

J. THOMAS HEWITT

# Messiah and Scripture

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

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J. Thomas Hewitt

# Messiah and Scripture

Paul's "In Christ" Idiom in Its  
Ancient Jewish Context

Mohr Siebeck

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*For A. L. C. H.*



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J. Thomas Hewitt  
Aberdeen, Scotland  
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## Abbreviations

All abbreviations of ancient sources and secondary literature conform to Billie Jean Collins et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).



## Introduction

According to Codex Alexandrinus, Paul, in Rom 3:22, did not write *διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ* but *διὰ πίστεως ἐν χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*.<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this study, this variant is interesting not because of what it suggests about a fifth-century scribe's interpretation of the genitive relationship in the received text, but rather because of the care he takes with word order. Whatever the scribe's reasons for this amendment, he appears to have realized that merely inserting *ἐν* after *πίστεως* would result in the characteristically *un-Pauline* expression *ἐν Ἰησοῦ* – a phrase which never appears in the undisputed Pauline epistles.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in an apparent homage to Paul's idiolect the scribe also inverts the words *Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ* so that the prepositional phrase reads *ἐν χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*.

The significance of these textual details would perhaps be lost on many modern readers of Paul, who, upon hearing the English transliteration “Christ,” hear only a second name of the man Jesus of Nazareth. If “Christ” is just a name, what difference would it make that Paul routinely wrote “in

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<sup>1</sup> The variant is not recorded in the apparatus of NA<sup>28</sup>. High-resolution images of Codex Alexandrinus are available online at The British Library, “Codex Alexandrinus (Gregory-Aland 02), Bible in Four Volumes: Volume 4 (New Testament),” Digitised Manuscripts, [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal\\_MS\\_I\\_d\\_viii](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_I_d_viii). For this particular variant, see fol. 86r, line 23. On the significance of this variant for interpreting the genitive relationship of *πίστεως Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ*, see Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 388.

<sup>2</sup> “In Jesus” appears once in the disputed epistles, in Eph 4:21 (*ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ*). Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 428–430 suggests this unusual use of “in Jesus” is meant to imply that the tradition taught to the Ephesians can be traced to the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth. Somewhat differently, N. T. Wright, “The Messiah and the People of God: A Study in Pauline Theology with Particular Reference to the Argument of the Epistle to the Romans,” (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1980), 21 asserts that “in Jesus” is used to indicate that the Ephesians “have been taught the true facts about the man Jesus of Nazareth.” Note also the inversion of *χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* after *ἐν* in Gal 3:14 according to the fourth-century codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. The majority of witnesses read *ἐν χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*, including  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$  A C D F G K L P  $\Psi$  0278. 33. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505. 1739. 1881. 2464  $\mathfrak{M}$ , the entire Latin tradition, and Harklensis.



Christ” or “in Christ Jesus” but not “in Jesus”?<sup>3</sup> But of course the Greek noun *χριστός* also translates as “messiah,” which is something other than a name and is itself a transliteration of the Jewish scriptural word מָשִׁיחַ, “anointed one.”<sup>4</sup> And Paul, when using an expression built with the preposition *ἐν* and a personal object referring to Jesus, habitually chose the scriptural word “messiah” as that object. My aim in this study is to elucidate the import of this linguistic custom.

## A. The Problem Stated

The problem can be stated simply: Modern interpreters of Paul have almost universally ignored the category “messiah” when describing Paul’s use of the phrase *ἐν χριστῷ* even though *χριστός* means “messiah.” A survey of these interpreters suggests there are at least two reasons for this.<sup>5</sup> The first is a fixation on the word *ἐν*. What could Paul have meant by writing that something was done “in” Christ or even that *someone* was “in” Christ? Discussions of Paul’s “mysticism,” or doctrine of “union,” or concept of “participation” have continued apace sheerly by force of Paul’s seemingly odd use of the preposition *ἐν* with a personal object. The second and more significant reason for neglecting messiahship in accounts of Paul’s “in Christ” language is a longstanding assumption that Paul had evolved beyond any interest in messiahship. Given this assumption, *χριστός* in Paul could not really have meant “messiah” because Paul’s ideas looked nothing like “messianism.” This, however, depends on the problematic premise that “messianism” in antiquity is an identifiable ideology that can be weighed in the balances with Paul’s christology and found wanting. Given the choice, then, between attending to Paul’s language or speculating about Paul’s ideological commitments, modern interpreters have typically chosen the latter.

