
Paul's Christ-Discourse as Ancient Kingship Discourse

Despite the fact that, as Francis Oakley has reminded us, “[F]or several millennia at least, it has been kingship and not more consensual governmental forms that has dominated the institutional landscape of what we today would call *political* life,” the ancient institution of kingship has not seemed to most to be a particularly relevant resource for understanding Paul’s depiction of Christ.¹ Whatever one’s views regarding the historical value of the canonical Gospels, we can agree that Jesus was clearly remembered with royal hues: he proclaimed God’s kingdom (Mark 1:14-15), his ancestry was traced to the lineage of the royal family of David (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:31-35, 68-69; 2:1-8; cf. Mark 12:35-37), he was supposed by his followers to be God’s anointed

1. Francis Oakley, *Kingship: The Politics of Enchantment* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 4. There are, however, as I will soon indicate, some notable exceptions. Christ is not named as βασιλεύς, and yet it is important here to heed Marc Zvi Brettler’s methodological caution (*God Is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* [JSOTSup 76; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989], 23). He notes the same dynamic in the Psalter, where the word for king, rule, and kingdom are often absent and yet this does not mean that the motifs or metaphors associated with kingship are also absent, as long as the biblical text uses language typical of kings in its description of God.

Messiah (Mark 8:34-38), he was crucified by the Romans as a messianic pretender (Mark 14:55-64; 15:1-38; John 18:33-19:22), and he was one whose death and resurrection from the dead were seen as corresponding to the pattern set forth in the Davidic Psalms (Ps. 22:19 in Luke 23:34; Ps. 69:2 in Luke 23:36; Ps. 31:6 in Luke 23:46).² Paul himself also had spoken of Christ in relationship to “the kingdom of God” (Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; 1 Thess. 2:12) and as the agent through whom God will establish an eschatological kingdom through the defeat of evil authorities and powers (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Christ is the agent through whom God mediates judgment (Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 5:2). Though most have not seen Paul as stressing the messianic aspect of the title, his favorite designation for Christ is *Χριστός* and, based in part on the fact that he does speak of Christ as “born from the seed of David” (Rom. 1:3) and the one who comes “from the root of Jesse” (Rom. 15:12a), some have made powerful arguments that Messiah in Paul retains its royal connotations. Even if it was not written by Paul, the exhortation to “Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead, from the seed of David according to my gospel” (2 Tim. 2:8) suggests that the royal, messianic identity of Jesus was seen, at least by some early Christians, to be critically important for rightly understanding Jesus.

Given the preservation of these influential remembrances of a royal Messiah, it is not surprising that numerous figures from the early

2. The point stands regardless of whether one views these accounts as largely historically reliable or as providing testimony for the beliefs of some of the early Christians. Regarding the historical likelihood that Jesus was crucified for his royal-messianic claims, see Nils A. Dahl, “The Crucified Messiah,” in *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine* (ed. Donald H. Juel; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 27-47, esp. 39-40; see also Martin Hengel, “Jesus, the Messiah of Israel,” in *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 1-72; James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (vol. 1 of *Christianity in the Making*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 627-47. On Mark’s Passion Narrative and its ironic depiction of Christ as a king, see Frank J. Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15* (SBLDS 66; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1982); Joel Marcus, “Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation,” *JBL* 125 (2006): 73-87. On the Davidic Psalms as the lens through which the early Christians interpreted the death of Jesus, see Joshua W. Jipp, “Luke’s Scriptural Suffering Messiah: A Search for Precedent, a Search for Identity,” *CBQ* 72 (2010): 255-74; Peter Doble, “Luke 24.26, 44—Songs of God’s Servant: David and His Psalms in Luke-Acts,” *JSNT* 28 (2006): 267-83; Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992); Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark’s Passion: Jesus’ Davidic Suffering* (SNTSMS 142; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

church also exploited royal categories, titles, and functions as a means of explaining the significance of Jesus.³ In the *Ascension of Isaiah* the pre-existent Christ is repeatedly referred to as “the Lord” over the entire cosmos (8:9; 9:32-39), is enthroned to rule at God’s right hand (10:7-15), and is the cosmic and eschatological judge (4:14-18; 10:12-15). One even begins to find the explicit application of Hellenistic kingship metaphors being applied to Jesus, as in, for example, *the Martyrdom of Polycarp*, where Christ is referred to as Lord, Savior, pilot, and shepherd (19:2). Clement of Alexandria also speaks of Christ as the divine shepherd, charioteer, royal living law, and pilot—standard titles for a Hellenistic king (*Strom.* 1.158-168).⁴ For Clement, Christ was the supremely wise and just lawgiver who, as shepherd and king, leads his people in the path of royal wisdom (*Strom.* 1.158-159; 168.4; 169.1-2; 7.42.7; *Protr.* 116.1-4).⁵ Eusebius of Caesarea’s writings *Oration in Praise of the Emperor Constantine* and *The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine* are well known for their exploitation of biblical and Hellenistic notions of kingship, in that they depict Constantine’s kingship as deriving from the rule and authority of Christ’s kingship.⁶

My simple and largely anecdotal point here is that one of the ways early worshippers of Christ made sense of the significance of Jesus and their experience of him was through using royal tropes and motifs to depict Christ as king.⁷ And yet, apart from a few notable exceptions, Paul’s Christ-discourse—by which I simply mean the specific words and patterns of speech used to talk about the Christ-figure—has not been thought to be particularly illuminated by ancient kingship discourse or royal messianism.⁸ The roots of this neglect are likely due in part to

3. I have been guided here by Oakley, *Kingship*, 69-76; Per Beskow, *Rex Gloriam: The Kingship of Christ in the Early Church* (trans. Eric J. Sharpe; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014; reprinted from Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1962).

4. Beskow, *Rex Gloriam*, 213-19.

5. *Ibid.*, 218.

6. *Ibid.*, 313-30. See also Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 43-44.

7. The point holds even if one supposes that a messianic Jesus stems from the early church and not Jesus himself. E.g., William Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien: Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901); *idem*, *The Messianic Secret* (trans. J. C. G. Greig; Library of Theological Translations; Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971).

