Christology in the Letters to Timothy and Titus.

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Contours of Christology in the New Testament

Edited by
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CHAPTER 10

Christology in the Letters to Timothy and Titus

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Past studies of the letters to Timothy and Titus have returned various verdicts concerning their character and relationship to "Pauline" theology. Comparisons of their contents with those of the undisputed letters—particularly with the christology of Paul's major letters, which are often viewed as exhibiting a rather complete symmetry on the subject—have been a mainstay of scholarship, with disparities between these two sets of letters usually highlighted. And conclusions about the sources of their theology—that is, whether Johanneine, pre-Pauline, reworked Pauline, Jesus logia, rabbinic speculation, or some combination—have generally measured their distance from Paul as well.

Hans Windisch in 1935 discerned a pre-Pauline hue to the material, and suggested that, in the main, the author bypassed Pauline categories in the construction of an adoptionist christology based on Synoptic and other early Christian traditions (see his "Zur Christologie der Pastoralbriefe"). Many scholars have concurred—though, of course, with various adjustments—and so have laid stress on the non-Pauline character of the writer's sources and his subsequent christology. Hanna Stettler's 1998 study, in fact, which argues that the author of these letters was most influenced by the Son of Man tradition as it appears in the Gospel tradition, is not unlike Windisch's. Others, however, have followed Martin Dibelius, who asserted that the christology of the Pastoral Epistles is totally eclectic, unoriginal, and without unity (cf. Dibelius and Conzelmann, Pastoral Epistles, especially 8 and 10).

But the scholarly response that Dibelius eventually provoked seems,
of late, to have found a better path. For more nuanced interpretations of the letters have regarded the author as an interpreter of Paul (and other materials) who sought to present a “Paul” adjusted for a new theological, cultural, and linguistic situation (e.g., Hasler, “Epiphanie und Christologie in den Pastoralbriefen”; Donelson, *Pseudoepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*; Oberlinner, *Titusbrief*; and Lager, *Christologie der Pastoralbriefe*). And most scholars today, whatever their views of authorship, emphasize the vitality, distinctiveness, and unity of the christology of the Pastoral Epistles, though many points are still in dispute.

While real gains have been made — particularly with respect to the themes of epiphany, savior and salvation, the Greek ethical perspective, and the social setting of the letters — the consensus view of the Pastoral Epistles as “pseudopigrapha” (i.e., written in the name of Paul by a later Pauline disciple, in accord with “widely accepted practice”) has kept the investigation of these letters on a narrow, one-way track. The views of this approach need not here be rehearsed. It is necessary to point out, however, that some have recognized that the assumptions and methodology of this approach — whether a consensus view or not — are neither airtight nor completely compelling (cf. Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 79-92; Johnson, *Letters to Timothy*, 55-90). As a consequence, reopened questions and a renewed evaluation of the data have led Marshall to opt for something closer to Paul, which he calls “allonymity” (*Pastoral Epistles*, 83-84), and have caused Johnson to redouble his efforts to understand these letters within the historical Pauline framework (*Letters to Timothy*, 91-99). I simply want to use the room created by the present state of uncertainty to treat the letters as substantially historical and to address one particular methodological mistake of the consensus view.

One of the most disadvantageous features of the current scholarly consensus is the assumption that these three letters constitute one three-part corpus. There are, of course, reasons to think that they are related (see Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 1-2; Oberlinner, *Erster Timotheusbrief*, xxii-xxiii). But their relationship, I believe, has been over-read by scholars to the point where the features of the letters that argue for their individuality — including their respective treatments of christology — have been suppressed.

The two letters to Timothy and the one letter to Titus purport to be separate letters written to Pauline coworkers. The letters identified as 1 Timothy and Titus contain elements of the ancient type of document called *manda præ* newly commissioned, patched, and so a letters to Timothy, 137 incorporates examinations of polemic (1 cluster (cf. the clus nians, 1-2 Corinthians neither should they sages. In what folk unite and the fact
interpretations of Paul (and other authors) for a new theological, ethical, and Christological center. Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles, Christologie der Paulinischen Pastoralbriefe, their views of authorship, and the christology of the Pastoral Epistles. With respect to the ethical perspective, the ethical view of the Pastoral Epistles (the work of Paul by a later “secretary”) has kept the views of this secretary. The views of this secretary, however, have been treated as a supplement to the methodology of this letter. I simply want to treat the letters within their own context (83-84), and have not sought to separate these letters within this study (xxvii). I simply want to treat the letters within their own context and to highlight their common christological features.

1. Common Christological Features

and the Search for a Christological Center

Christological meaning does not reside simply in titles or names apart from their respective contexts. While contextual considerations will be important in our separate treatments of each of the Pastoral Epistles, it is necessary first to lay out the raw materials that appear in all three letters and to highlight their common christological features.

Common Titles and Names

The use of titles and names in the Pastoral Epistles other than “Savior” exhibits little thematic stress. “Christ Jesus” occurs twenty-five times, whereas on six occasions the order is “Jesus Christ”—which variation seems to reflect no particular pattern. “Lord” accompanies “Christ Jesus” three times (1 Tim 1:2, 12; 2 Tim 1:2) and “Jesus Christ” twice (1 Tim 6:3, 14) and occurs independently as a designation for Christ fourteen times. It is not apparent that “Christ Jesus,” “Jesus Christ,” and “Christ” have lost any of their “Pauline” theological significance, and the occurrence of these appellations in soteriological texts bears this out (cf. 1 Tim 1:15, 16; 2:5; 2 Tim 1:9-10; 2:8; Tit 2:13; 3:6).

Furthermore, that Christ is “Lord” has reference in the Pastoral Epistles to both his resurrection and his exaltation. Appeals are directed to the Lord for mercy and blessing (2 Tim 1:16, 18; 2:7; 4:22) and for vindication
(2 Tim 4:14); the Lord's claim on the church is the framework for matters concerning church and mission (1 Tim 6:3, 14; 2 Tim 1:8; 4:8); and Christ is to be "Lord" and "Judge" at his second coming (2 Tim 1:16, 18; 4:1, 8; cf. 1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 2:12). However, neither Adam christology, nor "Jesus" independently, nor the title "Son of God" occurs in these letters. Once Jesus is simply designated "the Christ" (1 Tim 5:11).

With the discovery that the author was a creative theologian (contra Dibelius and Conzelmann, Pastoral Epistles, 9), two features have been typically thought to hold the clue to the coherence or unity of the christology of the Pastoral Epistles: (1) the depiction of Christ as Savior and (2) the epiphany concept. These macro-features, however, always have to be held in tension with the micro-themes and concerns of the individual letters themselves. Nonetheless, as overarching christological features that are common to all three letters, their presence and significance must first be considered — after which we will then explore the unique ways in which each letter develops these interrelated thoughts.

