

Wisdom literature and NT Christology

A. Feuillet, Le Christ Sage de Dieu d'apres les epitres pauliniennes, Paris: Gabalda, 1966

1 Cor 2, 6-8

1 Cor 2, 9

1 Cor 8, 4-6

1 Cor 10, 1-4

2 Cor 3, 17-18

Col 1, 15-20

Eph 1, 23; 3, 18

Other developments of a more complex origin

Conclusion generale 361-400

M. Jack Suggs

Wisdom, Christology and Law in Matthew's Gospel

Cambridge, Harvard U P, 1970

J. Rindel Harris

The Origin of the Prologue to Saint John's Gospel

Cambridge: At the university press, 1917

p. 43

Fuller, The Foundations of NT Christology, Chapter nine

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Two focus Christology: Acts 3, 19-24; Early Palestinian Earthly Ministry; Resurrection ascension; inactive waiting of Messiah designate; Parousia of Jesus as actually messiah

Hellenistic Judaism: Acts 2, 36; Two Stage Christology Rom 1, 3.4 Sending, Earthly ministry, Resurrection, Enthronement of Jesus as Khristos and Kurios, His Reign, His future return

The Gentile Mission: Three Stage Christology: Christological Hymns With God, Creation, Incarnation, Earthly ministry, Resurrection, Enthronement, Return at Parousia

Phil 2, 6-11

p. 206: it '... is the product of Jewish Christian missionaries working in a mainly Hellenistic gentile environment. They were sensitive to its ~~messiah~~ outlook and needs, and used materials provided by the sophia and anthropos myth already current in Hellenistic Judaism, by the Hellenistic world view, and by the earlier Hellenistic Jewish kerugma. There is no need to look further afield for the origin of this hymn.'

Col 1, 15-20. P. 214 f.

First two strophes express the sophia myth 15-18a
Third shifts to Adam/Christ typology 18b-20

1 Tim 3, 16. P. 216 ff.

Differs from Phil 2. Not a kenosis but an epiphany of divinity.

1 Peter 3, 18-22 (1, 20)

Differs from Phil as does 1 Tim.

Hebrews 1, 1-4. P. 221 ff

vv. 2 and 3: sophia literature; v. 4: redemption

John 1, 1-14. P. 222.

P. 223 reasons against Bultmann's rejection of sophia origin
P. 224: 'We conclude therefore that the Logos hymn of the prologue is a pre-johannine hymn which contains material derived ultimately from the growing Logos speculation within Hellenistic Judaism. But it is a Christian adaptation of that myth. for the statement in John 1, 14, The Logos became flesh, is only possible within Christianity.'

Wisdom, p. 72 ff.

Job 28, 23-28 section attributed to fifth or sixth century writer

Proverbs 8, 1-21 agent of revelation

8, 22-31, brought into being before all creation

Part of Book I, which was assembled by teacher of third or fourth century

Ben Sirach 6, 18-31 exhortation to pursue wisdom

14, 20-27 ditto

24, 3-22 Wisdom speaks for itself; creature, eternal

Composed by teacher about 180 BC, translated into Gk about 132

The Wisdom of Solomon

Composed in the latter part of the first century BC by an unknown Hellenistic Jew probably at Alexandria. Earlier materials traditional and in Hebrew; whole book originally in Gk

Wisdom of Solomon, 7, 22-27

Wisdom personified, emanation from God, pervades all things, in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets.

Logos, p. 75 f.

Given the sophia myth as it had already established itself in Hellenistic Judaism, and given this terminological shift from sophia to logos (Wisdom 9, ~~1a~~ 1b-2a; Philo), we already have sufficient BACKGROUND TO ACCOUNT FOR THE USE OF LOGOS in the Johannine prologue... In the Johannine prologue it is not a question of direct borrowing from oriental mythology, but the direct adaptation to Christology from Hellenistic Judaism of a concept which had long been firmly established in Judaism, but from time to time had received enrichments from extra-Jewish mythology." Fuller, p. 76