8. A notable exception regarding the positive relationship between royal messianism and kingship

the longstanding scholarly consensus that within Paul's letters *Χριστός* was a proper name that had lost its titular connotations.⁹ It can be stated with little exaggeration that Wilhelm Bousset's influential *Kyrios Christos* and its positing of a division between Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity, with the latter valuing the title "Lord" but devaluing Jewish Davidic traditions, has provided the historical foundations for Paul's supposed disinterest in Jesus' Davidic descent.¹⁰ This consensus shows signs, however, of being overturned, as many voices have marshaled evidence that indicates that the term means "Messiah" and retains its royal connotations.¹¹ Thus, while Paul does not refer to Christ as king, his abundant use of the honorific "Messiah" may indicate that he thinks of Jesus as the ideal king or ruler.

Especially significant in this regard is Matthew V. Novenson's recent monograph *Christ among the Messiahs*, in which he demonstrates that Paul's use of *Χριστός* actually conforms quite closely to common uses of honorifics in the ancient world.¹² Thus, for Paul *Χριστός* is not a proper name but rather an honorific such as Seleucus *the Victor* or Judah *Maccabee* that can be used in combination with an individual's proper name or can stand in for a proper name. In this view, such honorifics are honorable names granted to individuals to signify their

discourse and the rise of early Christian Christology is William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998).

9. See Nils A. Dahl, "The Messiahship of Jesus in Paul," in *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine* (ed. Donald H. Juel; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 15-25; Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (2 vols.; New York: Scribners, 1951), 1:49-50, 237; Magnus Zetterholm, "Paul and the Missing Messiah," in *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Magnus Zetterholm; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 33-55.
10. Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus* (trans. John E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon, 1970). Preceding Bousset, however, in the division between Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity was Wilhelm Heitmüller, "Zum Problem Paulus und Jesus," *ZNW* 13 (1912): 320-37. On the role of Bousset on historical investigations of the origins of Paul's Christology, see Leander E. Keck, "Christology of the New Testament: What, Then, Is New Testament Christology?" in *Who Do You Say that I Am? Essays on New Testament Christology* (ed. Mark Allan Powell and David R. Bauer; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 185-200, here 187-91.
11. N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); idem., *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (vol. 4 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God*; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 815-36; Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* (trans. Patricia Dailey; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 16-18; Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 101-22.
12. Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

unique identity and significance, often as a result of a military victory, accession to power, or benefaction.¹³ In sum, Paul's variegated usage of "Christ," "Jesus Christ," and "Christ Jesus" makes sense, Novenson argues, within the conventions of Greek honorifics. He examines a handful of Pauline texts and concludes that "Paul does all that we normally expect any ancient Jewish or Christian text to do to count as a messiah text and that in no case does he ever disclaim the category of messiahship."¹⁴ Paul's Christ-language is messiah language not as a result of its conformity to a Jewish messianic ideal or to the possible psychological messianic expectation of Paul's hearers, but rather because the language "could be used meaningfully in antiquity because it was deployed in the context of a linguistic community whose members shared a stock of common linguistic resources."¹⁵ In other words, Israel's Scriptures provided the linguistic and conceptual resources whereby Paul, as an example of one Jewish writer, could use scriptural messiah language with the expectation of communicating successfully with those who shared the same Scriptures.

Some scholars have prepared the way for Novenson's argument by recognizing the importance of Jesus' Davidic Messiahship in Paul's letters and especially his argument in Romans.¹⁶ Romans contains an inclusio that affirms Jesus' Davidic lineage (1:3-4; 15:7-12), and it is against this scriptural Davidic-sonship framework that Paul makes sense of Jesus' resurrection and enthronement (see 2 Sam. 7:12-14; Pss. 2:7; 89:26-27).¹⁷ Adela Yarbro Collins provides a brief but convincing case that Paul's abundant use of the honorific "indicates that the proclamation of Jesus as the messiah of Israel was a fundamental part

13. *Ibid.*, 64-97.

14. *Ibid.*, 138.

15. *Ibid.*, 47.

16. Most helpful here is Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*, 137-73; Christopher G. Whittsett, "Son of God, Seed of David: Paul's Messianic Exegesis in Romans 2[sic]:3-4," *JBL* 119 (2000): 661-81. See also my "Ancient, Modern, and Future Interpretations of Romans 1:3-4: Reception History and Biblical Interpretation," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 3 (2009): 241-59, here 258-59.

17. On Paul's messianic exegesis, see Lidija Novakovic, *Raised from the Dead according to Scripture: The Role of Israel's Scripture in the Early Christian Interpretations of Jesus' Resurrection* (Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies Series; London: T & T Clark, 2012); Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

of his announcement of the good news to those who formed the core membership of the communities that he founded.”¹⁸ Further, as emphasized by Richard B. Hays, Paul’s appropriation of royal Psalms to Jesus, seen in Rom. 11:9 (Ps. 68:23-24), 15:3 (Ps. 68:10), 15:9 (Ps. 17:50), 15:11 (Ps. 117:1), and 2 Cor. 4:13-14 (Ps. 115:1), is intelligible only because of Paul’s belief that Jesus was *the messianic descendent of the Davidic king*.¹⁹ Moreover, Douglas A. Campbell has argued persuasively that Paul’s argument in Romans 8 is indebted to “a story of ascent through resurrection to glorification and heavenly enthronement” and that this story is “explained by royal messianic theology, and in particular by the Old Testament’s enthronement texts, among which Psalm 89 is outstanding.”²⁰ Furthermore, numerous continental philosophers have seen Paul’s apocalyptic messianism as displaying a politics of an alternative sovereignty based on the crucified Messiah.²¹ But perhaps most important here is William Horbury’s *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ*.²² Horbury argues for the centrality of (Greek, Roman, and Jewish) kingship for understanding Jewish messianism, as Second Temple Jewish texts refashion both Greco-Roman and Israelite notions of the good king in their portrait of messianic figures.²³ Significant components of Jewish messianism, then, provide the context for the origination of the Christ cult, evidenced particularly in the similarities with which Christ receives acclamations, hymns, and titles.²⁴ The similarities between my

18. Collins and Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God*, 122. See also Stefan Schreiber, *Gesalbter und König: Titel und Konzeptionen der königlichen Gesalbtenervartung in fröijüdischen und urchristlichen Schriften* (BZNW 105; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 405-24.