But even more basic than these features is the need to recognize that all the theological elements of these letters serve the broader theme of "salvation in the present age." It is this dominant story that the various kerygmatic statements in all three letters seek to retell (see Towner, Goal of Our Instruction, 75-119; Marshall, Pastoral Epistles, 291-92; Matera, New Testament Christology, 158-59). Their retelling is noticeably Hellenistic in form. More importantly, their retelling seems to have been motivated by a combination of such overlapping concerns as (1) combating false teaching, (2) safeguarding the Pauline gospel, and (3) continuing the Christian mission after Paul's death. The reality of salvation is coupled in these letters with a call for a distinctively Christian response that is both ethical and an expression of true faith. And within each letter christology serves the broader theme of salvation in the present age, taking the shape required by the specific historical and literary situation.

**Common Use of "Savior"**

"Savior" (sōtēr) was already a well-known appellation of Yahweh in the Septuagint, where the exodus was the archetypal salvation event. In New Testament usage, "Savior" depicts God as the Savior of the world through the gift of his Son. Use of the title for Christ, however, was slow to develop and is limited to Tit 1:4; 2:13; 3:4; John 3:35 in writings (John 4:22).

Perhaps unexpected is the emperor delay, used of Christ (sōtēr) being the archetypal figure andenta influence of Roman religion on the church, gods; we should not have been chosen. In the Pastoral Epistles — and somewhere Tit 3:4 and 6). Five bibl the archetypal end (Tit 2:13; 3:10; 3:14; 3:15). The plan is implemented at the end (Tit 3:14) with caution, the christology of the Pastoral Epistles.

Yet activation of the sōtēr word group in 1 Timothy — as into the world, the epistle — perhaps or perhaps the features of christology...
framework for matters (1:18; 4:8); and Christ is God (Phil 2:6; Eph 1:10, 18; 4:1, 8; cf. 1 Tim 1:16, 18; 4:1, 8). Christology, nor “Jesus” in these letters. Once Jesus became the prophetic theologian (contra Tournel, contra Old Testament rootage and the use of “Savior” language for Hellenistic kings, heroes, and gods, we should not imagine that Christians simply co-opted such politically loaded language as a matter of convenience. Rather, the title seems to have been chosen deliberately to make a point.

In the Pastoral Epistles, God and Christ are both designated “Savior” — and sometimes in close proximity (see especially Tit 1:3-4; 2:10 and 13; 3:4 and 6). Five of six occurrences depict God as “Savior” in the sense of being the architect and initiator of the salvation plan (1 Tim 2:3; 4:10; Tit 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; cf. 1 Tim 1:1). Christ as “Savior” is the means by which this plan is implemented in history (2 Tim 1:10; Tit 3:6; cf. 1:14) and fulfilled at the end (Tit 2:13). 1 Timothy, however, does not use “Savior” for Christ, which cautions against overplaying its role in establishing “the coherence” of christology in these letters.

Yet activities associated with “Savior” are implicit in the use of the σώζω word group and other theological formulations of the Christ event in 1 Timothy — for example, the “faithful saying” of 1:15: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” So the concept seems to be latent in the letter. Suppression of the title itself in 1 Timothy may have resulted from reticence to make the claims that were associated with it in the ancient world — or perhaps it was simply the author’s choice to emphasize certain other features of christology in that particular letter (as will be detailed below).

Common Epiphany Motif

Recent scholars have spoken of an “epiphany christology” in the Pastoral Epistles, though there is a wide variation among their interpretations. Victor Hasler, who in 1977 was the first to develop the theme, detected in “epiphany” a retreat from Paul’s apocalyptic outlook and new interest in...
God's transcendence and the complete futurity of salvation. Lorenz Oberlinner in 1980 argued that the concept shifted the focus in eschatology from the \textit{parousia} to the presence of salvation in the world. Neither view, however, is entirely in line with the eschatology of these letters (cf. Towner, \textit{Goal of Our Instruction}, 66-71; Marshall, \textit{Pastoral Epistles}, 293-96). More helpfully, Andrew Lau in 1996 concluded that the concept represents a reconfiguration of traditional christology for a Greek audience rather than a Hellenizing departure from it.

Both the noun \textit{epiphaneia} (1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 1:10; 4:1, 8; Tit 2:13; cf. 2 Thess 2:8) and the verb \textit{epiphainō} (Tit 2:11; 3:4 in the aorist) refer to an “appearance.” In Hellenistic religious discourse, these terms were used of the appearance of a god (e.g., Athena) on behalf of his or her worshipers and so paralleled the concept of “savior.” The emphasis in the term on divine assistance made it an effective device to explore the Christian belief that God’s salvation had intervened in history in a person — sometimes highlighting the movement from invisibility to visibility. The Septuagint and Hellenistic Judaism used the concept of epiphany to retell the stories of Yahweh’s interventions in the world, thereby providing some precedent for its later Christian use (see Lau, \textit{Manifest in Flesh}, 179-223).

The “epiphany” motif in the Pastoral Epistles has two foci. The one that is most clearly demarcated is the future appearance of Christ (1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 4:1, 8; Tit 2:13), where \textit{epiphaneia} is effectively synonymous with \textit{parousia} (“coming,” “presence”). But when \textit{epiphaneia} is used of the historical appearance of Christ as Savior (2 Tim 1:10), the phrase “through the gospel” suspends closure of the “epiphany” and allows consideration of its extension into — and effects on — present human life (cf. Tit 1:2-3). The use of the verb with reference to appearances of God’s grace in Tit 2:11 and 3:4, which are descriptive references to the Christ event, is similar.

Does this mean, as Howard Marshall argues, that “the past epiphany is not restricted to the actual historical event of the life of Jesus but encompasses the ongoing effects that are brought about by the gospel . . . [that is] one epiphany inaugurated by the coming of Jesus and continuing throughout present and future time” (Marshall, \textit{Pastoral Epistles}, 295; cf. Oberlinner, \textit{Titusbrief}, 156-57; Läger, \textit{Christologie der Pastoralbriefe}, 111-19)? Or is it that this formative epiphany in some sense recurs in the proclamation of the gospel? In either case, it is important to see that references to the past epiphany of Christ serve as a focus for reflection on the event’s salvific effects in human culture. Tit 2:11 and 3:4, in context, refer obliquely to the Christ event in perspectives:

1. God’s grace was revealed in and through the Christ event and continues to be revealed.

Epistolography and ecological “epiphany” also engage the doxological, rethinking of political language, and needs to be supported by the past human dimension. For the past — both in scriptural and Temple contexts — the role of the Messiah and the presence and death (cf. \textit{Manifest in Flesh}, 182-223).
the priority of salvation. Lorenz (id) the focus in eschatology on the world. Neither view of these letters (cf. Towner, Pastoral Epistles, 293-96). More the concept represents a readdressment audience rather than a

Preexistence, which is an attribute of deity, probably attaches to the epiphany concept as used of Christ in the Pastoral Epistles. It represents a christological “experiment” in which Paul explores the link between God’s salvation plan and its manifestation in and through a preexistent Savior, the Messiah (2 Tim 1:9-10; cf. 1 Tim 1:15; see Lau, Manifest in Flesh, 279). And in combination with the accumulation of epithets and activities formerly associated with Yahweh — Savior, Judge, and Lord — and offering of doxological praise (2 Tim 4:18b), the epiphany motif expresses a christology that encompasses deity.

