CHRIST

The Greek word translated "christ" (*christos*) appears 531 times in the NT (Nestle-Aland 26th ed.), and "Christ" is one of the most familiar terms by which Jesus is known, both in the NT and in subsequent Christian tradition. All the canonical Gospels (*see* Canon) apply the term to Jesus, but each has its own interesting variation in the way Jesus is presented as "Christ." The use of "Christ" in the Gospels reflects both the Jewish origins (*see* Judaism) of Christianity and the distinctive modifications of Jewish tradition that characterize early Christian faith. For all the Evangelists Jesus is "the Christ," the Messiah of Israel's* hope. But they also reflect the conviction that Jesus is also the Son of God* and bears a significance that suggests divinity or is at least divine-like. Moreover, Jesus' crucifixion is presented as a decisive aspect of his messianic work, although there seems to have been no Jewish precedent for seeing Messiah's work as involving his own violent death (*see* Death of Jesus).

In order to deal with the use of the term in the canonical Gospels, we must address related questions as well, especially the background of the term and the associated eschatological expectations of ancient Judaism, as well as the use of the term "Christ" in early Christianity prior to the Gospels.

1. Derivation, Meaning and Background

The term "christ" is an anglicized form of the Greek word *christos*, originally an adjective meaning "anointed (with ointment or oil)" from the verb *chriō* (to anoint or smear with oil or ointment). *Christos* had no special religious significance in Greek culture prior to the influence of ancient Jewish and Christian usage (on the history of the term, see Grundmann et al.). In ancient Greek-speaking Jewish and Christian circles *christos* translates the Hebrew term *mašiaḥ* (about forty-five times in the LXX), which likewise means "anointed (with oil)" but carries a special significance owing to the Israelite practice of anointing with oil a person installed in a special office, such as king or priest (e.g., 1 Sam 9:15–16; 10:1, Saul; 16:3, 12–13, David; Ex 28:41, Aaron and his sons; 1 Chron 29:22, Zadok and Solomon). In such settings the anointing signified that the person was commissioned and approved (by God and the people) for the special office or task. The term mašiaḥ is especially significant in some OT passages in connection with the Israelite king (e.g., 1 Sam 24:6; 2 Sam 1:14; cf. Ps 2:2), where the term seems to be a royal title ("the Lord's anointed," etc.) and it appears that the religious connotation is emphasized.

In postexilic OT texts one finds the hope for a renewed (Davidic) monarchy, often pictured with grandiose dimensions and qualities (e.g., Hag 2:20–23; Zech 9:9–10; 12:7–13:1). Out of this hope, but probably not until sometime in the Hellenistic period (after 331 B.C.), Jews came to use *māšîaḥ* (and the Greek equivalent, *christos*) as a designation for a future agent ("messiah") to be sent by God, usually to restore Israel's independence and righteousness.* Recent research suggests, however, that ancient Jewish eschatological expectations of deliverance and sanctification of the elect did not always include the explicit or prominent anticipation of a "messiah," and there seems to have been some variation in the ways "messiah" figures were pictured (e.g., Neusner-Green-Frerichs, de Jonge).

In the Qumran texts, for example (150 B.C.—A.D. 70; *see* Dead Sea Scrolls), we find what appears to be an expectation of two "anointed" figures (e.g., 1QS 9:10–11; CD 12:22–23) who would preside over the elect in the future: a "messiah of Israel" (probably a royal figure) and a "messiah of Aaron" (a priestly figure). For the Qumran community, the latter figure was apparently seen as outranking the royal "messiah" (see S. Talmon in Neusner-Green-Frerichs). In the *Psalms of Solomon* (late first century B.C.), however, hope for the restoration of Israel is tied to God's raising up a descendant of David as "the Lord's anointed one" (*christos kyriou*, 17:32; 18:7), and the messianism here is of a purely royal variety. *1 Enoch* conveys still another image, in which the messianic figure ("the elect one," "the son of man") is pictured in quite exalted terms in heavenly glory and seems to be identified as Enoch (cf. Gen 5:21–24). It is not entirely clear whether this is another type of messianism or if royal/messianic imagery has been appropriated here to describe another type of exalted figure connected with hopes for eschatological salvation.*