19. Richard B. Hays, “Paul’s Use of an Early Christian Convention,” in *The Future of Christology: Essays in Honor of Leander E. Keck* (ed. Abraham J. Malherbe and Wayne A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 122-36; Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*, 151-56.

20. Douglas A. Campbell, “The Story of Jesus in Romans and Galatians,” in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (ed. Bruce W. Longenecker; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 97-124, here 116.

21. See, for example, Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul* (trans. Dana Hollander; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Giorgio Agamben, *The Time that Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* (trans. Patricia Dailey; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). On the philosophical turn to Paul for contemporary matters, see Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries, eds., *Paul and the Philosophers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

22. William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998).

23. *Ibid.*, 64-77.

24. *Ibid.*, 109-52.

argument and Horbury's will be evident in what follows (particularly in chapter 3, "King and Praise"), and I suggest that his important work has probably not received the attention it deserves from Pauline interpreters due to his controversial claims regarding the "coherence" and "prevalence" of messianism, claims that need not be accepted for my argument to stand.²⁵ In other words, my argument front-grounds *how Paul* reinterpreted and reworked notions of kingship discourse.²⁶

Novenson's argument is particularly illuminating for discerning the sources of Paul's christological language, and in the present study I intend to extend his argument in new directions. I suggest, however, that Israel's Scriptures form only one significant strand, albeit a highly privileged one, of Paul's linguistic and conceptual resources for understanding the good king. That is to say, if Paul does speak of Χριστός as Israel's royal king, then his use of Jewish, Hellenistic, and Roman political *topoi* related to the ideal king would be unsurprising.

In this study, then, I argue that significant portions of Paul's Christ-discourse is kingship discourse in which Paul creatively transforms the responsibilities, traits, and titles commonly understood to belong to kings and applies them to Jesus.²⁷ I am interested, then, in what Nils A. Dahl has referred to as the sources of Paul's christological language.²⁸ In his 1977 presidential address to the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas, Dahl argued that whereas scholars had produced many works on christological titles, "only sporadic attention has been paid to the syntax of christological language," particularly concerning "what roles

25. *Ibid.*, 36-108.

26. Again, see my discussion of Novenson's important methodological statement above. See also Kenneth Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty in Early Judaism: Its History and Significance for Messianism* (SBLJL 7; Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), who challenges Horbury's points regarding both the coherence (arguing, instead, for diversity) and prevalence (arguing that "there never existed a continuous, widespread, dominant, or uniform expectation for a Davidic messiah in early Judaism," p. 271) of messianism. To be clear, my argument depends upon *Paul's reading and interaction* with notions of monarchy and kingship. Pomykala's criticisms of Horbury (of which Pomykala is only one representative of other similar voices), however, do not call into question Horbury's thesis that the Christ cult originated in Jewish messianism. For a balanced and somewhat mediating position between Horbury and Pomykala, see Schreiber, *Gesalbter und König*.

27. Though my research was completed before I had read his work and though the subject matter is different, my approach is similar to M. David Litwa, *IESUS DEUS: The Early Christian Depiction of Jesus as a Mediterranean God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014).

28. Nils A. Dahl, "Sources of Christological Language," in *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine* (ed. Donald H. Juel; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 113-36.

various designations of Jesus play in Greek sentences and concerning semantic transformations of these sentences.”²⁹ A more appropriate methodology for discerning the sources of Paul’s christology, Dahl suggested, may be one that attends to Paul’s “linguistic resources—words, phrases, forms and patterns of composition that existed prior to their use in talking about Jesus.”³⁰ The question is this: “To what extent did Christian speech about Jesus have analogies and precedents in what was said about different types of persons and beings?”³¹

The present study, then, pursues the linguistic systems within which Paul’s christological discourse makes sense.³² It is less concerned with investigating religious- or tradition-historical questions than it is with the metaphorical character of Paul’s ascription of royal significance to the person and work of Jesus. Jens Schröter rightly notes: “If ... ascriptions of meaning . . . often possess metaphorical character, then the starting point for a metaphorical Christology lies here: as a constituent element of language, metaphor possesses reality-structuring and reality-disclosing power.”³³ So with respect to Paul’s Christ-discourse, there is no fixed semantic or conceptual content. Rather, the application of royal motifs and metaphors to Jesus “represents a special case of their reception, in which certain semantic features were actualized and connected with his activity and fate.”³⁴ So for Paul to make the basic claim that “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and was buried, and was raised on the third

29. *Ibid.*, 116.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, 117.

32. On the methodological primacy of reading early Christian texts as literary productions, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 156-85.

33. Jens Schröter, “Metaphorical Christology in Paul,” in *From Jesus to the New Testament: Early Christian Theology and the Origin of the New Testament Canon* (trans. Wayne Coppins; Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 185-204, here 186.

34. *Ibid.*, 187. Regarding the development of Pauline Christology through the use of metaphorical concepts, Schröter says that “it can thus be stated that the contribution of a metaphorical Christology can consist in understanding the fields of interpretation with which early Christianity surrounded the person of Jesus, beyond the question of their historical and tradition-historical presuppositions, as—to express it with a metaphor—the building stones of the structure of the Christian interpretation of reality” (pp. 202-3).

day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3b-4) is "a use—intelligible only in light of the fate of Jesus—of the Jewish idea of the Anointed One, which represents an innovation and which expands, in turn, the semantic spectrum of this term."³⁵