Epiphany christology reconceptualizes the relation between eschatology and ethics. For by establishing with a single word that the past historical “epiphany” introduces salvation and the future “epiphany” completes it, the present age between these poles — which is a temporal tension that is so important in these letters — comes fully under the influence of “epiphany.” This is especially noticeable in Tit 2:11-14 and 3:4-7. And the role of proclamation as influencing the present age in 2 Tim 1:10 and Titus 1:3 strikes a similar note.

What motivated the choice of this motif? Undoubtedly, as with the title “Savior,” epiphany language must have been deliberately chosen to engage the dominant religious-political discourse of the day and to force a rethinking of these categories by the proclamation of God’s story in Hellenistic dress. Perhaps the challenge posed by co-opting such religious-political language should be considered profound enough. But it also needs to be recognized that the use of “epiphany” with reference to the past human experience of Christ (cf. 2 Tim 1:10) sharpens the subversive point. For the term called to mind divine power and divine intervention — both in secular Greek thought and in the religious sensibilities of Second Temple Judaism (cf. 1 Chron 17:21 LXX; 2 Macc 2:21-23; 8:24-28; 12:2; 14:15; 15:27; Josephus, Antiquities 9.53-60; see further Lau, Manifest in Flesh, 182-225). In the epiphany of Jesus Christ, however, divine power and presence are disguised in the forms of human weakness, suffering, and death (cf., e.g., Paul’s experiences recounted in 2 Corinthians 10-12). The allusion in the Pastoral Epistles to preexistence only heightens the paradox.

to the Christ event in order to view it from both theological and ethical perspectives. In any case, as I see it, the relationships are threefold: (1) God’s grace has appeared in the epiphany of his Son; (2) it is being revealed in and through the church’s proclamation of the gospel; and (3) it will be revealed finally and ultimately in the future epiphany of the Lord.
“Epiphany,” therefore, is not just catchy language. Rather, it seeks to retell the gospel in a most thought-provoking way.

Summation

Christology in the letters to Timothy and Titus is oriented, in somewhat varying degrees, around the dual themes of “Savior” and “epiphany.” The visibility or grip of these themes, however, varies as the letters are read individually and as other goals decide the extent to which christology is served by these themes in each letter. The best illustration of this is 1 Timothy’s non-use of “Savior” for Christ and its limitation of “epiphany” language to only one occurrence (see below). The decision to adapt this religiously-politically loaded language for Christian proclamation reveals the intention of each of the letters, to one degree or another, to take the dialogue with the culture of the day to another level, as we will see in the following three sections of this article.

2. The Man Christ Jesus:
The Shape of Christology in 1 Timothy

The occasion and genre of 1 Timothy determine, in large measure, the shape of the letter’s christology. There is broad agreement that Paul’s chief concerns here were (1) to allay the opposition and (2) to restore church leadership. The opponents were anti-Pauline with a Jewish or Judaizing element (1:2). Their type of gnōsis (“knowledge”) included ascetic renunciation of the world (4:3-4), and their scriptural exegesis was speculative. The community itself was experiencing social instability, as the teaching regarding women and slaves suggests. But the relation of that instability to the issues raised by the opposition is unclear.

The usual explanation for these features has been, and still is, to refer in some manner to Gnosticism. But the situations of the churches at Corinth and Colossae provide better points of comparison (see Johnson, Letters to Timothy, 144-45; Towner, Goal of Our Instruction, 33-36). Of the aberrant theology, we know only that the opponents sought to distance themselves from the world. Perhaps their view of salvation was elitist and over-realized. Or, perhaps it was simply that their ethical outworking of the faith encouraged by the christological emphasis on belief, though such certain, as we will high 1 Timothy supports.

As Luke John’s logical perspective, bring ing of reality”), write fulness” (1:4). The decision to address his readers in their culture, that social panding outward con tinuous with the...

Leaving aside the clear that Paul reg ar. The heretics, on es from the household of God’s for the letter is used to a ma society.

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the faith encouraged disengagement from life in the world. Other christological emphases in the letter may combat specific distortions of belief, though such matters are somewhat uncertain. But what seems certain, as we will highlight below, is that the christological presentation of 1 Timothy supports engagement in the world.

As Luke Johnson demonstrates (Letters to Timothy, 147-54), the theological perspective of 1 Timothy is that of *oikonomia theou* ("God's ordering of reality"), with the appropriate response to this being human "faithfulness" (1:4). The "household" language of the letter indicates that Paul addressed his readers in the understanding, which was common to that culture, that social structure — beginning with the "household" and expanding outward to include civic, political, and religious life — was continuous with the divine will.

Leaving aside the question of how far he accepts the status quo, it is clear that Paul regards the social structure as continuous with God's ordering. The heretics, however, stand in opposition to this ordering, as 1:4 announces from the outset. From here, the description of the church as the "household of God" (3:15) unfolds. And on this basis, the christology of the letter is used to affirm the relevance of salvation and ministry within human society.

The "Saying" of 1:15

The first extensive christological reflection in 1 Timothy comes at 1:15: "The word is trustworthy and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — among whom I am the foremost." Located after Paul's first engagement with the false teachers (1:3-10) — and as a reflection of "the gospel" (1:11) and his own experience of mercy and calling (1:12-16) — the saying illustrates his gospel in polemical contrast with that of the false teachers.

First it needs to be noted that this "faithful" or "trustworthy" saying, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," combines at least two strands of tradition. Johannine theology seems to have been fond of speaking of Jesus as "coming into the world" (John 9:39; 11:27; 16:28), but the salvific purpose of that "coming" is never explicitly attached to the Johannine statements. Luke speaks of the Son of Man coming to save sinners (cf. Luke 19:10), but there is no reference in that statement to his
“coming into the world.” Paul’s weaving of these traditional strands, however, exceeds both traditions in placing the saving work of Christ Jesus into historical relief as a divine work carried out in the human context.

