the synagogues of the cities in which he worked as an envoy of Jesus, in Syria, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, Asia, and in Rome.

At the same time, we need to remember that Paul was in contact with the earliest Aramaic-speaking followers of Jesus in Jerusalem who were committed to Jesus as *מְשִׁיחָא/הַמְּשִׁיחַ* not only in the early years after his conversion in AD 32/33, but throughout his ministry until his arrest in Jerusalem in AD 57. After his first post-conversion visit, Paul visited Jerusalem three more times: eleven years after the first visit, in connection with his work in Antioch in Syria (Acts 11:27-30); three years later on the occasion of the Apostles' Council (Acts 15:1-29); and six years later after his mission in Ephesus when he brought the collection of funds that he had organised to the believers in Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-17). On all these occasions Paul would have used Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek: Aramaic on the street, in personal conversations, and when he participated in the meetings of the Jerusalem believers; Hebrew when the Scriptures were read and explained and in prayers; and Greek when he conversed with the diaspora Jews living in Jerusalem.

#### **4. Missionary, Congregational, and Personal Settings for Χριστός Meaning 'Messiah'**

Paul's primary self-understanding was not that of a scholar who adopts, adapts, reworks, reapplies, and expands Scriptural, Jewish, and early Christian

traditions. Paul did not merely write texts. He was primarily committed to the oral proclamation of the gospel – aspects of which he explains in his letters – in one form or another, before Greeks and Jews, in public squares, workshops, and synagogues, in Greek and in Aramaic, and occasionally using Hebrew. He taught believers in Jesus in variegated cultural and geographical settings in Greek and in Aramaic, and he joined the congregational singing in Greek, Aramaic, and possibly in Hebrew. And he prayed in private and in congregational settings in Hebrew, Aramaic, and in Greek.

Beyond the tradition-historical, philological, exegetical and common sense arguments which have been used to argue that Χριστός in Paul's letters retains titular meaning, five settings (*Sitze im Leben*) required Paul to use Aramaic and Hebrew.

#### 4.1 Public Proclamation

In his public proclamation in Damascus, Arabia, and Jerusalem, Paul used Aramaic, with Hebrew used in the local synagogues for the reading and in the explanation of the Scriptures, and for prayers. It would be preposterous to think that he would have used Χριστός as a name of Jesus – which would be *Yeshua<sup>c</sup> Christos*, written perhaps as ישוע ברזתוס,<sup>32</sup> ישוע ברסטס,<sup>33</sup> ישוע קריסטוס,<sup>34</sup> or ישוע קרסטס – in these settings.<sup>35</sup> In his public proclamation of the gospel in Aramaic, Paul would have explained the significance of ישוע מְשִׁיחָא (*Yeshua<sup>c</sup> meshikha*), 'Jesus Messiah'. In Hebrew prayers in synagogues in which he was invited to explain the Scriptures, he would have thanked God through ישוע המְשִׁיחַ (*Yeshua<sup>c</sup> ha-mashiakh*), 'Jesus Messiah' (cf. Rom 1:8).

#### 4.2 Congregational Teaching

When he taught Jewish believers in Jesus in Damascus, Arabia, and Jerusalem, Paul would have spoken Aramaic, with Hebrew used for the reading of the Scriptures and for the explanation of Scriptural terms and phrases. Again, he would not have taught about the significance of the death and resurrection of Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, but of ישוע מְשִׁיחָא and ישוע המְשִׁיחַ, respectively.

32. כְּרִזּוּ means 'public announcement'; Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli, and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (1903; repr., Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005), 664.

33. כְּרִסְתָּן means 'large-bellied, stout'; Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 672.

34. Cf. the proper name קְרִיסְפָּא, Krispa; Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1421.

35. Cf. אֲרִכּוֹנְטוֹס, the transliteration of ἄρχων, -οντος, or טִיטוֹס, the transliteration of the proper name Titas; Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 121, 530.

### 4.3 Congregational Singing

Luke's reference to the Jerusalem believers 'praising God' (αἰνοῦντες τὸν θεόν; Acts 2:47) is probably meant as an allusion to the corporate singing of thanksgiving hymns in the meetings of the Jerusalem church in Solomon's Portico on the Temple Mount (Acts 3:11; 5:12). The verb αἰνεῖν could refer to individual and corporate prayers in which God was praised. In the context of the reference to the Jerusalem temple (Acts 2:46), it is plausible to assume that Jerusalem believers' praising God 'probably at least included some corporate singing, as typically in the psalms'.<sup>36</sup> The Jerusalem believers in Jesus would hear the singing of the psalms of Scripture in the Temple; the *Psalms of Solomon* and the hymnic texts discovered in Qumran<sup>37</sup> are evidence for the composition of new religious songs, written in Hebrew, in Jewish Palestine. James' letter advises Jewish believers<sup>38</sup> that if they