We cannot discuss further here the details of pre-Christian Jewish eschatological hopes and the diversity of messianic expectations. It must be emphasized, however, that in the Jewish texts the expectations and speculations about messiah(s) are tied to and overshadowed by other aspirations, such as freedom of the Jewish people from Gentile* domination, and/or the triumph of a particular religious vision of the divine will (e.g., at Qumran), and/or a more general longing for God's kingdom or triumph over unrighteousness and injustice. That is, Jewish hope for messiah(s) was never the center of religious concern for its own sake, but functioned as part of the attempt to project God's eschatological triumph and the realization of aspirations connected with God's triumph. This contrasts with the way the person of Jesus quickly became central and vital in early Christian devotion.

In the NT something like the royal messianism of the *Psalms of Solomon* seems to be the Jewish messianic expectation most often alluded to and presupposed in relating Jesus to the Jewish religious background. This suggests that the idea of a divinely appointed royal agent who would deliver and purify the nation may have been reasonably well known in Jewish circles (e.g., Acts 2:30–36), though it is not so clear how widely embraced such a hope was.

2. NT Usage Outside the Gospels

It is worth noting the distribution of the term *christos* in the NT. Of the 531 occurrences of the term, 383 are in the Pauline corpus, and 270 of these are in the seven letters whose authorship is virtually

undisputed today (Rom, 1 Cor, 2 Cor, Gal, Phil, 1 Thess, Philem). In some other NT writings, likewise, use of *christos* is quite frequent for their size: 1 Peter (22); 1 John (8); Jude (6). But in some larger writings the term is not comparatively frequent: Heb (12); Rev (7). Given their size, the Gospels (especially the Synoptics) do not use *christos* very frequently: Matthew (16); Mark (7); Luke (12, plus 25 occurrences in Acts); John (19).

This quick glimpse of the distribution of *christos* in the NT shows three things. First, the variation in the frequency of the term may indicate differences in the importance attached to it by the different NT authors. However, the differing subject matter and purposes of the individual authors may also have accounted for the frequency variation. Second, the heavy concentration of occurrences of *christos* in Paul's letters (the earliest NT writings) suggests that the term very early became an important part of the vocabulary of Christian faith. Third, the strikingly small share of the total NT occurrences of *christos* in the Gospels, and the variation among the Gospels in the number of uses of *christos*, make it appropriate to question the meaning and role of the term in these specific writings. Before we discuss in detail the Gospels' use of *christos*, however, it will be helpful to comment further on the Christian use of *christos* prior to the Gospels.

2.1. Pre-Gospel Use. The Gospels are commonly dated approximately A.D. 65–100, several decades after the beginning of the Christian movement. For tracing the use of *christos* in the earlier decades, our most important evidence is found in the undisputed letters of Paul, which are generally dated approximately A.D. 50–60, and constitute the earliest surviving Christian writings. Several important studies of Paul's use of *christos* are available (e.g., Kramer, Dahl, Hengel), and we cannot discuss all the issues addressed in these studies. It is necessary here only to review some matters relevant to the use of *christos* in the Gospels.

First, we may compare Paul's use of *christos* with his use of other key christological titles in these writings. Occurrences of *christos* in the seven undisputed letters constitute fifty-one percent of the total NT occurrences of the term (seventy-two percent of occurrences are in the writings attributed to Paul in the NT). We might compare the distribution of *kyrios* ("Lord"): 719 occurrences in the NT, 189 (twenty-six percent) in the undisputed Pauline letters; and the distribution of "Son/Son of God/his Son": 105 occurrences in the NT, fifteen times (fourteen percent) in these Pauline letters. Two things relevant to *christos* are evident: (1) *christos* is by far Paul's favorite of early Christian titles for Jesus; (2) on the basis of the early date of Paul's letters, we may conclude that in the earliest years of the Christian movement *christos* quickly became a prominent Christian title for Jesus.

Close examination of *christos* in Paul's letters, however, shows that he uses the term almost as a name, or as part of the name for Jesus, and not characteristically as a title. Thus, for example, in Paul *christos* usually appears in the following formulae: "Christ Jesus," "Jesus Christ," "the Lord Jesus Christ" and sometimes simply "Christ." This has led some to ask whether or how well Paul connected the term *christos* to an understanding of Jesus as "messiah," and to what degree *christos* was for Paul, like a name, simply a way of referring to Jesus. In answering this question, several factors are important.