A second point to note is that while the preexistence of Christ, and hence the divine origin of salvation, is implicit in 1:15, the weight of the saying that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” is on the humanity of Jesus and its significance. As elsewhere in Paul, this statement telescopes the whole earthly experience of Jesus into the event of his coming (cf. Gal 4:4-5; Rom 8:3-4). Furthermore, the location “into the world” (i.e., the world in need of God) and the declared target of his “coming” (i.e., “to save sinners”) disclose the relevance of this tradition for the present church.

The ongoing relevance and authority of this saying are highlighted by Paul’s application of its contents to himself. For his apostleship and experience of God’s mercy (cf. 1:12-14) are fruits of the work of the Messiah, who lived as a human — and the fact of the Messiah’s humanness, Paul insists, must remain central to an understanding of the gospel. Paul’s own experience is drawn on to assure Timothy of Christ’s human relevance. So whatever else christology might mean, it certainly requires that the ministry of the Christian gospel be carried out in the present sinful world, and it expects that salvation will have its effect in changing this world from within.

This opening christological statement, therefore, combines traditional elements that affirm (1) the humanity of Christ and (2) salvation as its corollary. Paul’s own experience illustrates the linkage. Salvation is a present reality. But it is a salvation that is anchored in the humanity of God’s Messiah — with that humanity actually making the difference “for those who will believe for eternal life” (1:16; cf. 1:1).

25-6

The second christological statement of 1 Timothy appears at 2:5-6: “There is one God; there is one mediator between God and humankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.” This statement also occurs within a broader, carefully constructed discourse about salvation (2:1-7), with the notion of the universality of salvation being central to the argument of the discourse (note the repetition of “all” in vv. 1, 2, 4, and 6). Thus
traditional strands, however, work of Christ Jesus into the human context.

The preexistence of Christ, and in 1:15, the weight of the "have sinners" is on the human context. In Paul, this statement into the event of his com-munication "into the world" and target of his "coming" tradition for the pres-edge sinful world, and it brings this world from before, combines tradi-tion (1) salvation as linkage. Salvation is a dimensioned in the humanity of people receive the gift that God desires to give.

A "mediator" (mesites) was a go-between or negotiator who brought two parties together. In the Old Testament the term was used of how God relates to people (Job 9:33 LXX; cf. Testament of Dan 6:2). In the New Testament Christ is sometimes referred to as the mediator of a "new" or "better" covenant, the antitype of Moses (Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). The only use of the concept in the undisputed letters of Paul is to be found in Gal 3:19-20, where it serves to place the reception of the Law at a certain distance from God.

Here in 1 Tim 2:5, however, "one mediator" is placed in immediate juxtaposition to "one God," thereby setting up a striking paradox. For "one God" signals universal access to salvation, but "one mediator" narrows that access to a single means. There is nothing in the term mesites itself to suggest equivalence with God — though, of course, in this formulation it carries a positive connotation. At most, if covenant ideas are present, Jesus occupies a position like that of Moses between God and people. Thus, rather than suggesting equivalence, the thrust of the statement is to locate Jesus' mediatorial precisely in his humanity, with the phrase the "man Christ Jesus" defining "mediator."

This unusual use of anthropos ("man") for Jesus has been traced to (1) Pauline Adam christology (cf. Rom 5:15, "the one man Jesus Christ") or (2) the Son of Man tradition, which is seen to lie behind the words "who gave himself a ransom for all" (cf. Mark 10:45). But neither source fully explains the statement, and there are better antecedents. Within the undis-
puted letters of Paul, a broader theme — to which Paul's Adam discourse in Rom 5:12-21 possibly belongs — connects Christ's humanity with his death (cf. Gal 4:4-5; Rom 8:3; Phil 2:7-8). Also somewhere behind anthropōs as a christological designation might be the association within developing Jewish messianism of the emergence of "a man to rule the nations" (Num 24:17-8) and Yahweh's sending of "a man who will save" (Isa 19:20; see Horbury, Jewish Messianism, 44-45). In any case, the emphasis on "the man Christ Jesus" is the high point of this traditional piece (for further discussion, see Towner, Goal of Our Instruction, 54-57). And the placement of the anthropōs designation between "one mediator" and "who gave himself a ransom for all" seems intended to locate the mediating activity of Christ Jesus specifically in his humanity. What Jesus did to execute God's universal will to save, therefore, he did as a human being in full solidarity with the human condition.

The argument concludes in the retelling of the tradition of Jesus' self-giving in v. 6, "who gave himself a ransom for all." These words access the Jesus tradition either directly (cf. Mark 10:45) or by way of Pauline adaptation (cf. Gal 1:4; 2:20; Eph 5:2; also Tit 2:14). Coinciding with the universal thrust of this passage, the Pauline preference to apply the work of Christ to "us" is shifted to "all" — as is also inherent in the use of "many" in the Jesus tradition. The means of mediation is Jesus' willing giving of his own life as a "ransom" (antilytron; Mark 10:45 has lytron and Rom 3:24 and 8:23 have apolytrofisi, but the same sense of giving oneself as a ransom payment to secure the release of enslaved humans is present). Finally, in all of this, Jesus' status as a human representative of humans (hyper, "in behalf of") stands out. Here the circle that began with universality has run its course through particularity to arrive again at universality: what he has done he has done "for all."

Christology in this statement finds expression at a very human level. While nothing of the higher elements of christology are necessarily sacrificed, for all that is implicit remains, the formulation establishes clearly the necessity of Christ's complete participation in humanity in order to accomplish the work of mediation that was intrinsic to God's universal salvation plan. It is this full participation in the human experience that makes representation and meaningful self-sacrifice possible — which is an important Pauline theme (see especially Rom 5:12-21). And it is as a human, not as an object of belief, that Jesus is the mediator of salvation to all (see Johnson, Letters to Timothy, 197).
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The Christ Hymn of 3:16

The center point of 1 Timothy is the Christ hymn at 3:16:

Who was manifested in flesh,
vindicated in [the] Spirit,
seen by angels;
Proclaimed among the nations,
believed in throughout the world,
taken up in glory.

This hymn provides the theological conclusion to the important summarizing section of 3:14-16, where Paul pauses to remind Timothy of his travel plans and places this teaching within the larger framework of the “household of God” (3:15; cf. 1:4). The hymn offers a confessional reflection on “the mystery of godliness” that amounts to a christological interpretation of the essence of Christian existence. For in the Pastoral Epistles, (1) the term “godliness” (eusebeia) characterizes Christian existence as the interplay of genuine faith in God and obedient response in life (cf. Towner, Goal of Our Instruction, 147-52; Marshall, Pastoral Epistles, 135-44), and (2) “mystery” (mystērion) is to be read as “the revelation of the mystery” — that is, “confessedly great is [the unveiling of] the mystery of godliness.” It is the story of this “mystery” that interests us.