This has created a methodological paradox in treatments of Paul’s “in Christ” language. Scholars have remained simultaneously interested in what Paul was saying yet predisposed against paying attention to what he was saying. And thus the cottage industry of research on Paul’s “in Christ” lan-

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<sup>3</sup> Paul also wrote “in the lord” roughly about half as often as he wrote “in Christ” and related expressions (on which see below). Cf. Rom 14:14; 16:2, 8, 11, 12 [2x], 13, 22; 1 Cor 1:31 [paraphrase of LXX Jer 9:23]; 4:17; 7:22, 39; 9:1, 2; 11:11; 15:58; 16:19; 2 Cor 2:12; 10:17 [paraphrase of LXX Jer 9:23]; Gal 5:10; Phil 1:14; 2:19, 24, 29; 3:1; 4:1, 2, 4, 10; 1 Thess 1:1; 3:8; 4:1; 5:12; Phlm 16; 20 (thirty-five instances versus sixty-three, though in some cases it is perhaps debatable whether the referent of *κύριος* is Jesus).

<sup>4</sup> *Χριστός* is a common noun, not a proper noun, and it is used by Paul as an honorific. On this see Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> See chapter 1.

guage has become self-sustaining. This is why, even after a century and a half of modern biblical research, Stanley Stowers explains that we still “need a discourse or discourses that provide the conditions of intelligibility for the language of participation” (by which he means primarily the expression “in Christ”).<sup>6</sup> This need is bound to remain unfulfilled as long as we overlook the foremost clue indicating the discourse in which Paul was participating – the word *χριστός*, “messiah.” Alternatively, my thesis is that Paul’s use of “in Christ” language is part of a broader phenomenon of ancient Jewish messiah discourse, and that Paul’s development and uses of the expression “in Christ” are accounted for by features of this discourse. In other words, I propose that *ἐν χριστῷ* means “in messiah.”

This claim is simple but susceptible to misunderstanding. I am not proposing that Paul was, after all, heir to a pre-formed messianic ideology to which his various uses of the word *χριστός* refer. That is to say, I do not think there was an extant messianic theology in Paul’s period that explains his use of “in Christ” language. Recent research on messianism in antiquity has demonstrated that there was no such thing. Instead, what we have is a variety of ancient messiah texts whose commonality consists not in a uniform conception of messiahship, but rather in the markedly innovative interpretation of scripture in accordance with the varying historical realities of each author in order to describe their respective messiahs. This description is the model of ancient messiah discourse I will use here.<sup>7</sup> And on this model, Paul may be understood as a participant in a recognizable Jewish interpretative enterprise, but a participant whose manner of speaking and whose ideas – like those of all the other participants – were nevertheless distinctive in light of the particularities surrounding the life of his messiah. Thus, Paul’s “in Christ” language may be said to be both conventional and innovative.

## B. Methodology

The aim of this study is historical description, not theological synthesis. It is therefore to be distinguished from treatments of the Christian doctrine of “union with Christ.” Accordingly, I use the conventional linguistic, literary, and historical-inferential tools commonly deployed in the discipline of biblical studies. Additionally, within the general category of historical description I am specifically interested in Paul’s language rather than themes or motifs

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<sup>6</sup> Stanley K. Stowers, “What Is ‘Pauline Participation in Christ’?,” in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders*, ed. M. Chancey, S. Heschel, and F. Udoh, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series 16 (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2008), 353.

<sup>7</sup> See chapter 2.

thought to be evinced in his writings. This study, then, is also different from research on participatory motifs in the Pauline epistles. Furthermore, my object of inquiry is neither ἐν-phrases generally nor χριστός-phrases generally.<sup>8</sup> It is specifically the phrase ἐν χριστῷ and its variants. My defense for this delimitation is threefold: First, the study would grow too large if I attempted to conduct a thorough analysis of Paul's "in Christ" language as a specimen of ancient Jewish messiah discourse in addition to conducting a comparison with lexically similar phrases within the *corpus Paulinum*. Second, such comparisons of Pauline expressions have already been undertaken by others, but the framework of messiah discourse as an interpretative-linguistic phenomenon has been utterly neglected.<sup>9</sup> And third, as concerns Paul's overall use of "messiah" language, ἐν χριστῷ is the most frequently occurring syntagm built with the word χριστός after the appellative combinations χριστός Ἰησοῦς and Ἰησοῦς χριστός.<sup>10</sup> In other words, aside from Paul's axiomatic messianic designation of Jesus, "in Christ" is the thing Paul most frequently said about his messiah. It is therefore worthy of its own analysis.