First, it is clear that *christos* was not immediately meaningful as a religious term to ancient Gentiles unfamiliar with Jewish messianic expectations. For example, evidence indicates that *christos* was often understood by pagans to be the name *chrestos* ("useful"), a common Greek name, especially for slaves (e.g., Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.4). This being so, it is worth asking how easily Paul's Gentile converts would have understood or appreciated a presentation of Jesus as the Messiah.

Second, however, it is likely that Paul, as a Jew familiar with his ancestral tradition (Gal 1:13–14), knew the significance of *christos* in connection with Jewish messianic expectations. In all likelihood, the term *christos* began to be used with reference to Jesus among Jewish Christians even before Paul's apostolic mission. *Christos* must have been appropriated by Jewish Christians from Greek-speaking Jewish circles where it functioned as the translation for *mašiaḥ*. Otherwise, it is impossible to account for the emergence of *christos* as a title for Jesus. Paul's frequent and easy use of the term reflects a well-established Christian usage and is strong evidence that *christos* was a part of the religious vocabulary of Christian groups within the very first few years (A.D. 30–50).

Third, although in Paul's letters *christos* functions syntactically more characteristically as a quasi-name for Jesus than a title (as in "the Christ"), it appears that the term retains in Paul something of its messianic connotation. This is so not only in explicit passages such as Romans 9:5, with its reference to Jesus as "the Christ" (*ho christos*), but also in the wider pattern of Paul's usage. As Kramer has shown, Paul characteristically uses *christos* (either alone or in connection with "Jesus") in passages that refer to Jesus' death and resurrection* (e.g., 1 Cor 15; Rom 3:23; 5:6–7; Gal 3:13), and it is likely that these passages reflect Paul's familiarity with and emphasis on the early Christian conviction that Jesus' crucifixion was part of his mission as the "Messiah." (Hahn's view, 161–62, that the earliest Christian affirmation of Jesus as Messiah was exclusively in connection with the hope of his eschatological return does not do justice to this close connection between the term *christos* and Jesus' death and resurrection in Paul, the earliest evidence of Christian usage we possess.)

Thus, although Paul's letters do not seem to emphasize or make explicit the messianic connotation of the term "Christ," they provide evidence that the term derived from circles of Jewish Christians where this connotation was emphasized and that the proclamation of Jesus as Messiah was a part of the earliest faith of Christianity. Paul's use of *christos* almost as a name for Jesus has been taken by some scholars as suggesting that among his Gentile converts the term's association with Jewish messianic expectations was not emphasized. But, as the Gospels demonstrate, the claim that Jesus is the Messiah remained a part of early Christian faith well after the Christian movement grew beyond its initial stage as a sect of ancient Judaism. As will be shown in the next sections, although early Christians modified the connotation of the term *christos* in light of Jesus' death and their experience of his resurrected glory*, the term retained something of its sense as designating Jesus as the "Messiah," the divinely designated agent of salvation.

2.2. Use of "Christos" in Other NT Writings. In the many occurrences of *christos* in the writings in the Pauline corpus whose authorship is disputed or widely doubted among scholars (often called "deutero-Pauline" letters: Eph, Col, 2 Thess, 1 Tim, 2 Tim, Titus), the usage is basically like that found in

the undisputed Pauline letters. However, the use of the term in NT writings outside the Pauline corpus and the Gospels is relevant to understanding the background for the use of *christos* in the Gospels. For example, 1 Peter uses the term twenty-two times, often in connection with the theme of suffering—both of Christ and/or of Christians: the OT prophets predicted Christ's sufferings (1:11); Christ's redemptive suffering is mentioned several times (e.g., 2:21; 3:18; 4:1; 5:1); and Christians share in Christ's sufferings (4:13). This connection between the term *christos* and suffering probably reflects the early Christian emphasis mentioned earlier—Jesus' crucifixion was a messianic event. It also shows how the idea of Jesus the suffering Messiah was used to inspire Christians to endure sufferings in his name.