Complementing the theme of Christ’s humanity, which is developed in the immediate context, the first line of the hymn begins with a statement of Jesus’ entrance into the human sphere: “Who was manifested (ephanerōthē) in flesh” — which, by the use of the verb phanerō (“reveal,” “make known”), employs language suited to the “mystery” theme (cf. Col 1:26) and coincides with an apophthegm scheme. The humanity of Christ is the means by which God’s salvation mystery is revealed. The term “in flesh” (en sarki), which indicates sphere or mode, refers to the whole of Jesus’ earthly existence and its culmination in human death (cf. Rom 8:3; Phil 2:7-8).

The next two lines of the hymn affirm Christ’s vindication in response to his earthly ministry. “Vindicated in [the] Spirit” suggests his resurrection from the dead (cf. Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 2:1-10; Phil 2:5-11). Together, “flesh” and “spirit” identify Jesus’ two-stage manner of existence. Although the Spirit was fully present in his ministry prior to his death, the resurrection marked Christ’s entrance into the supernatural domain characterized
by the Spirit’s activity and presence (Fowl, *Story of Christ*, 159-62; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 90-93). Christ’s vindication was also celebrated by the rich tradition of his resurrection appearance before angelic powers (cf. Phil 2:9-11; Eph 1:21; Heb 1:3-4; 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 5:8-14). Consequently, the Christ hymn expands on the statements of 1:15 and 2:5-6, showing that the meaning of Jesus’ full humanity lies not simply in his experience of weakness and suffering, essential as these were, but also in the vindication and full empowerment of eternal life in the Spirit that resurrection brings.

Lines four and five (“proclaimed among the nations, believed in throughout the world”) regard Christ more obliquely as the content of the gospel. The focus shifts to the effects of this mystery among humanity. Again, as in 1:15 and 2:5-6, the humanity of Christ is central in the gospel and the gospel is universal in scope. In preaching, the church takes up its role in continuing the revelation of God’s plan. Christ’s human life, death, and resurrection fulfill God’s plan to save the nations, and the plan has already begun to achieve universal success. Christology, therefore, leads to missiology.

The hymn ends on the note of Christ’s exaltation: “He was taken up in glory (anélemphthe en doxe).” The language alludes to Christ’s ascension (cf. Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11). But the symbolic value of the event predominates, for it represents the exaltation of Christ to God’s right hand. Yet this particular view of exaltation — that is, through the lens of the ascension — reinforces the link between the vindicated humanity of Jesus and his present exalted status.

Christology, therefore, binds Christian existence and mission inextricably to the humanity of Christ. Furthermore, it is the vindicated humanity of Christ that is highlighted in the focus of 1 Timothy on the church’s present situation, for that is what supplies hope and motivation for the struggles of the Christian faith.

6:13-14

Paul gives a last glimpse of the humanity of Christ alongside a reference to his future epiphany in 6:13-14:

In the presence of God, the one who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to return to 1

To charge Timothy...

What is striking in this context is that — contrary to the idea that Jesus was simply represented in his human testimony to Pontius Pilate (cf. Acts 3:13-15) — Christ’s human testimony is itself the faithful testimony of the Jesus Christ hymn. This is an example of eternal life itself.

The theme of “the fullness of time” is striking here. Here the future epiphany is linked to “the end of the age” (cf. 2 Tim 4:1; 1 Cor 1:7-8). The Christ hymn — Christ’s human testimony — is linked to the parousia, the manifestation of Christ’s resurrection. This links the statements of Christ’s humanity in 1 Timothy — alluded to in the context of 6:13-14 — with the parousia of Jesus Christ at the end of time, and with the present of God, to whom Jesus is obedient.

This feature of the humanity of Jesus as the mechanism of the parousia — that is, of the last judgment — actually represents the fulfillment of Christ’s future humanity. The humanity of Christ is not just a feature of his present situation, but is the actual machination by which the parousia is achieved.

In the presence of God, the one who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to return to the message of God's grace, to the mission of the church. The humanity of Christ is fundamental to this mission, not just a feature of it. In the humanity of Christ, the universal success of God's plan is revealed.
Christology in the Letters to Timothy and Titus

To charge Timothy “in the presence of God and Christ” is not unusual. What is striking is that Paul characterizes God as “the one who gives life” (i.e., resurrects) and speaks of the resurrected and exalted Christ as having, in his human weakness, “made the good confession before Pontius Pilate” (cf. 2 Tim 4:1). The parenetic application is obvious. The text’s focus on Christ’s human testimony “then” illustrates the necessity of Timothy’s faithful testimony “now.” The full story of Christ’s vindication, as in the Christ hymn of 3:16, provides a motivational backdrop (cf. 6:12, “take hold of eternal life”), but the primary reflection is on the humanity of Christ.

The time of judgment and reward is indicated by the explicit reference to “the manifestation (epiphaneia) of our Lord Jesus Christ” in 6:14. Here the future appearance of Christ, which will come about at “the right time” as determined by God (6:15a; cf. also 2:6; 2 Tim 1:9-10; Tit 2:13), represents the boundary of faithfulness and the time of reward. So Paul’s charge to Timothy to be faithful, after the model of the human Christ, extends to the parousia.

This final christological statement sheds light on the practical implications of the humanity of Christ. Something about the heresy confronted in 1 Timothy—its theology, eschatology, christology, ethics, or whatever—had shifted the balance decisively away from thinking about engagement with the world. Thus the “trustworthy saying” of 1:15 links salvation to Christ’s incarnation and extends its relevance into the present via Paul’s paradigmatic role. Likewise, the statement of 2:5-6 identifies and interprets Jesus’ mediatorial ministry precisely with his humanity, and makes this feature the linchpin in the process by which God’s universal salvation can actually reach out to all people; while the Christ hymn of 3:16 explains that Christ’s full human experience, including his resurrection and vindication, is to be considered the “fleshly” unveiling of Christian existence—that is, “godliness” (eusebeia)—and that his experience determines the church’s message and hope. And so in this final christological statement in 6:13-14, mission faithfulness is grounded in Christ’s human sign of faithfulness—that is, in his testimony before Pontius Pilate of loyalty to God, which ultimately ended his life and launched the church’s mission.

In Christ’s humanity, therefore, God’s salvation plan and the Christian life are grounded. But the necessity of the final manifestation or
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epiphany of the vindicated one establishes the tenuous stance of the Christian in the present age.