### C. Definitions

As a contribution to an ongoing scholarly conversation, this study uses as evidence for Paul the seven epistles which are widely considered to be of undisputed Pauline authorship: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon.<sup>11</sup> Within these writings the

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<sup>8</sup> Therefore, while analyses of phrases such as ἐν κυρίῳ or σὺν χριστῷ would no doubt be fruitful, they are outside the purview of this study. However, see the brief comparative surveys concerning ἐν κυρίῳ in the conclusions of chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>9</sup> See chapter 1.

<sup>10</sup> The noun χριστός is Paul's preferred designation for Jesus. The word occurs some 269 times in the undisputed epistles compared to 142 uses of Ἰησοῦς and 188 uses of κύριος (not all of which refer to Jesus). The combinations χριστός Ἰησοῦς and Ἰησοῦς χριστός occur 106 times altogether. There are 56 instances of ἐν (τῷ) χριστῷ.

<sup>11</sup> For the NT I follow the Greek text of Kurt Aland et al., eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013). The one exception to this is that unlike NA<sup>28</sup> I do not capitalize the Greek noun χριστός. On this, note Giorgio Agamben, *The Time that Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 16–17: "The distinction between *Christos* (capitalized) and *christos* as an appellation was introduced by modern editors. Not only do the most ancient manuscripts fail to distinguish between capitalized and non-capitalized words, they also write *christos* – as with other *nomina sacra* such as *theos*, *kyrios*, *pneuma*, *Iēsous*, and so on – in an abbreviated form .... But, in the preface to the Nestle-Aland edition, we read '*christos* will be written in lower case when it signals "the official designation" (*Amstbezeichnung*) of the Messiah ...., and in upper case when it has clearly become a proper name ....' The real difficulty with this more or less conscious

evidence of primary interest is Paul's sixty-three uses of "in Christ" language, by which I mean the expressions ἐν χριστῷ, ἐν τῷ χριστῷ, ἐν χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, and ἐν αὐτῷ where the pronoun's antecedent is χριστός.<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, in describing the pertinent ancient literature I use several phrases containing the word "messiah." Given the extensive secondary literature devoted to the study of "messianism" in antiquity, my terminology bears explaining. When speaking of "messiah texts" I mean texts that use the words משיח, χριστός, *unctus*, or other translation equivalencies; I do not mean texts about eschatological figures sometimes considered to be "messianic" but never called "messiah." The authors of messiah texts engaged in "messiah speculation" – that is, the activity of characterizing a figure or figures called "messiah" and describing events, activities, and implications pertaining to that figure. In so doing, these authors participated in "messiah discourse," understood as the literary and linguistic conventions common to communication about messiahs. As we will see, the most prominent of these conventions is "messianic interpretation" by which I mean the reading of an antecedent scriptural text as pertaining to a "messiah" (regardless of whether that antecedent text is itself actually a "messiah text").<sup>13</sup> Finally, it is possible to describe an ancient author's "messianology." This does not refer to widespread beliefs about a messiah, but rather the sum total of what one given author writes about a messiah. As concerns Paul, "messianology" is not synonymous with "christology," which typically refers to all of Paul's beliefs about Jesus. Rather, messianology is what Paul believes about the messiah, whom he identifies as Jesus.<sup>14</sup>

## D. Conceptual Models

The overarching conceptual model of this study is to regard Paul's letters as ancient Jewish literature. Ancient "Judaism" – the historical, cultural, religious, and literary factors pertaining to ancient Jews – is therefore a context

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transgression of the most basic philological principles, lies in determining this self-evident "when." I do capitalize the English noun "Christ" since to my mind neglecting to do so would result in a distraction outweighing any philological benefit.

<sup>12</sup> Rom 3:24; 6:11, 23; 8:1, 2, 39; 9:1; 12:5; 15:17; 16:3, 7, 9, 10; 1 Cor 1:2, 4, 5, 30; 3:1; 4:10, 15a, 15b, 17; 15:18, 19, 22, 31; 16:24; 2 Cor 1:19, 20; 2:14, 17; 3:14; 5:17, 19, 21; 12:2, 19; 13:4; Gal 1:22; 2:4, 17; 3:14, 26, 28; 5:6; Phil 1:1, 13, 26; 2:1, 5; 3:3, 9, 14; 4:7, 19, 21; 1 Thess 1:1; 2:14; 4:16; 5:18; Phlm 8, 20, and 23.