One significant, yet underdeveloped, set of conceptual and metaphorical resources for understanding Paul's christological language is ancient kingship discourse and the many texts devoted to reflections upon the ideal king.³⁶ Paul's Christ-discourse is heavily indebted to his own creative reflection upon ancient royal ideology, as activated through the fate of Jesus and the early Christians' continued experience of him.³⁷ My basic argument, then, is that Paul used, reworked, and applied ancient conceptions of the good king—both Greco-Roman and Jewish—to Christ in order to structure reality or the symbolic universe of his congregations. In each chapter I will examine the relevant aspects of kingship discourse in order to provide a context that will illumine Paul's Christ-discourse. Except in those instances where Paul quotes or alludes to the Greek Old Testament, my argument is that Paul adopts and adapts the cultural scripts, generic conventions, and *topoi* popularly associated with the good king—not that he derives it from a specific textual source *per se*.³⁸ In other words, given Paul's

35. *Ibid.*, 187. I do not, however, follow Schröter in his unsubstantiated claim, despite its long-standing scholarly pedigree, that "the designation of Jesus as *Χριστός*, for example, is a christological metaphor that Paul takes over without developing it further. For him this is an established designation for Jesus that has already faded in the pre-Pauline tradition from being a title to being part of Jesus' name, and it is not used by Paul to enrich with additional metaphorical statements the image field of being anointed or being the kingly Anointed One" (p. 192).

36. See, however, Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ*, 64-77; with respect to Ephesians, see Julien Smith, *Christ the Ideal King: Cultural Context, Rhetorical Strategy, and the Power of Divine Monarchy in Ephesians* (WUNT 2.313; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2011).

37. Again Schröter, "Metaphorical Christology in Paul," 188: "Rather, one must inquire into the ascriptions through which the activity and fate of Jesus became the center of a specific interpretation of reality. If one considers the early Christian writings from this perspective, then numerous images and image fields come into view, which show a broad spectrum in which the person of Jesus refracts." On the importance of Paul's own experience of Christ as generative for his christological statements, see throughout Hendrikus Boers, *Christ in the Letters of Paul: In Place of a Christology* (BZNW 140; Berlin; de Gruyter, 2006); Dieter Georgi, *Theocracy: In Paul's Praxis and Theology* (trans. David E. Green; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 17-25; more broadly, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *Religious Experience in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998).

38. My method is different, then, from Samuel Sandmel's description of "parallelomania . . . which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe *source and derivation as if implying literary connection flowing in an inevitable or predetermined direction*" (italics mine). See Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 1-13, here, 1.

ethnic and religious background within ancient Judaism, his explicit citations of the Greek Old Testament, and the historical-religious derivation of Paul's churches, I generally emphasize and give pride of place to the Greek Old Testament as providing the sources for Paul's language.³⁹ Nevertheless, if anything has been learned about Judaism in the past half-century, it is that Judaism was situated within the Hellenized ancient Mediterranean world.⁴⁰ As M. David Litwa has stated clearly: "Ancient Judaism was a living Mediterranean religion engaged in active conversation and negotiation with larger religious currents of its time."⁴¹ Thus, despite the obvious rejection of certain aspects of Greco-Roman religions and culture, the Jewish and Greco-Roman depictions of the ideal king share numerous points of overlap and contact with one another, especially with respect to their cultural understanding of "the good king."⁴² Finally, I should emphasize that it would be a mistake to suppose that Paul simply derived his Christ-discourse wholesale from either the Greek Old Testament or Greco-Roman kingship discourse. Paul clearly portrays Christ as absolutely set apart from and superior to any other ruler. After all, Paul supposes that Christ not only defeats but also even created these rulers (Col. 1:16; 2:14-15)! Further, ancient kingship discourse is refracted through the fate of Jesus and the early Christians' experience of the resurrected Messiah.⁴³

39. See especially T. Michael Law, *When God Spoke Greek: The Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 85-116; Michael L. Satlow, *How the Bible Became Holy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 153-70, 210-23.

40. Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974); Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

41. Litwa, *IESUS DEUS*, 19.

42. Though I did not emphasize the point, my study on the cultural script of hospitality to strangers demonstrates numerous points of overlap between Jews and non-Jews when it comes to the practice of hospitality; see Joshua W. Jipp, *Divine Visitations and Hospitality to Strangers in Luke-Acts: An Interpretation of the Malta Episode in Acts 28:1-10* (NovTSup 153; Leiden: Brill, 2013). See also the perceptive analysis of Jonathan Z. Smith, who notes that scholars have often used Judaism as a background for Christianity as an "insulation for early Christianity, guarding it against 'influence' from its environment". (*Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990], 83.

43. Thus, to compare Paul's Christ-discourse with ancient kingship discourse, or to argue that Paul reworks and applies notions of the good king to Christ, is obviously not to suggest *identity* or *sameness* between Christ and that with which he is compared. See here Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, 36-53. See also Litwa, who rightly notes: "If Paul . . . opposed imperial ideology, he also reinscribed it in an attempt to exalt Jesus over the imperial gods of his day. . . . Christians compete

The cumulative effect of my argument is that Paul's language about Christ cannot be fully appreciated apart from recognizing that quite frequently Paul is setting forth a vision of Christ as *the* king. Paul's use of kingship discourse as a source for his christological language has explanatory power for resolving some classic scholarly conundrums: Given Paul's seemingly negative statements regarding the Torah and its inability to grant justification and life, is Paul simply being playful or haphazard in his command to the Galatians to fulfill "the law of Christ"? How was it possible for a Jewish monotheist to conceptualize and articulate the worship and cultic veneration of a second divine figure next to Yahweh? What conceptual resources, in other words, make the rise of early Christology possible? What does Paul mean when he uses participatory language to speak of Christ's people sharing in Christ's identity and narrative? And how did he even begin to develop this participatory soteriology that dominates his discourse and conceptualizing of salvation? Is it possible to more precisely identify the meaning of Paul's justice/righteousness language in Romans? And what did Paul hope that this construction of Christ the king would accomplish in the lives, rituals, social existence, and communal ordering of his churches? The following study will take up these questions in an attempt to illustrate the value for discerning this significant resource for Paul's christological language, one that can provide important insights into exegesis of Paul's letters and his attempt to order the lives of his churches.