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36. Keener, *Acts*, 1:1036; cf. Martin Hengel, 'Hymnus und Christologie [1980]', in *Studien zur Christologie: Kleine Schriften IV*, ed. C.-J. Thornton (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 185–204, here 201 (ET Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul*, 92); Martin Hengel, 'Das Christuslied im frühesten Gottesdienst [1987]', in *Studien zur Christologie. Kleine Schriften IV*, ed. C.-J. Thornton (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 205–258, here 257: 'Der Preis Christi als "Gottes Weisheit" erklang schon in den Straßen und Häusern von Jerusalem ... Dort, wo täglich Psalmen aus dem "Gesangbuch Israels" im Tempel intoniert wurden, dort wirkte der Geist die neue messianisch-eschatologische Deutung eben dieser alten und vertrauten Lieder ... die dann auch als Psalmen der messianischen Erfüllung in neuer Weise, gewissermaßen als "neues Lied" (Jes 42,10; Apk 5,9; 14,3), gesungen wurden und die man in der Kraft der neugeschenkten "profetischen Weisheit" durch neue Schöpfungen nachahmte' (ET Martin Hengel, 'The Song About Christ in Earliest Worship', in *Studies in Early Christology* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995], 227–291, here 290). Hengel does not comment on the language in which these new hymns must have been written if some of them were composed in Jerusalem.

37. Note, e.g. the thirteen Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, written ca. 150–100 BC if they are a composition of the Qumran Community; James H. Charlesworth and Carol A. Newsom, *Angelic Liturgy: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, The Dead Sea Scrolls 4B (Tübingen/Louisville: Mohr Siebeck/Westminster, 1999); Esther Eshel, et al., *Qumran Cave 4.VI: Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 1*, DJD 11 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), and the eighteen Thanksgiving Hymns, cf. Svend Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot. Psalms from Qumran*, ATD 2 (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1960); Hartmut Stegemann, Eileen Schuller, and Carol Newsom, *Qumran Cave 1.III: 1QHodayot<sup>a</sup>. With Incorporation of 1QHodayot<sup>b</sup> and 4QHodayot<sup>c,f</sup>*, DJD 40 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

38. Richard J. Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, New Testament Readings (London: Routledge, 1999), 14–23: Jewish believers in the western diaspora; Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. from the 3rd German ed., ed. M. W. Jacobus (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1917), 1:83–101; Roland Deines, *Jakobus. Im Schatten des Grösseren*, Biblische Gestalten 30 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2017), 258–259; cautiously Hengel and Schwemer, *Urgemeinde*, 465–466: Jewish believers in the western and eastern diaspora, perhaps specifically the Jewish believers who left Jerusalem due to the persecution initiated by Herod Agrippa I.

are cheerful, they should ‘sing songs of praise’ (ψαλλέτω; Jas 5:13). Paul knows, from personal experience, that the believers in the congregations in Corinth, Rome, and Ephesus were singing (1 Cor 14:15,26; Rom 15:5; Eph 5:19; cf. Col 3:16).<sup>39</sup> He details psalms (ψάλμοι), probably the psalms of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as hymns (ᾠμοι) and songs (ὠδαί) which would be new texts written by believers in Jesus. The reference to the ‘heart’ (Eph 5:19) does not describe silent worship but ‘here signifies the whole of one’s being’.<sup>40</sup> According to Acts 16:25, Paul and Silas were ‘praying and singing hymns to God’ (προσευχόμενοι ᾠμουν τὸν θεόν – perhaps traditional songs of believers in Jesus, but perhaps ‘spontaneous compositions through the Spirit’<sup>41</sup>) while in prison in Philippi. The New Testament texts that have been identified as hymns or hymnic fragments<sup>42</sup> – more recently classified as carefully formulated christological confessional texts<sup>43</sup> or epideictic passages in the sense of ἔπαινος (praise) accorded to Jesus<sup>44</sup> – suggest that there was a considerable repertoire of new compositions in the early churches. These celebrated, with a didactic focus, the work of Jesus Messiah, in particular his death, the salvation that God accomplished through his death, his resurrection, his exaltation, and his pre-existence, mediation at creation, and incarnation. The new songs (ὠδὴ καινῆ) were often directed, as John indicates (Rev 5:9; cf. 14:3),

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39. Cf. Eckhard J. Schnabel, ‘Singing and Instrumental Music in the Early Church [2011]’, in *Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church: Missionary Realities in Historical Contexts. Collected Essays*, WUNT 406 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 415–450.

40. Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 396.

41. Keener, *Acts*, 2492, with reference to 1 Cor 14:15,26; 1 Chr 25:3.

42. Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20; cf. Luke 1:46-55,68-79; 2:29-32; Rom 8:31-39; 1 Cor 13:1-13; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 2:21-24; Rev 4:11; 5:9-12,13-14; 11:15,17-18; 15:2-4; 19:1-8. Gottfried Schille, *Frühchristliche Hymnen* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965), identifies thirty hymnic texts in the New Testament. Cf. Reinhard Deichgräber, *Gotteshymnus und Christushymnus in der frühen Christenheit. Untersuchungen zu Form, Sprache und Stil der frühchristlichen Hymnen*, SUNT 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967); Jack T. Sanders, *The New Testament Christological Hymns: Their Historical Religious Background*, SNTSMS 15 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Klaus Wengst, *Christologische Formeln und Lieder des Urchristentums*, StNT 7 (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1972); Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, *Jesus’ Death in Early Christian Memory: The Poetics of the Passion*, NTOA 53 (Göttingen; Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Academic Press, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666539541>.

43. Gunter Kennel, *Frühchristliche Hymnen? Gattungskritische Studien zur Frage nach den Liedern der frühen Christenheit*, WMANT 71 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1995).

44. Ralph Brucker, ‘Christushymnen’ oder ‘epideiktische Passagen’? *Studien zum Stilwechsel im Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt*, FRLANT 176 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), <https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666538599>; cf. Klaus Berger, *Formen und Gattungen im Neuen Testament*, UTB 2532 (Tübingen: Francke, 2005), 401–403; Paul A. Holloway, *Philippians, Hermeneia* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 115–116, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1tm7hgf>.

to Jesus who is celebrated as ‘Jesus Messiah, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth’ (Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς, ὁ μάρτυς, ὁ πιστός, ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλέων τῆς γῆς; Rev 1:5), as ‘the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David’ who has conquered (ὁ λέων ὁ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰούδα, ἡ ῥίζα Δαυίδ; Rev 5:5), all phrases which have messianic connotations. The believers in the congregations in Jerusalem and probably Damascus, and Aramaic-speaking Jerusalem believers who left Jerusalem, some of them active in the city of Rome,<sup>45</sup> would have sung the traditional psalms of the Scriptures in Hebrew as well as the new hymns and songs composed in Jerusalem – presumably written in Aramaic, but perhaps also in Hebrew, addressing Jesus as **אֵשׁוּא מְשִׁיכָה** (Yeshua<sup>c</sup> meshikha) and **אֵשׁוּא חַמְשִׁיכָה** (Yeshua<sup>c</sup> ha-mashiakh).

#### 4.4 Personal Study of the Hebrew Scriptures

Paul would have been immersed in Hebrew when he studied the Scriptures, relying, besides on his memory, on copies of Scriptural texts, *testimonia*, and/or excerpts.<sup>46</sup> The evidence for the view that Paul’s biblical quotations cannot all have been derived from memory but were taken directly from written texts does not need to be repeated here.<sup>47</sup> The varying text forms we find in Paul’s Old Testament quotations suggest that Paul’s primary interaction with the biblical text did not take place in the moment of dictation of his letters but in his personal study of the Scriptures,<sup>48</sup> which in turn suggests that ‘Paul engaged in a regular and persistent of study of Scripture throughout his missionary travels.’<sup>49</sup>

45. Probably Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7); cf. Richard J. Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 109–202; Richard J. Bauckham, ‘James and the Jerusalem Community’, in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, ed. O. Skarsaune and R. Hvalvik (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 55–95, here 86.

46. For *testimonia*, cf. Martin C. Albl, ‘And Scripture Cannot be Broken’: *The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections*, NTSup 96 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004267466>; for excerpts, cf. Koch, *Schrift*, 98–99, 253; Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 73–79; see David Lincicum, ‘Paul and the Testimonia: Quo Vademus?’ *JETS* 51 (2008): 297–308.

47. Cf. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 65–264; Koch, *Schrift*, 11–99, who confirmed the findings of Hans A. Vollmer, *Die alttestamentlichen Citate bei Paulus textkritisch und biblisch-theologisch gewürdigt* (Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1895), regarding the diversity of text-types in Paul’s Old Testament quotations.

48. Cf. Koch, *Schrift*, 99, who argues that Paul ‘im Zug seiner eigenen Beschäftigung mit der Schrift auch dazu übergegangen ist, planmäßig geeignet erscheinende Schriftworte zu sammeln, auf die er dann bei Abfassung seiner Briefe zurückgreifen konnte’; cf. *ibid.*, 99–101, 253, 284.

49. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 73; for the following remark see *ibid.* 73, n.27.

The scrolls of biblical texts that Paul studied could have been owned by local synagogues in which Paul regularly taught before being evicted, by local well-to-do Christian leaders who were patrons of congregations (note the probable role of Theophilus mentioned in Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1 for the publication of Luke-Acts),<sup>50</sup> or even by Paul himself (inferred by some from 2 Tim 4:13).<sup>51</sup> Christopher Stanley surmises that as Paul

came across passages that promised to be useful later on, he presumably copied them down onto his handy wax tablet, or perhaps even directly onto a loose sheet of parchment. At times he may even have included brief annotations to remind himself of how certain verses might be integrated into a later sermon or letter. This growing collection of biblical excerpts would then have become his primary resource for meditation and study in those times when he was traveling or staying in a private residence and had no immediate access to physical rolls of Scripture.<sup>52</sup>

If Paul wrote excerpts of the Hebrew Scriptures in Hebrew and included comments in Hebrew when he wanted to note, for example, connections of a Scriptural text with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, he would have written *ישוע המשיח* (*Yeshua' ha-mashiakh*), a phrase that he would also have used when he prayed in Hebrew. This scenario is reflected in the fact that modern translations of Paul's Greek letters into Hebrew translate Ἰησοῦς Χριστός uniformly as *ישוע המשיח* (*Yeshua' ha-mashiakh*).<sup>53</sup> When Paul wrote Aramaic summaries of his teaching, he would not have written Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, but *ישוע משיחא* (*Yeshua' meshikha*).

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50. Cf. Richard A. Burridge, 'About People, by People, for People: Gospel Genre and Audiences', in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. R. Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 113–145, here 139; Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 4 vols (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012–2015), 1:14, 656; see Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), *passim*.

51. Cf. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 19, n. 5; Otto Michel, *Paulus und seine Bibel* (BFCT 2.18; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1929), 123. But see Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 73, n. 27, who points out that while Paul's quotations from Isaiah come close to suggesting a consistency that one would expect from the use of a single scroll of an Old Testament book, the fact that several of Paul's quotations from Isaiah seem to come from a revised text of the Old Greek translation of Hebrew text while others follow the Septuagint text 'seems to argue against even this possibility'.

52. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 74.

53. Cf. Elias Hutter, *Novum Testamentum Domini nostri Iesu Christi. Syriacè, Ebraicè, Graecè, Latinè, Germanicè, Bohemicè, Italicè, Hispanicè, Gallicè, Anglicè, Danicè, Polonicè* (Noriberga [Nürnberg], 1599); Franz Delitzsch, *ספרי הברית החדשה. Testamentum Novum* (Leipzig:

#### 4.5 Personal and Corporate Prayer

The New Testament mentions two prayer exclamations (*Gebetsruf*) that the early Christian believers were quite obviously familiar with, one in Hebrew and one in Aramaic: ἀλληλουϊά, transliterating the Hebrew הַלְלוּ־יָהּ, ‘praise YHWH!’ (Rev 19:1,3,6), and μαράνα θά, transliterating אָתָּה אֲמָרְנָא, ‘Lord, come!’ (1 Cor 16:22; note the Greek translation ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ in Rev 22:20). One should also note the affirmation ἀμήν, transliterating אָמֵן, which is used 129 times in the New Testament, 15 times in Paul’s letters,<sup>54</sup> and the appellation of God as ἀββᾶ, transliterating Aramaic אָבָא, which Paul uses twice (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). These Hebrew and Aramaic terms reflect, so Norbert Baumert, the ‘*Urgestein christlicher Frömmigkeit*’ (‘primary rock of Christian piety’).<sup>55</sup> It is plausible to assume that earliest Christian piety did not use only a handful of words in Hebrew and Aramaic which made it into the Greek texts of the New Testament. These terms reflect the fact that the earliest believers, among them Paul, prayed in Hebrew and Aramaic and sang in Hebrew and Aramaic. Paul would have regularly used Hebrew when reciting the Scriptural psalms, and Hebrew and Aramaic in ‘free’ prayers when he prayed by himself or when he prayed with Aramaic-speaking Jewish co-workers (e.g. Silas – Acts 15:22,40; 16:15) and with Aramaic-speaking believers in the congregation in Jerusalem, thanking God for the life, death, and resurrection of אֲשֶׁר מָשִׁיחָא (Yeshua‘ meshikha). We know from Paul’s letters that he regularly prayed for the believers in the congregations he had founded, and for believers in congregations he knew and wanted to visit (Rome). We have no explicit evidence to answer the question in which languages Paul prayed when he addressed God in personal prayers. However, if the experience of contemporary multilingual Christians is any indication, he would have prayed in all languages he knew – in Greek, in Aramaic, and in Hebrew – at different times, depending on the situation. Since Paul usually refers to Ἰησοῦς Χριστός in his written thanksgivings and prayers,<sup>56</sup> he would have used אֲשֶׁר מָשִׁיחָא and יֵשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ, ‘Jesus Messiah’, when he prayed in Aramaic and in Hebrew.