<sup>13</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>14</sup> "Messianology" is therefore synonymous here with the tautological expression "messiah christology."

for Paul, not a “background.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, for this study the analysis of other Jewish literature roughly contemporary to Paul’s letters is valuable, but not primarily for pinpointing linguistic “parallels” or ostensible conceptual “parallels,”<sup>16</sup> nor primarily for tracing the purported history of a tradition which Paul appears to espouse. Rather, contextualizing Paul within Judaism is valuable for describing shared discourses in which Paul participates and by which aspects of his writings are elucidated – messiah discourse in this case. Nevertheless, two caveats are in order: First, this study will propose that certain antecedent scriptural texts shaped Paul’s messianology. That, however, can be said of any messiah text in and around the first century CE. Second, this study is primarily interested in re-describing Paul specifically, not ancient Jewish messiah discourse generally. In itself, however, that stated purpose does not devalue other Jewish literature; it merely focuses the object of inquiry.

## E. Outline

Chapter 1, recounting modern treatments of “participationism” and associated language in Paul, illustrates a virtually uniform neglect of messiahship in describing Paul’s “in Christ” language. Chapter 2 traces the rise of revisionist accounts of ancient messiah texts, accounts which eschew “the messianic idea” as an explanatory category and which instead emphasize the interpretative-linguistic conventions common to ancient messiah discourse. Chapters 3 and 4 explore Paul’s participation in that discourse with special reference to his use of “in Christ” language. Chapter 3 traces Paul’s messianic interpretation of scriptural traditions concerning Abraham’s seed, and chapter 4 assesses his messianic interpretation of the Danielic “one like a son of man.” Finally, chapters 5 and 6 comprise a two-part examination of every instance of “in Christ” language in Paul in light of the findings of chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 5 consists of a syntactical analysis and chapter 6 a conceptual analysis. The conclusion of the book very briefly summarizes the findings of the study, considers their import for evaluating existing scholarship, and suggests trajectories for further investigation.

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<sup>15</sup> This distinction is in partial response to the essays, Geza Vermes, “Jewish Studies and New Testament Interpretation,” *JJS* 31 (1980): 1–17; Geza Vermes, “Jewish Literature and New Testament Exegesis: Reflections on Methodology,” *JJS* 33 (1982): 361–376; and Geza Vermes, “Methodology in the Study of Jewish Literature in the Graeco-Roman Period,” *JJS* 36 (1985): 145–158. I use the term “Judaism” in its conventional sense, but it has been instructively problematized by Steve Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,” *JSJ* 38 (2007): 457–512.

<sup>16</sup> See Samuel Sandmel, “Parallelomania,” *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13.

## Chapter 1

# The Modern Problem of “In Christ” in Paul

I have claimed in the introduction that in some important respects Paul’s “in Christ” language has been misconstrued in modern scholarship. Whatever the causes of this, a lack of attention to the phrase has not been one of them. On the contrary, it rarely goes unmentioned in treatments of Paul and early Christianity. The idiom, however, is very rarely dealt with in its own right. Rather, discussions of it are logged in broader accounts of Paul’s thought, or it is uncritically treated as a cipher for some theological or religio-historical concept.<sup>1</sup> This latter scholarly habit is especially problematic because it confuses Paul’s idiom with various modern constructs thereby distorting the results of historical inquiry. Despite the relatively copious attention given to the phrase, one of the effects of this faulty approach is a neglect of one of the phrase’s constituent lexemes, the noun *χριστός*. Because in modern parlance, scholarly and popular, “Christ” usually simply and uncontroversially denotes Jesus of Nazareth without evoking the meaning “anointed one” or “messiah,” there results a fixation on the preposition *ἐν* and what it might mean for concepts of “union,” “participation,” or “mysticism.” These ideas are certainly worthy of study, but they are conceptual constructs rather than accounts of an ancient author’s manner of speaking. And in the case of the idiom *ἐν χριστῷ*, however else that manner of speaking might be described, it is consistently messianic. Nevertheless, modern treatments of Paul’s “in Christ” language, almost without exception, ignore messiahship. I intend the present study as a corrective to this oversight.