Gnostic Redeemer Myth

After expounding Reitzenstein and Bultmann, Fuller p. 95: "When we examine some of the earlier gnostic literary remains, particularly those of early Jewish gnosis, we find that the redeemer figure is not featured. Instead what happens is that A GNOSIS OR REVELATION IS IN SOME WAY CONVEYED DIRECTLY to human beings. In the Jewish gnostic Adma literature this revelation is first conveyed to Adam, and is then handed on from generation to generation. Adam is here apparently equivalent to the fallen first man, who then lives on in his descendents. The same type of myth appears to underlie the literary remains of early Jewish Christian gnosticism. The "true prophet" who figures in in the pseudo-Clementine literature is equated with Adam. His function is to pass on the true gnosis. He re-appears in a whole succession of figures, including Jesus, until finally he reaches the "heavenly rest." The early fathers complained of the low christology of the Elkesaites. This is due to the fact that Jesus in these Jewish-Christian gnostic systems is not a redeemer figure, but one of the successive recipients of gnosis or wisdom revelation. In the pre-Christian Jewish gnosis this revelation first came with Adam, the fallen first man. It was then passed on to his OT successors. In the Jewish Christian adaptations Jesus is simply added to the list."

P. 96: Two parts to Bultmann's form of the myth

- a) The first man who falls from the world of light and enters the thralldom on the material world
- b) There is the distinct concept of of the heavenly wisdom or revelation which enters the world through a series of emissaries in each successive generation bringing the gnosis that will release man from his fallen condition. This second ~~part~~ part firmly embedded itself in ~~the~~ Judaism in the hokhma-sophia tradition

The first part was formulated by Philo in the interests of the Genesis story and Platonism

P. 97: There is no evidence of a pre-existent redeemer who becomes incarnate.

Jesus self-understanding Chapter five

p. 130: "Jesus understood his mission in terms of eschatological prophecy and was confident of its vindication by the Son of man at the end. As the eschatological prophet he was not merely announcing the future coming of salvation and judgement, but actually initiating it in his words and works. It is the unexpressed a/ implicit figure of the eschatological prophet which gives unity to all of Jesus' historical activity, his proclamation, his teaching with exousia ("authority"), his healings and exorcisms, his conduct in eating with the outcast, and finally his death in the fulfilment of his prophetic mission. Take the implied self-understanding of his role in terms of the eschatological prophet away, and the whole ministry falls into a series of unrelated, if not meaningless, fragments.

"It must not be inferred that "eschatological prophet" is the definitive understanding of Jesus' person. This concept cannot be used as a corrective either of the christological responses of the New Testament church or the subsequent metaphysical development of Christology which culminated in Chalcedon and Nicea. Jesus did not define his own person as that of an eschatological prophet. It was simply the working concept which guided him in the tasks of his earthly ministry. The basic datum of NT Christology is not the concept of Jesus as eschatological prophet, but his /131/ proclamation and activity which confront men and women with the presence and saving act of Godbreaking into history, and his utter commitment and entire obedience to the will of God which made him the channel of that saving activity. To interpret that datum in terms of explicit Christology was the task of the post-Easter church, in whose kerygma the Proclaimed became the Proclaimed."

On eschatological prophet, pp 46-49, 67, 125-129

On words and works, pp. 103-108

The Son of God pp. 114 f.

Mk 12, 1-12 Parable of vineyard. F doubts that 12, 6 is Jesus speaking about himself

Mk 13, 32. Because of apocalyptic setting, F says that "Son" replaces an original "Son of man"

Matt 11, 25-27. P. 136 n. 54: A church formation based on Jesus' filial consciousness (Abba) and his invitation of others to such a mode of address, on the notion of the servant, and on the son of man.