Paul's Invention of an Alternative Royal Ideology

What was Paul doing in his reworking of these cultural scripts of the good king? I suggest that the evidence we will see is strong enough to hazard that Paul was attempting to rework the symbolic universe or social imaginary of his churches in order to reorder the allegiances and practices around the reign of Christ the King.⁴⁴ One of Paul's agendas, in

with perceived cultural rivals, but in the very thick of that competition they assimilate and appropriate cultural ideas to promote the unique deity of their lord" (*IESUS DEUS*, 213-14).

44. See here the classic work of Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books Doubleday, 1967).

other words, was to create a new royal ideology, out of the conceptual and linguistic resources at his disposal, and thereby to proclaim the rule of Christ over Paul's churches.⁴⁵ Paul, in other words, legitimates the people around Christ the king by upstaging every other royal competitor as he adapts and reworks aspects of ancient kingship discourse to portray the total sovereignty and power of the Messiah.⁴⁶ Just as kings and emperors relied upon propaganda and spectacles to (re)fashion the legitimacy of their rule, so Paul constructs a portrait of Christ as the perfect king whose actions, qualities, body politic, and institution of rituals show him to be the singular embodiment of the ideal king. Given that the king's body, namely the body of Messiah Jesus, is absent for Paul and his communities, Paul relieves any anxiety over the king's absence by replacing the king's absent body with the body of Christ the ideal king.⁴⁷ The physical body of the king may be absent, but in its place Paul uses kingship ideology to transform, reorder, and stabilize the world of the king's subjects by relating them to the resurrected and living body of the enthroned king.⁴⁸ This new Pauline royal ideology plays a crucial role in what Jacob Taubes has referred to as "the *establishment and legitimation of a new people of God*."⁴⁹ We will see an abundance of evidence that will demonstrate that the king or ruler played an enormous role in the social imaginary of those who lived under something akin to kingship, such that it was often believed that the king stabilized the body politic and even, in some

45. With respect to the Roman Empire, see throughout, Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*, 19-48.

46. With respect to Paul outbidding Moses, see Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, 38-40.

47. On the king's two bodies, see Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Eric L. Santner, *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 1-62; with respect to Paul and the body of Christ, see Devin P. Singh, "Until We Are One?" Biopolitics and the United Body," in "In Christ" in Paul: *Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation* (ed. Michael J. Thate et al.; WUNT 2.384; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2014), 529-55, here 549-50.

48. Santner argues that when the king disappears "the complex symbolic structures and dynamics of sovereignty" (p. 33) do not simply disappear with the king but, rather, migrate into a new location that was previously occupied by the king (*The Royal Remains*, 33-39). On the Roman imperial cults as structuring, defining, and stabilizing the world, see S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Singh, "Until We Are One?" 552: "The loss of Christ's fleshly body initiates a tradition of thinking about how to preserve and maintain the body of Christ . . ."

49. Taubes, *Political Theology of Paul*, 71 (italics original).

instances, the entire universe. Paul inhabits these royal scripts.⁵⁰ They are, for him, stitched as one important thread within the interwoven fabric of his social imaginary.⁵¹

And yet, I suggest that the evidence presented in the following chapters, combined with the possibilities for further research I will signal, indicate that Paul *strategically* reworks and applies these royal scripts to Christ such that this king now stabilizes their assemblies and is the focal point for their symbolic world. Paul can thus be seen as an “ideologue” or as one engaging in “world construction” as he attempts to restructure how the early Christians imagine their existence through the creation of an ideology, an ideology that allows for alternative imaginative scenarios for conceptualizing their own social existence based on this ideal king.⁵² This is not to imply that Christ becomes simply an idea or pure construct, since Christ the king is, for Paul, the living, ruling, and enthroned Lord of the universe who relates to his people precisely through his beneficent rule.⁵³ Wayne A. Meeks concludes his important *The First Urban Christians* with the suggestive claim that Paul and his churches “were engaged . . . in constructing a new world. In time . . . their ideas, their images of God, their ways of organizing life, their rituals, would become part of a massive transformation, in ways they could not have foreseen, of the culture of the Mediterranean basin and of Europe.”⁵⁴ One of the ways in which Paul constructs this new world is through his invention of an authoritative language for his communities that (re)orders the ultimate allegiances and social relations of the subjects of Christ the king.⁵⁵

50. One role of religion in the ancient Mediterranean world as “stabilizing the world,” see Luke Timothy Johnson, *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity* (Anchor Yale Library; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 93-110.

51. Charles Taylor states regarding the meaning of a social imaginary: “I am thinking rather of the ways in which they imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlies these expectations” (*A Secular Age* [Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2007], 171).

52. See also John Barclay, “Paul, Roman Religion and the Emperor: Mapping the Point of Conflict,” in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews* (WUNT 275; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2011), 345-62, esp. 361-62.

53. See the sage cautions by Keck, “New Testament Christology,” 197-98.

54. Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 192.

Paul's creation of the construct of Christ the perfect king is totalizing in that its supremacy, power, benefactions, and justice brook no competitors.⁵⁶ He is, for Paul, the only game in town. Michael J. Thate has referred to Paul's failure to mention the Roman Emperor as a "politics of neglect" whereby for Paul "it is not that Jesus is Lord and Caesar is not; it is that Jesus is Lord [*punkt!*]."⁵⁷ And John B. Barclay has similarly claimed that Paul's refusal to name Rome stems from his belief that "Rome did not rule the world, or write the script of history, or constitute anything unique."⁵⁸ Thus, it seems likely that Paul intentionally refrains from any kind of direct antithetical interaction or competition with Roman imperial ideology, and rather, to use the language of Karl Galinsky, draws upon the resources of kingship discourse to "create a more perfect version of the same concept" in his portrait of Christ's kingship.⁵⁹ Barclay rightly points out

55. See here Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (trans. R. Nice; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 21.

56. Though he is speaking more broadly about early Christianity, this is stated well by John B. Rives, "Christian Expansion and Christian Ideology," in *The Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries: Essays in Explanation* (ed. W. V. Harris; Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 27; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 15-41. Rives argues: "In most early Christian texts we can see a totalizing view of the cosmos, a sort of master narrative that ordered all the different modes of interaction with the divine, rapidly taking shape. This totalizing world-view left no room for myth, philosophy, and cult as separate theologies, since anything that concerned the relationship of humans to the divine had, in order to be true, to flow from and reflect that basic understanding of the cosmos" (pp. 32-33).