In Revelation, along with more formulaic uses of *christos* ("Jesus Christ," e.g., 1:1–2, 5), there are interesting passages where the term is used as a title, "messiah" (e.g., 11:15 "our Lord and his Christ"; 12:10 "the authority of his Christ"). These passages portray the eschatological triumph of God in terms drawn from Jewish messianic expectation and thus confirm the continuing awareness in Christian circles of the late first century A.D. that "Christ" is a messianic designation.

Likewise, in 1 John 2:22 and 5:1, the confession that Jesus is "the Christ" reflects the messianic claim. But this same document shows the emergence of distinctively Christian doctrinal disputes about the reality or importance of Jesus' human nature (e.g., 4:2, "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh"), and the author coins the term "antichrist" to describe those whose christology he finds seriously inadequate (2:22). In 1 John we see again how *christos* can function both to designate Jesus in messianic terms and also almost as a name for Jesus.

This brief survey of uses of *christos* in NT writings other than the Gospels gives us a general understanding of the first-century Christian background of the term that is presupposed as familiar to the readers of the Gospels. With this background in mind, we are now able to discuss in comparatively greater detail how the individual Evangelists use the term in their stories of Jesus.

3. "Christ" in the Four Gospels

As we have indicated already, each Evangelist applies *christos* to Jesus, but does so with particular nuances and emphases. We shall therefore discuss their usage individually; and, accepting commonly held scholarly opinion, we shall deal with the Evangelists in their probable chronological order (*see* Synoptic Problem).

Modern scholarly investigation of NT christology has expended a great deal of effort in analyzing the use of christological titles in the Gospels and in the other NT writings (e.g., Hahn). In spite of this, certain disagreements remain in contemporary discussions, making a survey such as this a difficult enterprise. To some degree conclusions about one particular title, such as *christos*, are connected with conclusions about the Evangelists' use of the other titles, and this will be reflected in the following discussion.

3.1. Mark. The earliest of the canonical Gospels, Mark, shows the complexity of applying the term *christos* to Jesus. In varying ways this complexity characterizes all four Evangelists.

From the opening words in 1:1, the author indicates familiarity and acceptance of the term as applied to Jesus ("the gospel of Jesus Christ"), and at various other points the author uses the term as a way of referring to Jesus. For example, in 9:41 a reward is promised to anyone who gives a cup of water to Jesus' disciples "because you are Christ's" (cf. Mt 10:42).

The warning in 13:21–22 about the coming times of crisis when some will say, "Look, here is the Christ!," and the caution about "false Christs" implicitly show that for Mark the title belongs properly to Jesus alone, whose coming with glory will need no such announcement (13:26–27). *Christos* is used as a title here, and this passage insists that the only genuine fulfillment of the messianic hopes—falsely appropriated by deceivers—will be Jesus' appearance as "the Son of Man* coming in clouds with great glory." The warning about deceivers probably reflects a conflict between early Christian claims about Jesus as Messiah and other messianic hopes circulating among Jewish groups. (Cf. 13:6, which refers to deceivers who claim "I am he!" The variation in some manuscripts, "I am the Christ," is probably a scribal harmonization with the form of the saying in Mt 24:5. Scholars debate whether the significance of "I am he" is a messianic claim or a claim to divinity alluding to God's self-description; see the discussion of 14:61–62 below.)

In several other passages, however, *christos* is used with a certain reserve or subtlety that has generated scholarly debate over Mark's intent. Perhaps the most familiar of these is 8:29–30, where Peter acclaims Jesus as "the Christ" (*ho christos*) and is immediately ordered by Jesus "to tell no one about him" (cf. Mt 16:16–20; Lk 9:20–21). Believing that Jesus did not see himself as the Messiah, some scholars have suggested that Jesus' original response to Peter's acclamation was the rebuke "Get behind me, Satan!" in 8:33, and that Jesus rejected the messianic appellation altogether. In this view, Mark recast the incident, introducing the command to secrecy (8:30) and making Jesus' rebuke apply to Peter's rejection of Jesus' sufferings (8:31–33). There are, then, two issues: Jesus' own attitude toward the appellation "messiah" and Mark's treatment of the messiah/*christos* term here. The latter question is the primary concern before us, but a few comments about the authenticity of the Markan scene are relevant as well.