B. M. F. Van Iersel

"Der Sohn' in den synoptischen Jesusworten

Supplements to Novum Testamentum, vol III

Leiden (Brill) 1961²1964

argues that these three texts do represent Jesus' readiness to speak of his divine filiation though he refuses identification with such titles as Messiah Son of man Son of God

P. 121: Jesus s distinguished between himself and the Son of Man
Mk 8, 38; Lk 12, 8. On Son of Man, pp. 34-43

P. 142: The Kerygma of the Earliest Church: The Two Foci Christology
Jesus had proclaimed that the Kingdom of God is at hand
He had claimed that those that accepted him would be accepted by the
Son of Man when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy
angels, and those ashamed of him would be shamed by by the son of man
But his proclamation and claim had been put in question by his
crucifixion and death

The vindication of his claim did not await the coming of the Son of Man
It was effected by God in raising him from the dead. It followed
that the disciples now saw in Jesus the one that was to come
as the & Son of Man. Sayings of Jesus that had been in the first
person became sayings in the third person about the Son of Man. 144.

Mk 8, 38 has undergone apocalyptic elaboration of Lk 12 8 (145)
Mk 13, 24-27 possibly taken over from a pre-Christian apocalypse (145)
or Mk 13, 26 a Marcan creation with Christological intent
etc to p. 151

Pp. 151 - 155: The Suffering Son of Man
NT mainly soteriological. Soteriology combines with apologetic
in the affirmation that the Son of Man wws to be scourged crucified
die and rise again

Pp. 155-173: The Terminological Shift
Rabbi 155 Mari marana 156 Messiah 158 Death and resurrection of
Messiah 160 Son of David 162 Son of God 164 (Rom 1, 3-5; 165 older
formula) Mosaic servant-prophet 167 (Acts 3, 12-26)

P. 173 Summary

It is difficult not to admire the christological achievement of
the earliest Palestinian church. Its doctrine of Jesus as the
Mosaic prophetic servant in his earthly life, and as the one who
was to come shortly as the Son of Man to vindicate openly his word
and work, conveyed in terms of an explicit christology precisely
what Jesus had implied about himself throughout his ministry.
It enabled the history of Jesus to be interpreted not merely
in terms of a prophetic proclamation of a futre & eschatological
act, but in terms of the soteriological redemptive event which
had already occurred in that history and which awaited consummation.
.... The prophetic Christology brings out fully the soteriological
aspects of Jesus' history. And this was precisely its intention.
Where it proved inadequate was when the Christian mission shifted to
the Hellenistic world. Here not functional but ontic categories
were needed to interpret Jesus' earthly work.

The Hellenistic Jewish Mission

- 182 Acts 6, 1 ff. presents Hellenistic Jewish community ~~xxxxxxx~~ arising in Palestine and in close touch with Aramaic speaking community
At first simple translation of Aramaic titles into corresponding Gk words; same two foci christology was expressed
- 183 But to announce the Xtian message to ^{Hellenistic} Jews, to instruct them in their faith, to defend their mission against Hellenistic Jewish opponents, they employed not the Hebrew OT but the LXX translation. There resulted a terminological shift.
- 184-6 Act 2 36; Ps 110, 1: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.
In Greek kurios repeated; in Hebrew Yahweh said to my Adonai
Two foci becomes two stage christology
No inactive period as in Act 3, 20: Jesus is already made Lord and Christ

LXX regularly uses kurios as translation of Yahweh
OT passages in which Kurios translates Yahweh begin to be applied to Jesus. Fuller considers such application by Hellenist Judaism to be not ontic but functional; Jesus is the one ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ through whom divine power is exercised.

187-197: similar shifts in other titles.

Summary 197

"The task of the Hellenistic Jewish missionaries was to convey the Christian message of the saving act of God in Jesus to Greek speaking Jews who, like themselves, ~~ka~~ were reared on the LXX. Its achievement was to transform the earliest Palestinian kerygma, with its two foci of Jesus historical ministry of exousia and the parousia as its vindication, into a proclamation orientated chiefly upon the present work of the Exalted One. To this present exalted work the historical ministry was a preliminary stage and the parousia the expected consummation. But the Hellenistic Jewish community still thought in functional terms: it was not concerned with the nature of Jesus in his earthly ~~work~~ life. And it had barely raised the question of the pre-existence of the Redeemer. And, while it could apply to Jesus in a functional sense OT texts originally referring to YHWH-kurios, it had not yet raised the ontic question of the divinity of the exalted Lord. But it had laid the necessary foundations for these developments in the gentile mission.