3. Our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ: The Shape of Christology in Titus

Christology in the letter to Titus takes a different stance and strikes a different balance than in 1 Timothy. The letter was written specifically and intentionally, not just notionally, to Titus against the background of a nascent Pauline church that had spread to various cities on the island of Crete and was in many ways experiencing stress, frustration, and some uncertainty of commitment — particularly as it sought to be Christian in a rude social and non-ethical environment, for which Crete was infamous, and in the face of a growing anti-Pauline movement (see Kidd, “Titus as Apologia”).

Paul initiates a discourse on two intersecting levels, engaging both the Cretan story (cf. 1:12) and an opposition that embodied the deception for which Cretan mythology was well-known (Kidd, “Titus as Apologia”). Thus in 1:12, at the very outset of the letter, he anchors the hope of his gospel in the God who “does not lie.” This emphasis on a truthful God is in pointed contrast to Zeus of the Cretan tales, who, though held to be the epitome of virtue, did, in fact, lie to have sexual relations with a human woman, taking the human form of her husband.

Moreover, in the context of the Cretan religious challenge to Olympian traditionalists (i.e., the Cretan claim that Zeus was born and died on the island of Crete), the tendency to portray Zeus as one who received divine status in return for his benefactions to humans suggests an upside-down approach to “theology” at the popular level, which would have inevitably forced a collision between the Christian gospel and Cretan mythology. Paul does not avoid this collision. Rather, playing down the human features of Christ — which are emphasized, as we have seen above, in 1 Tim 1:15; 2:5; 3:16; 6:13-14 — he declares in this letter to Titus that Christ (1) came among humans from above, and (2) conferred gifts (salvation, a life of virtue) as a deity, not as a human who for his benefaction is accorded divine status.

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Christology in the Letters to Timothy and Titus

The Pairings of God and Christ as Savior

The first theological section of Titus comes in the salutation of 1:1-4. The main goal is to lay the salvation-historical framework of “promise and fulfillment,” within which may be seen the gospel—that is, the appearance of Christ in history, which is referred to obliquely as “his [God’s] word”—and Paul’s authoritative link to it. But the letter’s unique christological theme is also introduced in the successive references to God and Christ as “Savior” in 1:3 and 4; 2:10 and 13; and 3:4 and 6: “God our Savior. . . Christ Jesus our Savior.” The equivalence or sharing of status signaled by these pairings is more pronounced than in the letters to Timothy. And its significance will become clear in what follows.

2:11–14

The next christological reflection occurs in 2:11–14:

For the grace of God has appeared (epephane), bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation (epiphaneia) of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

This passage follows an extended parenetic section that instructs household members to live respectably in their various positions. The degree to which this teaching is situated in the culture is clear from the Greek ethical language that it uses. What prompted the teaching was probably the disruption caused by the opponents, who were “upsetting whole households” and “teaching for sordid gain” (1:11).

With the reference to “God our Savior” in 2:10b, the transition is made from ethics to theology. The theological material that follows in 2:11–14 grounds the reshaped household code. And within the “Savior” and “epiphany” emphases of the three Pastoral Epistles, the christology in this passage reaches the highest point in the letter. For one epiphany in history has communicated a new way of salvation-life in the world (vv. 11–12) that
the second epiphany will fulfill (vv. 13-14). Christ is the source of present Christian existence and hope for its completion.

In dialogue with current beliefs and symbols, Paul tells here a Christian epiphany story to rival those of the culture. His verbal thrust and parry is evident from his references to “epiphany” and the gifts of “grace” and “salvation,” which were often associated with gods and kings. And the opening oblique reference to Christ’s advent as the epiphany of “God’s grace, bringing salvation” brings the christological discussion within the framework of the cultural story. Furthermore, Paul exeges the Christ event in terms of the Hellenistic concept of “education in culture” (paideia), describing the effects of this epiphany, in opposition to the Cretan stereotype, in terms of a “Christian civilization” where the cardinal virtues can indeed be realized (2:12).

Also to be noted is the fact that the Cretan cultural story is thoroughly subverted when 2:13 is reached. For the description of another epiphany, the Christian object of hope, while it starts on the typical theme of the appearances or epiphanies of Hellenistic kings, gods, and Roman emperors — using the expression “our great God and Savior” — defiantly ignores those claims and inserts the name “Jesus Christ.”

But does 2:13 refer to the epiphany of one person (“of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”) or two (“of our great God and of our savior Jesus Christ”)? The rarity of divine appellations for Christ in the New Testament perhaps favors the latter. But Paul may have committed himself to the former in Rom 9:5 (cf. 2 Pet 1:1), and Col 1:19 pursues a similar line. And a number of other factors favor a single christological reference: (1) “God and Savior” was a widely used title that generally referred to a single deity; (2) a single definite article governs the two titles “God and Savior”; (3) “epiphany” is used only of Christ in these letters; and (4) a future coming of the Father in association with the End is unprecedented. It seems most reasonable, therefore, that the reference here is to the future “epiphany” of “our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

The theme of Christ’s sharing of the status of Savior in 1:3-4, which is present also in the pairing of 2:10 and 13, invites this extraordinary climax. But this sharing between God and Jesus Christ, together with the divine transfer of their activities, reaches critical mass here in 2:11-14. We are familiar with the statement that describes the Savior as the one “who gave himself for us” (cf. 1 Tim 2:6; Gal 1:4; Eph 5:2). But the intertextual echoes in the purpose statements of 2:14 — which recall statements in Deut 7:6; 14:2; Exod 19:5; and “You shall be a model of the things you believe as you live in the midst of others” (Titus 2:11; 2 Tim 3:14-16) — show how Paul has expanded to add a Christian behaviorism to a conventional religious worldview.

Christology and its corollaries, however, are equated with the整定のepiphany. The “epiphany” in Titus 3:1-2 is different from the description of Christ’s first historical manifestation as the Father in association with the End. The “epiphany” in Titus 3:1-2 is declared “the good news of the possession.” And — using the concept of monotheism — the “epiphany” in Titus 2:13 is the future “epiphany” of “our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Using the same concept, Paul elevates the saving event obliquely to God and Christ in Titus 3:1-2: “But the very fact that we were dead spiritually gives evidence that we are our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”
Christology in the Letters to Timothy and Titus

Titus 3:1-2 considers Christians as participants in society. The traditional call to recognize political authorities (cf. Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-17) is here expanded to address the public image of the church among all people. Christian behavior is then urged in 3:4-6 because of (1) "the appearance" of "the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior" (v. 4), (2) salvation as the new Christian reality, which has come about by God's mercy, "the washing of regeneration," and "renewal by the Holy Spirit" (v. 5), and (3) the work of "Jesus Christ our Savior" (v. 6). All of this has introduced a change from the old patterns of normal living (v. 3) to the new patterns of those who are "heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (vv. 7-8).