The speculative attempt to reconstruct the original dialog between Peter and Jesus as described above is probably ill-conceived. There is little basis for regarding Jesus' command to silence in 8:30 as Markan invention while holding Jesus' rebuke of Peter in 8:33 as authentically from Jesus. On the one hand, both function quite well as redactional elements (*see* Redaction Criticism) in the scene, and both can be explained as deriving from Mark's editorial purpose (Lk 9:20–22 does not include Jesus' rebuke of Peter). On the other hand, both statements can equally well be attributed to Jesus. If Jesus did predict his own rejection and death (not so unlikely in view of the ancient Jewish tradition of Israel's rejection of prophets and the martyrdom of John the Baptist* with whom Jesus associated himself), Peter's negative response is thoroughly understandable, as is Jesus' rebuke of Peter in 8:33 (*see* Predictions of Jesus' Passion and Resurrection). And the notion that Jesus could not possibly have seen himself in messianic terms rests to some degree on the assumption that "messiah" carried a single meaning, having to do with a Davidic, royal figure with military intentions. With such a figure, it is widely thought, Jesus cannot

be compared and he could not have thought of himself in this fashion. But the diversity evident in ancient Jewish messianic speculations (e.g., Smith, Neusner-Green-Frerichs, de Jonge) suggests that Jesus may have rejected this or that form of messianic speculation while understanding his mission in the light of his own definition of messiahship. Therefore, Jesus could have ordered silence about the use of the Messiah/Christ title among his disciples because the term did not itself communicate clearly his own vision of his task and was subject to what he considered severe misunderstandings. In light of this, the command to silence in 8:30 can be as plausibly authentic a saying as Jesus' rebuke of Peter in 8:33.

Debates about what Jesus himself may or may not have felt about the term "messiah" (*christos*) are thus more complicated than even some scholars recognize. Determining Mark's intention is comparatively easier, though still not without problems. In view of Mark's use of *christos* in the passages examined already, we must conclude that Mark intends Peter's acclamation of Jesus as "Christ" to be taken at least in some sense positively. Jesus' command in 8:30 is to say nothing about him to others; it is not a rejection of the term *christos* outright. Yet 8:30–33 indicates a reserve about the term, and the reason seems to be that none of the pre-Christian definitions of *christos* prepare one to understand Jesus' mission, as is shown by Peter's reaction to Jesus' prediction of his suffering. Thus 8:29–33 hints that the term *christos* achieves its proper meaning as a title for Jesus in light of his divinely mandated sufferings (the divine necessity indicated by the "must suffer" of 8:31). That is, this passage suggests that Jesus is the Christ, but cannot be so identified apart from an appreciation of his crucifixion as central to his messianic task.

The appearance of the title "Christ" in 8:27–30 must also be seen in the light of the overall narrative of Mark. At various points earlier in Mark others have asked about Jesus (1:27; 2:7; 4:41; 6:2–3) or have offered identifications of him (1:24; 3:22; 5:7; 6:14–16). In 8:27–30, however, Jesus himself poses the question of his identity and demands a response from the Twelve, which has the effect of making explicit the simmering question of his true significance. Consequently, 8:27–30 is a turning-point in Mark. Jesus' question is to be dealt with in light of the preceding narratives of his ministry, and gathers up all that has gone before it in Mark. Structurally his question also anticipates the question of the priest in 14:61, which is the climax of the Jewish trial and rejection of Jesus (*see* Trial of Jesus). In the latter episode Jesus is asked about his identity, and the messianic acclamation of Peter is also affirmed by Jesus himself.

In 14:61–62 the chief priest asks Jesus, "Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed One?" Jesus responds affirmatively, "I am" (*egō eimi*), and then predicts his own vindication at God's "right hand." The Markan form of Jesus' reply is more emphatic than the parallels (cf. Mt 26:64; Lk 22:70; the variants in some Markan manuscripts are probably scribal harmonizations with these parallels). The "I am," a possible allusion to the self-descriptive language of God in the OT (e.g., Is 43:10, 13), may also have been intended by Mark to hint at Jesus' transcendent significance.