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Ackermann & Glaser, 1878); הַבְּרִית הַחַדְשָׁה/הַדְרָךְ (Hebrew Living New Testament; Biblica, 1979/2009).

54. Rom 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 16:27; 1 Cor 14:16; 2 Cor 1:20; Gal 1:5; 6:18; Eph 3:21; Phil 4:20; 1 Thess 3:13; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim 4:18.

55. Norbert Baumert, ‘Maranatha: Gegenwart und Ankunft des Herrn – 1 Kor 16,22’, in *Studien zu den Paulusbriefen*, SBAB 32 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2001), 49–58, here 49.

56. 1 Thess 1:3; 1 Cor 1:4,6,7,8,9; 2 Cor 1:3,5; Rom 1:8; Eph 1:3,4,5,9,11,12,15,17,20; Phil 1:6,8,10,11; Col 1:3,4,7; Phlm 5,6.



## 5. Conclusion: The Significance of the Proclamation of Jesus Messiah

Paul was a believer in Jesus, a missionary, and a pastor, active in different cultural and linguistic settings. He studied Scriptural texts; he prayed privately and publicly in local congregations; he spoke before Jewish and Greek audiences, before believers in Jesus and before unbelievers, in Damascus and Jerusalem, in Corinth and in Ephesus. When Paul spoke and wrote in Greek, he called Jesus of Nazareth Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. In contexts in which he used Hebrew and Aramaic, he would have used the expressions *ישוע המשיח* (*Yeshua' ha-mashiakh*) and *ישוע משיחא* (*Yeshua' meshikha*). The question why Paul did not dispense with the term Χριστός in his missionary preaching before Gentile audiences in which he proclaimed Jesus as Χριστός ἐσταυρωμένος, the crucified Messiah (1 Cor 1:23; 2:2), and why he included the term frequently in his letters to congregations, is linked with the question of what the appellation 'Messiah' meant for Paul. He may have spoken of Jesus as Messiah in order to highlight the overwhelming power and authority of God's Messiah who mediates God's presence to his people, a conviction that was based on Jesus' miracles.<sup>57</sup> The fact that Paul's Scriptural source texts are mostly associated with the house of David may suggest that he saw his Gentile mission as grounded in a vision of the Davidic king ruling over the nations (Isa 11:10; 2 Sam 22 = Ps 18).<sup>58</sup> Alternatively, the significance of Jesus' messiahship may be linked with Paul's emphasis on the believers in Jesus sharing in the rule and reign of the Messiah.<sup>59</sup> Since Jesus, in particular his death, resurrection, and exaltation, was not only relevant but central for Paul's self-understanding, for his interpretation of the Scriptures, and for his missionary proclamation among Jews and Gentiles, he remained consistently committed to Jesus' messianic dignity.<sup>60</sup> Paul, the Torah

57. McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 171; cf. *ibid.*, 24–32.

58. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*, 173.

59. Jipp, *Messianic Theology*, 180. Regarding the suggestion of Karrer, *Der Gesalbte*, 406, that the term Χριστός, the 'Anointed One', was an ideal term for Paul's missionary work since the Jewish concept of the 'Anointed One' did not correspond to real historical figures, since the term Χριστός relates to practices of anointing, not to Jewish messianic redeemer figures, and since Χριστός would be understood in the Greco-Roman world as relating to holiness, being close to deity, see the critique in Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 2:1406, and, more recently, Anna Maria Schwemer, 'Jesus Christus als Prophet, König und Priester: Das *munus triplex* und die frühe Christologie', in *Der messianische Anspruch Jesu und die Anfänge der Christologie*, ed. M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer, WUNT 138 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 165–230, here 166–169 and *passim*.

60. Schwemer, 'Jesus Christus', 203, and *passim*, who comments on the royal, priestly, and prophetic dimensions of the early Jewish messianic expectations.

expert who was committed to faith in Jesus, the crucified and risen One, studied, prayed, proclaimed, taught, and wrote as the envoy of *Yeshua' ha-mashiakh*.

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