Using the same strategy as in 2:11, Paul in 3:4 considers the Christ event obliquely as "the appearance" of God's kindness and love for people. These qualities, communicated to people, are just what is needed to live peaceably in the world. The Cretan way of living is thus rejected. And "epiphany" in this text gradually assumes its christological shape as salvation is declared to be "through Jesus Christ our Savior" (3:6).

God and Christ in this passage again share the title "Savior." Building on 2:11-14, the epiphany concept depicts Christ's historical entrance into the world as that of the arrival of the Benefactor-God in order to save his people. Titus, therefore, projects a christology that shares the savior/salvation and epiphany motifs of the letters to Timothy. But within that framework, Paul elevates the depiction of Christ in this letter, portraying him as
Savior and God — no doubt to sharpen his gospel’s penetration into Cretan culture.

4. Jesus Christ Raised from the Dead, Paradigm of Suffering and Vindication: The Shape of Christology in 2 Timothy

2 Timothy brings the Pauline story to a conclusion (see Towner, “The Portrait of Paul”). Paul’s situation (4:6-8, 16-18) and Timothy’s need set both the tone of the letter and the purposes for its christological reflections. For Paul, imprisoned at Rome, the end is in sight. Somber notes intermingle with a strong expectancy of vindication. Timothy’s dwindling courage and lagging commitment stand in tension with Paul’s call on him to succeed him. For this parenetic letter calls on Timothy to imitate Paul’s experiences and hope. And in so doing, it reflects on the resurrection of Christ to a degree that goes beyond what appears in 1 Timothy or Titus.

The Kerygma in 1:9-10

The dual themes of suffering and mission open the letter. Timothy is instructed to revive his gift and his calling, and so to take his stand, in Paul’s absence, in suffering for the same gospel that brought suffering to Paul (1:6-8). Mention at the end of 1:8 of the “power of God” that is to enable Timothy — that is, the indwelling Spirit — leads to a theological discussion in 1:9-10 of the gospel for which Paul suffers.

This kerygmatic passage in 1:9-10 follows a revelatory “once hidden, now revealed” pattern in detailing the movement of salvation from its inception in the will of God to its execution in history (cf. Rom 16:25-26; also Tit 1:1-3), with the emphasis falling on the present time of the church. Christ Jesus is the pivotal figure in this drama: “[God] saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages” (v. 9). “In Christ Jesus” is typically the sphere of existence in which the blessings of fellowship with Christ are experienced (cf. 1:1-2; 2:11; 2:10; 3:12, 15; 1 Tim 1:14; 3:13).

As the thought turns in 1:10 to the “manifestation” of God’s grace that has “now been revealed,” several things need to be noted. First, the...
means of manifesting God's grace was the event of Christ's historical epiphany as Savior (cf. Tit 2:11; 3:4). This is the only use of the noun *epiphanéia* for the incarnation, and its meaning stretches to include the whole earthly experience of Jesus. A second matter to note is that, although the sharing of status between Christ and God is close to emerging in the statement "[God] saved us . . . according to grace . . . through the epiphany of our Savior Jesus Christ," christology in 2 Timothy seeks another level. The suffering and resurrection of the Savior are central, and the appearance of Christ in history is viewed from the perspective of the results achieved by his suffering and resurrection.

Negatively, Christ is credited with "having abolished death" (*katargésantos ton thanaton*, 1:10). The allusion is to his death as the instrument of death's annihilation (Rom 6:6, 10; 14:8-9; 2 Cor 4:10; 1 Thess 5:10; see also Heb 2:14). But the accent falls on the positive result: Christ's resurrection has "brought to light life and immortality." "Having brought to light" (*phōtisantos*) forges the link between this singular revelatory and eschatological event of the Savior's resurrection and the promise of eternal life inherent in the gospel (cf. 1 Cor 15:12-23, 53-54; cf. Acts 2:27-31). Paul's christological interest throughout 2 Timothy hovers at this intersection of the Savior's life and death, where the door to eternal life has been opened.

A third matter worthy of note in 1:10 is that the historical "epiphany" of God's grace entails a surprise, for included in it are suffering and death. A non-Christian would scarcely think of the life, suffering; and death of Jesus Christ in terms of a divine "epiphany;" for the elements of weakness and shame strike a discordant note (cf. 1:8, 12). The divine and powerful effects of the cross are true enough and tangible enough to qualify for "epiphany" status. But these realities are evident only to faith. For those outside the Christian faith or who would challenge the place of suffering of suffering within the faith, this use of the epiphany concept turns common notions inside out and makes a radical claim for the Christian gospel. Indeed, God's grace is powerfully embodied in Christ's death and resurrection; the divine epiphany is expressed in and through utter human frailty. This is a paradox that faith alone resolves.

Finally, christology returns to parenesis at the end of 1:10 in the phrase "through the gospel." Here Paul drives home the point that the results of the Savior's epiphany, his death and resurrection, are effective in the world by means of the proclamation of the Christian gospel— which may very well be seen as an ongoing epiphany. Either cowardice on the
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part of Timothy or neglect on the part of misguided opponents in the communities can halt the revelatory process, but neither suffering nor death poses a threat to the gospel itself.

2:8-13

Christology again supports parenesis in 2:8-13. Paul's main concern throughout this second letter is not to reiterate the Christian message, but to call on Timothy to live as Paul himself (and Jesus) did. Nonetheless, it is the gospel that explains the logic of his exhortations. So in 2:8-10 he (1) asks Timothy to "remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David," (2) declares this to be "my gospel," (3) links his own sufferings with the suffering of Jesus, and (4) involves Timothy throughout the process.

Paul's depiction of Jesus is primary. As a retelling of the gospel, the formulaic words "Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David" leave much implicit. "According to my gospel" (cf. 2 Tim 1:11; 1 Tim 1:11) underlines the statement's authenticity — partly with polemical intention (cf. 2 Tim 2:18), but mainly as an endorsement of its apostolic origin (cf. Rom 2:16; 16:25). The resurrection of Jesus Christ is declared to be central to the gospel (cf. 1 Cor 15:4, 12, 13, 14, 16; 2 Cor 5:15).