This is made even more likely by the allusion here to the glorification of the "son of man" in Daniel 7:13–14. Jesus' full reply to the priest's question asserts that, though he does not seem to fit some messianic expectations (such as the royal-Davidic model mentioned in 12:35), he is rightfully *christos*

and his status will be vindicated directly in glorious dimensions. Contrary to the views of some earlier scholars, the phrase "the son of man" (v. 62) is not a title for a well-known figure in Jewish eschatological speculation (see, e.g., Casey) and was not intended by Mark as a preferred title in place of *christos* (see esp. Kingsbury, 1983). For Mark, Jesus is the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God (*see* Son of God), and the allusion to the Danielic scene of divine triumph serves to make it clear that "the son of man," rejected by the Jewish leaders, will in fact be vindicated as *christos* and divine Son in heavenly glory (*see* Son of Man).

Another much-discussed passage is 12:35–37 (cf. Mt 22:41–45; Lk 20:41–44). Jesus' question about how the Christ can be the Son of David* is of course not a theoretical question. The reader is expected to understand that the question really (albeit somewhat obliquely) has to do with Jesus' true identity and significance. And the point of 12:35–37 is to indicate the inadequacy of "Son of David" as the category for understanding who the Christ is, for David calls him "Lord" (Gk *kyrios*; Heb. *ʾᵃḏōnāy*), suggesting that the Christ is far superior to David. That is, David is not an adequate model for the work or person of the Christ. Here again, *christos* is implicitly accepted as a title for Jesus, but one popular understanding of the term (attributed to "the scribes," v. 35) is found inadequate. In light of the places where God addresses Jesus as the divine Son (1:11; 9:7), as well as other indications of Jesus' divine-like significance in Mark (e.g., stilling the storm in 4:35–41, esp. the disciples' awe-filled question in v. 41), the reader is expected to see that Jesus "the Christ" is far greater than the commonly accepted notions of the Messiah.

The final occurrence of *christos* in Mark is in 15:32, where observers of Jesus' crucifixion mockingly address him as "the Christ, the king of Israel." This is one of many examples of Markan irony (especially frequent in the passion account), and is one of several places where the question of whether Jesus is the king of Israel or king of the Jews appears in the narrative of the trial and crucifixion (cf. 15:2, 9, 12, 18–20, 26; see Juel). The Markan irony in the mockery of Jesus as "the Christ" in 15:32 is that, contrary to the mockers, Jesus is "the Christ, the king of Israel," though his ultimate vindication lies by way of his crucifixion and apparent failure. The pagan form of the mockery, in the title attached to the cross ("The King of the Jews"), gives the charge for which Jesus was executed, but is also an ironic truth: Jesus really is the rightful "king," rejected both by pagan and Jewish leaders.

It is interesting to note the distribution of uses of *christos* in Mark. The occurrences of *christos* are concentrated in the second half of the book, where the shadow of Jesus' coming death looms over the narrative. After the opening words in 1:1, *christos* does not appear in Mark until 8:29–30, in a complex of material that combines Jesus' explicit question about his significance with the first prediction of his sufferings (the variants in 1:34 are probably scribal harmonizations with Lk 4:41). Thereafter, aside from 9:41, *christos* appears in the material describing Jesus' final confrontation with Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, which culminates in his execution. The true stature of "the Christ" is the one teasing question Jesus asks in a list of questions debated in 11:27–12:40. Jesus' discourse about the future (13:5–37) includes the prominent reference to "false Christs," who are to be distinguished from the true Christ, Jesus. In the Jewish trial the question whether Jesus is the Christ culminates the interrogation. And in

the crucifixion account the mocking acclamation of Jesus as "the Christ" is the final ironic indignity heaped upon Jesus by his tormentors. Mark uses *christos* sparingly, but every occurrence is significant.

Thus, although Mark affirms other christological titles for Jesus (especially important is "Son of God" and its variations in 1:1, 11, 24, 34; 3:11–12; 5:7; 9:7; 15:39; see, e.g., Kingsbury, 1983), *christos* too is an important term in Mark's acclamation of Jesus. The cluster of uses of *christos* in the accounts of Jesus' final conflict with the Jewish religious establishment, their rejection of him and his execution at the hands of the Roman ruler reflects two things: (1) the close link in early Christian proclamation and in Mark between the term *christos* and Jesus' death, and (2) the recognition that the Christian identification of Jesus as *christos* involves a claim with special reference to Jewish religious hopes and beliefs.