This study is not, then, a treatment of participation, union, or the like, but rather an exploration of one very common example of Paul’s messiah language. Nevertheless, discussions of these more comprehensive topics necessarily entail analyses of relevant language, among which the Pauline idiom “in Christ” is frequently (and perhaps correctly) considered preeminent. It is therefore neither possible nor desirable to pass over such treatments while recounting the modern problem of Paul’s “in Christ” language. This study

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<sup>1</sup> Note, for instance, the title of a recent collection of essays, *“In Christ” in Paul*, the subtitle of which is *Explorations in Paul’s Theology of Union and Participation* (ed. Michael J. Thate, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Constantine Campbell, WUNT II 384 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014]). This is a fine anthology, but it contains no substantive discussion of “in Christ” language as such in the undisputed Pauline epistles.

does do something different, though. And while its findings may be pertinent for an understanding of “participation” in Paul, I do not assume that a particular conception of participation is operative in Paul’s thought, nor am I interested in the phrase mainly as it pertains to participation. Instead, I am interested in the phrase as it pertains to messiahship. Moreover, as will become evident in what follows, the modern problem of Paul’s “in Christ” language is largely a problem of *disinterest* in messiahship. This trait has been endemic in the modern, critical study of Paul from its inception, and therefore it is appropriate to begin our survey with the self-designated *Herr* of the Tübingen School of biblical criticism, Ferdinand Christian Baur.<sup>2</sup>

### A. Into the Age of Mysticism

Baur is (in)famous for his view that Paul’s letters represent one side of a two-sided dispute between Peter and Paul, that is, between Jewish Christianity and gentile Christianity. This theory is based largely on Baur’s construal of the factions in the Corinthian church, a perspective first set out in his 1831 article “Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde” and developed in his 1845 *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi*.<sup>3</sup> Baur finds evidence in the Corinthian correspondence not of four factions, but of two – those claiming “ἐγὼ Παύλου, ἐγὼ Ἀπολλῶν” and those declaring “ἐγὼ Κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ χριστοῦ” (1 Cor 1:12).<sup>4</sup> Left with the awkward question of why Paul would oppose a group professing to be Christ’s, Baur leverages the construct of messianism to explain the problem: The members of the Petrine party were Jewish Christians, who, given their Jewishness, were claiming closer association with the messiah than gentile believers enjoyed and thereby superiority over the gentiles loyal to Paul (and Apollos). Thus, on the problematic nature of the expression ἐγὼ χριστοῦ Baur speculates,

Among such proud men as these Jewish Christians, would not the presumption arise that Christ, the Messiah, belonged to them alone? Exactly in this manner the presumption did

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<sup>2</sup> F. C. Baur, *Die Tübinger Schule und ihre Stellung zur Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Fues, 1860), 58n1.

<sup>3</sup> F. C. Baur, “Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christentums in der ältesten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom,” *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* 4 (1831): 61–206; F. C. Baur, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi, sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre* (Stuttgart: Becher und Müller, 1845); ET F. C. Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teachings*, trans. A. Menzies (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), esp. 1:268–320.

<sup>4</sup> Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, 1:274.

arise .... They called themselves τὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ – disciples of Christ – disciples of the Messiah, – or, changing slightly the name, χριστιανούς.<sup>5</sup>

According to Baur, such messianic fervor was an issue of contention for Paul because he, confronted with the previously unthinkable notion of a crucified messiah, saw in Jesus’s death “the purification of the Messianic idea.” Baur explains,

With this death everything that the Messiah might have been as a Jewish Messiah disappeared; through his death, Jesus, as the Messiah, had died to Judaism, had been removed beyond his national connexion with it, and placed in a freer, more universal, and purely spiritual sphere.<sup>6</sup>

Paul had thus “passed far beyond” interest in a messiah *κατὰ σάρκα* (2 Cor 5:16).<sup>7</sup> And therefore the Petrine party’s claim of allegiance to the messiah – or, as Baur puts it, “the idea of the Χριστοῦ εἶναι” – is at the root of the “dispute between the Apostle and his opponents.”<sup>8</sup>

In drawing up his historical reconstruction, Baur gives a brief but telling analysis of the genesis of Paul’s “in Christ” language. Having contended that “the Χριστοῦ εἶναι” is the rub for Paul, Baur infers that

[t]he peculiar circumstance from which the εἶναι ἐν Χριστῷ must have been derived ... was not so much the earthly and national appearance of Jesus ... but rather the death of Jesus .... That which essentially distinguishes the national Jewish Messiah from the Christ of the true Christian consciousness, is the sufferings and death of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, Paul’s notion of being “in Christ” is a one-upping of his opponents notion of being “of Christ”; to be “in Christ” is “the *true* Χριστοῦ εἶναι.”<sup>10</sup> In this, Baur severs Paul’s “in Christ” language from discourse about a “Jewish messiah,” and indeed the phrase “in Christ” – despite its plain meaning – is taken as a *rejection* of messiahship. Grammatically speaking, Baur fixates on the preposition ἐν (on the assumption that “in” is better than