57. Michael J. Thate, "Paul and the Anxieties of (Imperial?) Succession: Galatians and the Politics of Neglect," in *"In Christ" in Paul: Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation* (ed. Michael J. Thate et al.; WUNT 2.384; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2014), 209-50, here 241. Preceding the aforementioned quote, Thate states: "Paul was not sitting upon the ground telling sad tales of the death of kings. He was telling the world of a king who died, rose, and not only re-mapped the cosmos but brought a new creation (Gal. 6:14-15; cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-2:16). Paul's Christological cartography of this new cosmos, of this new creation, does not merely flip the script on empire in terms of shifting center and periphery. Rather, Paul's inoperative political theology develops in such a way that empire is neglected altogether as it is reduced to irrelevance." See also Thate's penetrating critique of N. T. Wright ("Politics and Paul: Reviewing N. T. Wright's Political Apostle," in *The Marginalia Review of Books* [January 6, 2015], <http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/politics-paul-reviewing-n-t-wrights-political-apostle-michael-thate/>). A similar point is argued with respect to the relationship between Acts and its relationship to Greco-Roman religion by C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

58. Barclay, "Why the Roman Empire Was Insignificant to Paul," in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*, 363-87, here 386.

59. Karl Galinsky, "The Cult of the Roman Emperor: Uniter or Divider?" in *Rome and Religion: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult* (ed. Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan L. Reed; Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 1-21, here 12. Litwa, shows how early Christians "consistently played the game of apologetic onepmanship" in their depiction of Christ as similar and superior to other Mediterranean deities

that the use of common language, themes, and ideas “does not in itself entail a competitive, or antithetical, relationship between the entities using the same terms.”⁶⁰ Thus, the nature of the relationship between “Christ the king” and *all* other rulers is not one of direct antithesis but is, rather, much more totalizing and all-encompassing.⁶¹ As Christoph Heilig has stated: “Maybe it was not Paul’s *primary* intention to say something about Caesar, but rather to say something about the Messiah and God, although he was perfectly aware of the critical *implications* these statements had for other competing worldviews.”⁶² In other words, Paul’s reworking of kingship discourse to create the concept of “Christ the king” has as its primary purpose the creation of a new mythic worldview, a new locus of absolute power that subsumes all other alternative possibilities or scenarios.⁶³ Thus, when Paul’s words, phrases, and motifs are seen as resonating with Roman imperial ideology, this is probably due to the fact this is the standard and recognizable patterns of speech for speaking of a royal figure. Rather than seeing Paul as engaging in conscious antithetical subversion of a single individual, I understand Paul’s “Christ the king” construct to provide evidence that he has assimilated the ideals of the good king

(*IESUS DEUS*, 222-23). This is clearly different from those who tend to view Paul’s letters as apolitical and as having no subversive elements to the Roman Empire; e.g., see Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

60. Barclay, “Why the Roman Empire Was Insignificant to Paul,” 376. Also helpful is Thomas Phillips, “Why Did Mary Wrap the Newborn Jesus in ‘Swaddling Clothes’? Luke 2.7 and 2.12 in the Context of Luke–Acts and First-Century Jewish Literature,” in *Reading Acts Today: Essays in Honour of Loveday C. A. Alexander* (ed. Steve Walton et al.; LNTS 427; London: T & T Clark, 2011), 29-41.
61. Despite my not seeing Paul’s Christ-discourse as engaging his Roman imperial context *directly* or as antithetical in his criticism, one will soon see that I have profited from the careful studies of Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of the Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008); cf. idem, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994); James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology* (WUNT 273; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2011).
62. Christoph Heilig, “Methodological Considerations for the Search of Counter-Imperial ‘Echoes’ in Pauline Literature,” in *Reactions to Empire: Proceedings of Sacred Texts in Their Socio-Political Contexts* (ed. John Anthony Dunne and Dan Batovici; WUNT 2.372; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2014), 73-92, here 90. Also valuable in the same volume is Matthew V. Novenson, “What the Apostles Did Not See,” who argues, from a social-historical vantage point, that Paul was not concerned with Rome (and vice versa) due, in part, to the fact that the rulers with which he and most of his churches often had to negotiate were provincial (pp. 55-72).
63. Not unlike Augustus’s achievement through his cultural program and creation of a new Roman mythology. With respect to how the visual imagery was used to create this ideology, see Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (trans. Alan Shapiro; Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

as a means of remapping, reordering, and stabilizing the world for the early Christian communities.⁶⁴ This new royal ideology, complete with its myths, rituals, and topoi, functions as a totalizing alternative scenario to any other competing claim to supreme rule and power.⁶⁵

Real Kings and Ideal Kings: Kingship Discourses

Oakley has noted that “The roots of the institution of kingship reach so deeply into the past that they are lost to us in the shadows of prehistory.”⁶⁶ It would take many volumes to attempt something like a comprehensive treatment of this ancient institution and its divergent forms, along with the literature, coins, temples, statues, political reflection, and inscriptions it spawned. The sheer prevalence and widespread dissemination of “good king” motifs and topoi, whether literary or nonliterary, means that kingship discourse “can be invoked with the briefest allusion or used as the foundation for further argumentation.”⁶⁷ Fortunately, there is an abundance of rich scholarship upon which I am able to draw in the chapters that follow, and thus the various aspects of kingship discourse that will frame our understanding of Paul’s christological language are presented in the following chapters. My more limited goal in what immediately follows is to present a select, brief, and anecdotal account of some of the literature, material remains, and tropes and motifs that functioned to propagate a stereotype of the good king.⁶⁸ One important

64. See here also Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Sather Classical Lectures 55; Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991). Cameron masterfully demonstrates how early Christian literature built a symbolic universe and thereby stabilized society through exploiting the prevailing stories their audiences believed to be true.

65. See Heilig, “Methodological Considerations for the Search of Counter-Imperial ‘Echoes’ in Pauline Literature” : “Narrative structures are formative for worldviews, and echoes are able to evoke alternative scenarios in the imagination, which can have persuading power. Stories are able to challenge other stories on the worldview they represent much more effectively than purely factual criticism” (pp. 90-91).