Mark insists that *christos* receives its true meaning as a title for Jesus only in light of Jesus himself, his divinely ordained suffering and his transcendent significance as "Son of God." And Mark shows that the identification of Jesus as *christos* involves a claim that challenged the Jewish religious leadership, both for its handling of Jesus in his own ministry and for its continued negative response to the early Christian proclamation about Jesus.

The clustering of uses of *christos* in the final chapters of the story of Jesus is found also in Matthew and Luke, as we shall see. Thus, Mark was either influential in this matter and/or with the other Synoptics reflected the association of *christos* with references to Jesus' death. But unlike the other Evangelists, Mark's use of *christos* is almost entirely confined to the passion material, making the association of the term with the death of Jesus more emphatic.

3.2. Matthew. With some ninety percent of Mark appearing also in Matthew, it is not surprising that a considerable number of the Markan uses of *christos* reappear in Matthew. But there are also noteworthy distinctives in Matthew's use of the term, including his pattern of usage.

First, there is a cluster of occurrences of *christos* early in the book. The opening words of Matthew (1:1) refer to "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." This illustrates the Judaic flavor of Matthew's account and prefigures the way Matthew will connect Jesus to the history and religious hopes of Israel in the material that follows. The Judaic quality of Matthew's presentation of Jesus is evident also in 1:16, which concludes Jesus' genealogy by referring to him simply as "the Christ." The connection between Jesus and Israel is illustrated in 1:17, which portrays Israel's history in three stages, culminating with "the Christ."

Matthew's emphasis on the royal connotations of the term "Christ" is indicated in 2:1–4, where the Magi ask about the birth of the "king of the Jews" and Herod responds by inquiring about OT prophecies of the birthplace of "the Christ."

But following this cluster of occurrences, *christos* does not appear in Matthew until 11:2, where the imprisoned Baptist hears of "the deeds of the Christ," the works of Jesus (cf. Lk 7:18). This phrase may

refer retrospectively to the entire preceding narrative of Jesus' ministry (Mt 1–10). If so, it gives an explicitly messianic coloring to the whole.

Matthew's affirmation of the *christos* title is also evident in the next occurrence of the term in 16:16, where Peter acclaims Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." This forms Matthew's parallel to Mark 8:29. The second part of the acclamation both expands Mark's simpler form and makes each of the two titles interpret the other. That is, "Son of the living God" underscores Jesus' exalted status, and "the Christ" emphasizes that this divine Son fulfills all messianic hopes. Matthew 16:20 retains from Mark 8:30 Jesus' command to secrecy, but the order to silence concerning the *christos* title is more explicit in Matthew than in Mark. As in Mark, there is a cluster of occurrences of *christos* in the chapters concerning Jesus' final days in Jerusalem. Matthew 22:41–45 presents the question about the Christ as Son of David (discussed above), and like Mark makes the question the climax of a series of debates between Jesus and his critics. But in a saying unique to Matthew (23:10), the disciples are told that their true "master" (*kathēgētēs*) is "the Christ." This reflects Matthew's emphasis that "the Christ" is the authoritative teacher of the community, a theme most evident in the large blocks of teaching material in this Gospel (chaps. 5–7, 10, 13, 18, 23–25).

The remaining occurrences in Matthew appear in passages paralleled in Mark. But the Matthean form of the passages generally make more explicit the theme of Jesus' messianic status. In 24:5 the deceivers' false claim, which conflicts with Jesus' rightful status, is directly messianic; "I am the Christ" (cf. 24:23; Mk 13:6, "I am"). In 26:63–64 the priest's question as to whether Jesus claims to be "the Christ, the Son of God" is introduced with a solemn adjuration; and though Jesus' response appears less direct ("You have said so"), it is to be taken as a positive reply. This is confirmed in 26:68 by the distinctively Matthean form of the taunt by Jesus' tormentors, "Prophesy to us, you Christ!" (cf. Mk 14:65; Lk 22:64). And finally, in a uniquely Matthean wording, Pilate twice asks what the Jews wish him to do with "Jesus who is called Christ" (27:17, 23), making the question of Jesus' messiahship quite explicit.