Jesus' descent from David (literally, "from the seed of David") is also a stock element within the gospel tradition (cf. Rom 1:3; John 7:42). And although this statement implies incarnation (cf. Gal. 4:4), it goes beyond that to indicate the conviction that Jesus is Messiah (cf. John 7:42). Scholars have often discerned in the formulation "raised from the dead, descended from David [or 'from the seed of David']" reflections of a two-stage christology that distinguishes rigidly between Jesus' earthly status and his exaltation (e.g., Dibelius and Conzelmann, Pastoral Epistles, 108). But the two parts of the formula should be seen as a unity: Jesus' messianic identity involves both his descent from David and his resurrection, as in Rom 1:3-4, which most scholars argue stands somehow behind this text. But a comparison of the two texts suggests that here Paul has intentionally inverted the two dimensions of Christ's existence to emphasize the thought of resurrection.

The parenetic function of 2:8-13 implies Paul's reason for this emphasis. The passage recommends a course of action and supports such ac-

The tradition by appealing to the faithful saying that promises associated with Christ will not mean sharing in his suffering: The formula "my gospel" — with "according to my gospel" (v. 8) — will mean sharing in the fundamental faith in situation of his faith in resurrection.

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past and ongoing relevance of the event. And it is this fact that supports
faith in situations of suffering and galvanizes a believer's hope in the future
resurrection.

The traditional saying ("the saying is trustworthy") in 2:11-13 is both
supportive and illustrative of the command "remember" given earlier in
v. 8. Christology runs throughout this piece, developing first the thought
of sharing in Christ's victory and rule, and then going on to a consider-
ation of his faithfulness and role as judge.

The first line of this "trustworthy" saying takes the reader into the
mysterious territory of "dying and rising" with Christ: "If we died with
[him], we will also live with [him]-
though here the promise is totally
eschatological (cf. Rom 6:8). The line explains the "remember" in 2:8 by
identifying participation in Christ's resurrection and vindication as the
reward for faithful suffering. Martyrdom is not specifically exalted, though
the earlier metaphor of "dying and rising with" applies equally and ulti-
mately to literal death and resurrection. Christ's own experience assures
the certainty of eschatological vindication.

The second line ("if we endure . . ") explores the same reality from
another perspective. "Endure" links the action called for to the pattern es-
ablished by Paul (cf. v. 10). But this time reward for faithfulness in minis-
ry— "we will also reign with [him]"—taps into the well-known theme
of participation in Christ's eschatological role as king and judge (cf. Matt
19:28; 1 cor 4:8; 6:2-3; Rev 1:16; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4, 6; 22:5). The future timeframe
in this line confirms the future horizon in the promise of life in line 1.

In the final two lines, the image of Christ as the eschatological judge
reinforces a warning: "If we deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself." With the defection of most of Paul's former colleagues in mind (cf. 1:15; 4:10, 16), the certainty and severity of judgment are highlighted. Words from the Jesus tradition preserved in Matt 10:33 certainly lie behind this statement. The enigmatic last line, "for he cannot deny himself," either deepens the warning or tempers it with a hint of mercy in response to human weakness (see Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 168). In either case, the specter of future judgment remains.

4:1, 8, and 14

The christological statements in 4:1, 8, and 14 develop the eschatological dimensions of Judge (vv. 1, 8, 14), King (v. 1), and Lord (vv. 8, 14). In all these roles, transference or sharing of divine prerogative between God and Christ Jesus is noticeable. The Old Testament pattern for Yahweh as judge is transferred by Paul to Christ (note the echo of Ps 61:13 LXX in 2 Tim 4:14), as is also the right to rule as King and Lord.

Furthermore, it needs to be noted that these dimensions of christology are specifically linked to the future epiphany of Christ (4:1, 8). Thus, while there is motivational value in the thought of a future judgment (2:12-13), this future event — in keeping with the theme developed from the beginning of the letter — also symbolizes vindication and completion "for all those who have loved his epiphany" (4:8). For enemies of the gospel, however, Christ's future epiphany will be a time of judgment and retribution (4:14).

In these closing verses of ch. 4, then, Paul depicts the resurrected Lord in his most exalted stations — as Judge, King, and Lord. The final focus on the eschatological event suits the thrust of 2 Timothy, which closes the Pauline story. Paul's suffering for the gospel will end in his death, and thus, for obvious reasons, eschatological vindication looms large in his thinking. But Christ in his past epiphany has established the pattern that Paul follows. So Christ's historical resurrection and vindication substantiates Paul's hope for resurrection and vindication. 2 Timothy calls on Paul's young colleague to see himself as following in the same pattern. For the continuation of the gospel ministry, which reveals these truths, is a continuation of suffering, death, and vindication. The conclusion of the salvation that Christ effected...
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and of the gospel ministry that Paul and his colleagues have been engaged in will be the final appearance of Christ as Judge, King, and Lord.

5. Conclusion

Within the broad framework of the “epiphany” and “Savior” concepts, each of these letters shapes christology for its own purpose. This should not really surprise us. But the tendency to read these letters as a single corpus has limited the degree to which they have been allowed to tell their separate stories.

1 Timothy reflects a decided emphasis on the humanity of Christ. Titus explores in greater depth the co-equal status of God and Christ. 2 Timothy brings the promises of resurrection and vindication, as well as the eschatological functions of Christ, to bear on the harsh realities of suffering and death that confronted Timothy and challenged his faithful endurance. In each case, the interplay of christology and ethical parenesis underscores the present relevance of the salvation associated with the Christ event. The “two epiphanies” logic of the letters leaves the time in-between as the age in which faith is to bear fruit — in ministry, in godliness, and in suffering — until Christ’s second appearance brings about the final consummation.

Greek categories of “epiphany” and “savior,” together with exploitation of the Cretan myth, allow Paul to so fashion christology that it co-opts and subverts certain dominant symbols, making the sharp point of the gospel more keenly felt.

The degree to which Savior and epiphany concepts unify the christology of these letters remains in need of careful articulation. On the one hand, both concepts are only minimally present in 1 Timothy, where the focus is on the humanity of Christ. On the other hand, even with such concepts being present, Titus and 2 Timothy fashion christology into shapes that are as distinctive from one another as they are from 1 Timothy. The choice to use these concepts, therefore, whether because of the Greek backgrounds of Timothy and Titus and of the churches in view, because of the spread and increased influence of the Roman Imperial cult and the desire that the gospel penetrate the cultural-religious-political milieu to a new depth, or because of some combination of these factors, represents something of a new step in christological experimentation, which was somehow pertinent to the writing of these three distinct letters.

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One could overplay the search for connections with the christology of other Pauline letters — though I have often played down these connections in the interest of reading the letters individually. On the other hand, one could underplay such connections. Personally, I prefer to regard the epiphany/Savior framework of the Pastoral Epistles as a christological feature that links these three letters loosely into a distinctive cluster — much as can be found, though by reference to other features, among the other epistolary clusters that comprise the canonical Pauline corpus.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**