66. Oakley, *Kingship*, 10.

67. Donald Dale Walker, *Paul’s Offer of Leniency (2 Cor 10:1): Populist Ideology and Rhetoric in a Pauline Letter Fragment* (WUNT 2.152; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2002), 93.

68. Particularly valuable are F. W. Walbank, “Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History* (vol. 7.1; ed. F. W. Walbank, A. E. Astin, M. W. Frederiksen, and R. M. Ogilvie; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 62-100; *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (ed. Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Oakley, *Kingship*; Smith, *Christ the Ideal King*, 19-173; Walker, *Paul’s Offer of Leniency (2*

methodological caveat is necessary: the following survey of kingship discourse may give the impression that there was a homogenous conception of “the good king,” but of course nothing could be further from the truth. There was a diversity of conceptions simply within the ancient Near Eastern context of the kinds of kingship in Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Israelite sources.⁶⁹ The monarchy in Persia, the development of the institution of kingship after Alexander the Great’s conquests, and the enigma of the controversial rise of the Roman principate all give the lie to any purely homogenous conception of the ideal king. My own admittedly selective construal of what constitutes the good king is obviously a scholarly abstraction, and I do not pretend to suggest that one could even begin to disentangle certain motifs as “Jewish” or alternatively “Greco-Roman.”⁷⁰ Nevertheless, there is a recognizable discourse for discussing kings in antiquity that gives room for competing viewpoints, and given that Paul is my primary object of study, I will focus on *his* reworking and fashioning of this discourse in what follows. The following survey of kingship discourse is, for this reason, heavier on synthesis than it is analysis. The reader will almost certainly find the survey denser than my engagement with Paul’s texts, and yet I beg for the reader’s patience as an understanding of the themes, topics, and languages applied to ancient kings is essential for our understanding of *Paul’s own kingship discourse*.

Cor 10:1), 92-140; Oswyn Murray, “Philosophy and Monarchy in the Hellenistic World,” in *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers* (ed. Tessa Rajak et al.; Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 2007), 13-28.

69. On the king in ancient Near Eastern royal ideology, see Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Press, 1948); Shirley Lucass, *The Concept of the Messiah in the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity* (Library of Second Temple Studies 78; New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2011), 37-65; Ivan Engnell, *Divine Kingship: Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1967); Dale Launderville, *Piety and Politics: The Dynamics of Royal Authority in Homeric Greece, Biblical Israel, and Old Babylonian Mesopotamia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

70. This limitation, though not debilitating for this study, is exemplified in the difficulty of speaking of Israel’s royal ideology in separation from other ancient Near Eastern ideologies. See, for example, John Day, “The Canaanite Inheritance of the Israelite Monarchy,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. John Day; JSOTSup 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 72-90.

Kingship Discourse in Greek and Hellenistic Writings

Even before the Hellenistic kings of the fourth century BCE, the Greeks were acquainted with the institution of kingship as it pervaded Epic poetry and the Athenian tragedy.⁷¹ Kingship discourse continued into the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods. Philodemus, a first century Epicurean, wrote a treatise filled with royal topoi discovered in Homer (*On the Good King according to Homer*).⁷² Dio Chrysostom's *Second Discourse on Kingship* portrays Alexander and his father Philip engaged in a "courageous and lofty conversation" regarding Homer and kingship (περί βασιλείας ἦσαν, 2.1). And somewhat famously, Plutarch indicates that Homer's *Iliad* was used by Alexander as a guide to kings for military warfare (Plutarch, *Alex.* 668d; 679d-e). Isocrates gave orations in praise of rulers such as the *Evagoras*, the Cyprian ruler, as well as *Ad Nicolem* and *Nicocles*. The latter essays, along with Xenophon's *Hiero* written to extol the ruler of Syracuse, function as mirrors for princes in their exhortations to the rulers to become good kings. Xenophon wrote an idealizing and romantic novel of the good king Cyrus in his *Cyropaideia* and an encomium for the Spartan king *Agesilaus*.⁷³ Both Plato and Aristotle reflected upon kingship, with significant provisos, as an ideal form of government in the former's *Republic* and the latter's *Politics*. Throughout these writings the good king is almost certainly somehow related to or elected by the gods,⁷⁴ successful in military warfare,⁷⁵ protector of his people,⁷⁶ benefactor

71. E.g., see Aeschylus, *The Persians*, 56–58, 634–54, 760–86.

72. See here Oswyn Murray, "Philodemus on the Good King according to Homer," *JRS* 55 (1965): 161–82.

73. See especially, J. Joel Farber, "The *Cyropaideia* and Hellenistic Kingship," *The American Journal of Philology* 100 (1979): 497–514; J. Rufus Fears, "Cyrus as a Stoic Example of the Just Monarch," *The American Journal of Philology* 95 (1974): 265–77. On the mythic popularity of Cyrus as the preeminent good king, see Cicero, *Quintus fratrem Epistulae* 1.1.23.

74. Homer, *Il.* 1.279; 2.203–6; 9.96; Isocrates, *Evag.* 12–19; 25; *Nic.* 13.

75. Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.1.37.

76. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill ["The Emperor and His Virtues," *Historia* 30 (1981): 298–323, here 316] has demonstrated that the king's "power to conquer, to save, to bring harmony and stability, and to distribute benefits" is what legitimates the rule of Hellenistic kings and particularly Roman emperors. We will see this further in the frequent association between kings and *peace*.

of the people,⁷⁷ powerful,⁷⁸ superior in virtue,⁷⁹ supremely wise,⁸⁰ self-controlled,⁸¹ just,⁸² observant of the laws,⁸³ and pious.⁸⁴

After the conquests of Alexander the Great, monarchy and imperial power came to affect every aspect of life—whether it be that of religion, philosophy, political theory, or day-to-day life.⁸⁵ Thus, as F. W. Walbank has noted, “when the Greek world found itself facing a crop of kings, there was already a body of doctrine in existence ready to interpret, account for, justify and, it might be hoped, contain this disconcerting phenomenon.”⁸⁶ Notable in this period are characterizations of the military aggression of the Hellenistic kings and their so-called spear won territory;⁸⁷ an emphasis on the kings as saviors, shepherds, and benefactors;⁸⁸ the development of ruler cults and the bestowal of divine honors and cultic veneration for these kings;⁸⁹ the assimilation and

77. Isocrates, *Evag.* 51–57; 70–72; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.1.39.

78. Isocrates, *Evag.* 44; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.3.1–20.

79. Plato, *Resp.* 473D; 484A–502C; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1284a; 1288a8–10, 15–19, 28–29; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.1.21–22.