<sup>5</sup> Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, 1:276. See Philippa Townsend, “Who Were the First Christians? Jews, Gentiles and the *Christianoi*,” in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Eduard Iricinschi and Michael Holger Zellentin, TSAJ 119 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 212–230, who argues the opposite, that χριστιανοί emerged as a designation of the early Pauline gentile communities.

<sup>6</sup> Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, 2:125.

<sup>7</sup> Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, 2:126. On this problematic reading of 2 Cor 5:16, see chapter 3.

<sup>8</sup> Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, 1:297. Here, Baur is attuned to the meaning of χριστός. Note also 1:277–278: “On this account also [Peter’s party’s] designation, evidently intentionally chosen, was τοῦ Χριστοῦ not τοῦ Ἰησοῦ or τοῦ κυρίου.”

<sup>9</sup> Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, 1:283–284.

<sup>10</sup> Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, 1:284 (italics added). Note also 2:176: “[t]he name χριστιανοί ... expresses nothing but the external side of this relation ... but the ὄντες ἐν Χριστῷ ... expresses its most intimate principle.”



the genitive relation) and ignores the preposition’s object, *χριστός*. This state of affairs would obtain in treatments of the idiom for more than a generation to come.

The work of Adolf Deissmann exemplifies this trend. Deissmann has been dubbed a “discoverer” of the Pauline concept of participation in Christ,<sup>11</sup> an epithet earned by his theory of “Christ-mysticism” set forth in his 1909 Uppsala lectures and published the following year as *Paulus: En kultur- och religionshistorisk skiss*.<sup>12</sup> Deissmann builds his account of Paul’s thought around “the primitive Pauline watchword ‘in Christ,’” a “formula” which “is meant vividly and mystically” and is the “characteristic expression of his Christianity.”<sup>13</sup> Deissmann arrives at his perspective in two steps. First, leaning on the inverse expression “God revealed his son *in me*” (Gal 1:16), Deissmann finds in Paul’s Damascus road experience the catalyzing inception of his mystical thought.<sup>14</sup> And second, perceiving in Paul a “Hellenistic-mystical tendency of the experience of Christ,” Deissmann finds in the identification of *κύριος* with *πνεῦμα* in 2 Cor 3:17 the key to understanding Paul’s idea of mystical communion.<sup>15</sup>

Christ is Spirit; therefore He can live in Paul and Paul in Him. ... Just as the air of life, which we breathe, is “in” us and fills us, and yet we at the same time live in this air and breathe it, so it is also with the Christ-intimacy of the Apostle Paul: Christ in him, he in Christ.<sup>16</sup>

Deissmann’s explanation of Paul’s “in Christ” language entails functionally redefining *χριστός* as something other than “messiah” – in this case, Deissmann’s conception of the *πνεῦμα* of Hellenistic mysticism. Whereas for Baur Paul left behind “the national Jewish messiah” in favor of “the Christ of the true Christian consciousness,”<sup>17</sup> for Deissmann “[t]he spiritual Christ was able to do what a dogmatic Messiah could not have done.”<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, Deissmann throughout sees Paul as a religious and linguistic innovator. His Damascus road apocalypse was “the basal mystical experience of a religious genius.”<sup>19</sup> And having thus been “thrown open to creative energy,”<sup>20</sup> “Paul

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<sup>11</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977), 453.

<sup>12</sup> G. Adolf Deissmann, *Paulus: En kultur- och religionshistorisk skiss* (Stockholm: Geber, 1910); ET G. Adolf Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, trans. William E. Wilson (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1926), 147.

<sup>13</sup> Deissmann, *Paul*, 140.

<sup>14</sup> Deissmann, *Paul*, 130 (italics original).

<sup>15</sup> Deissmann, *Paul*, 138; 2 Cor 3:17: “the lord is the spirit (ὁ ... κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν).”

<sup>16</sup> Deissmann, *Paul*, 140.

<sup>17</sup> Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, 1:284.

<sup>18</sup> Deissmann, *Paul*, 156, cf. 191.

<sup>19</sup> Deissmann, *Paul*, 130.

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