80. Plato, *Pol.* 294A; *Resp.* 473D; Isocrates, *Evag.* 33, 77–78, 81; Xenophon, *Ages.* 6.4–8.

81. Plato, *Leg.* 712A; *Resp.* 590D; Isocrates, *Nic.* 41; Xenophon, *Ages.* 5.

82. Isocrates, *Evag.* 43; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1.3.16–18; 8.3.20; *Ages.* 4; Aalders, *Political Thought in Hellenistic Times*, 21.

83. Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1.3.18; 8.1.22; *Ages.* 7.

84. Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.1.23ff; *Ages.* 3.

85. See A. B. Bosworth: *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

86. Walbank, “Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas,” 75. See David E. Hahm, “Kings and Constitutions: Hellenistic Theories,” in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (ed. Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 457–76, here 457: “By the second century BC even the traditional kingship of mainland Greece, such as the Macedonian elected kingship and the limited dual kingship of Sparta, had been transformed into the autocratic Hellenistic type.”

87. M. M. Austin, “Hellenistic Kings, War and the Economy,” *CQ* 36 (1986): 450–66; Rufus Fears, “The Theology of Victory,” *ANRW* 2.17.2 (1981): 736–826; Walbank, “Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas,” 73–74; see the summary of the Hellenistic kings and their rule by conquest in 1 Macc. 1:1–9.

88. Philip de Souza [“*Parta Victoriis Pax*: Roman Emperors as Peacemakers,” in *War and Peace in Ancient and Medieval History* (ed. Philip de Souza and John France; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 76–106; Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background* (2 vols.; Dumbarton Oaks Studies 9; Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1966), 1:278. For the king as shepherd, see Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.32; *Cyr.* 1.1.2; 8.2.14; Aristotle, *Eth.nic.* 1161A. On benefactions, see Aristotle, *Pol.* 1286b.9–12; Klaus Bringmann, “The King as Benefactor: Some Remarks on Ideal Kingship in the Age of Hellenism,” in *Images and Ideologies: Self-definition in the Hellenistic World* (ed. Anthony Bulloch et al., Hellenistic Culture and Society 12; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 7–24; Angelos Chaniotis, *War in the Hellenistic World: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 30–37. On the use of “shepherd” as a royal title, see Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1.1.2; Plato, *Pol.* 265d; and throughout the Neo-Pythagorean essays “On Kingship.”

89. Walbank, “Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas,” 84–93; Price, *Rituals and Power*, 23–52.

identification of the kings with deities;⁹⁰ and an increasing emphasis on their wealth, beauty, and public displays.⁹¹ Also characteristic of this period is the kings' adoption of royal honorifics and titles after their military victories, the most popular of which were "Savior," "Divine Manifestation," and "Benefactor."⁹²

With the rise of the Hellenistic monarchs there was little point in debating the superior form of governance; rather, legitimating kingship and providing a good ideology of kingship now became the task of the philosophers.⁹³ This led to an increasingly enormous amount of philosophical and political reflection upon "the good king"—written from many and diverse viewpoints. Diogenes Laertius testifies to numerous philosophers who penned essays, no longer extant, "On Kingship," or discussed kingship within essays "On Constitutions/Polities."⁹⁴ The prevalence of the Hellenistic monarchies likely also resulted in the Neo-Pythagorean essays by Sthenidas, Diotogenes, and Ecphantus "On Kingship."⁹⁵ Julien Smith summarizes the content of the extant essays "On Kingship" under four headings.⁹⁶

90. Angelos Chaniotis, "The Divinity of Hellenistic Rulers," in *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (ed. Andrew Erskine; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 431-45; Aalders, *Political Thought in Hellenistic Times*, 26-27; R. A. Hadley, "Royal Propaganda of Seleucus I and Lysimachus," *JHS* 94 (1974): 50-65. Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* uses many of the standard elements of the good king to describe the work of Zeus in his rule of the universe. See John C. Thom, *Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus* (Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity 33; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005).

91. On the importance of wealth, beauty, and public display, see Walbank, "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas," 84.

92. Walbank, "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas," 81-82; Ludwig Koenen, "The Ptolemaic King as a Religious Figure," in *Images and Ideologies* (ed. Anthony Bulloch et al.), 81-113.

93. Walbank, "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas," 76.

94. Those who wrote essays "On Kingship" include Aristotle (Diogenes Laertius, 5.22), Theophrastus (Diogenes Laertius, 5.42-49), Antisthenes (Diogenes Laertius, 6.16-18), Zeno, Cleanthes (Diogenes Laertius, 7.175), and Epicurus. See Walker, *Paul's Offer of Leniency (2 Cor 10:1)*, 92-95; Goodenough, "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship," 58-59; Walbank, "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas," 77.

95. These essays have been preserved in Johannes Stobaeus, *Anthologium* (5 vols.; ed. C. Wachsmuth and O. Hense; Berlin: Weidmann, 1958). For translation and comment, see Erwin R. Goodenough, "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship," *YCS* 1 (1928): 55-102. For helpful commentary, see Bruno Centrone, "Platonism and Pythagoreanism in the Early Empire," in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, 567-75. Also helpful is Smith, *Christ the Ideal King*, 34-47; Bruno Blumenfeld, *The Political Paul: Justice, Democracy and Kingship in a Hellenistic Framework* (JSNTSup 201; London: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 189-274.

96. Smith, *Christ the Ideal King*, 37-47. See also the helpful discussion in Francis Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 21-24.