It is clear that *christos* is a major christological title for Matthew. In comparison with Mark, the title seems more prominent and important an item of religious vocabulary in Matthew. "Christ" appears in Matthew over twice as many times as in Mark and in passages where the term is lacking in the Markan parallel. Further, there is a more explicit connection between *christos* and Israel in Matthew, a feature particularly evident in the nativity account. Like Mark, however, Matthew has a cluster of occurrences in the material describing Jesus' final conflict with the Jewish leaders and his execution. And, like Mark, for Matthew it is Jesus who defines the term "Christ/Messiah" rather than it being defined by others. Jewish expectations about Messiah are not adequate for considering Jesus' messianic claims. Thus, Jesus the Christ is "Son of the living God," and his rejection and crucifixion form an important part of his messianic mission, both of these claims constituting significant modifications of pre-Christian messianic speculation.

3.3. Luke. In considering the use of *christos* in Luke, we must also take account of the second volume of the author's work, the Acts of the Apostles, which we shall briefly examine first (see also Fitzmyer, 197–200).

3.3.1. Usage in Acts. A little over half (thirteen) of the twenty-five occurrences of *christos* in Acts are in formulaic references to Jesus: "Jesus Christ" (2:38; 3:6; 4:10; 8:12; 9:34; 10:36, 48; 16:18), "Christ Jesus" (18:5; 24:24), "the Lord Jesus Christ" (11:17; 15:26; 28:31). Aside from 4:26, where *christos* appears in a quotation from Psalm 2:2, the other eleven occurrences are in descriptions of Christians attempting to persuade Jews that Jesus is "the Christ," that is, they attempt to present Jesus as the fulfillment of messianic hopes. In these cases, the term is used as a title and obviously derives its meaning from the context of Jewish expectations of a messiah. Some of the Acts passages reflect the attempt to deal with Jesus' sufferings as the fulfillment of OT texts interpreted as messianic prophecies (2:31; 3:18; 17:3; 26:23). Other passages describe a more general claim that Jesus is the Messiah (2:36; 3:20; 5:42; 8:5; 9:22; 18:28).

Acts claims to present the preaching of the earliest decades of Christianity. This, plus the peculiar wording of some passages in Acts, has led some scholars to argue that from this book we can reconstruct early forms of Christian faith in the book that are distinguishable from more mature forms in other NT writings. Sometimes these suggestions focus on 2:36, where God is said to have "made him [Jesus] both Lord and Christ," or on 3:20, which describes Jesus as "the Christ appointed for you [Israel]." In the former passage, it is suggested, we may have a remnant of an early adoptionist type of christology in which Jesus is seen as being appointed Messiah at his resurrection. In the latter passage some have found a remnant of the view of Jesus as a kind of Messiah-designate, who will exercise his office only in the future when he is sent to preside in the eschatological restoration of Israel. Scholars proposing these suggestions believe that we may be able to see traces of the development and change in the earliest Christian understanding of Jesus as Messiah.

The author of Acts certainly did not embrace either of the forms of christology just described. Luke's birth narrative (Luke 1–2), for example, shows that the author regarded Jesus as Messiah from the time of his miraculous conception onward (*see* Birth of Jesus). And it is questionable that he would have incorporated christological views in tension with his own in his account of early Christianity without indicating that they were deficient. This does not settle fully the question of the original meaning of the statements, but it suggests that the author of Acts did not understand the statements the way some modern scholars have.

In fact, nothing in either passage conveys the christological views some attribute to them. The titles "Lord and Christ" (*kyrios* and *christos*) in Acts 2:36 represent quite an exalted view of Jesus, and the passage simply asserts that Jesus holds such an exalted status by God's will. Nothing demands the conclusion that Jesus was made Messiah only at his baptism or resurrection. It is anachronistic to read an adoptionist christology into this passage. Similarly, 3:20 simply urges that, in spite of its rejection of Jesus, Israel may yet partake in the fulfillment of messianic hopes by recognizing in Jesus its only true Messiah. We certainly have here a reflection of the eschatological orientation of early Christian faith,

which included the conviction that Jesus the Messiah would be vindicated on a grand scale in a future triumph of God's purposes. But, again, nothing in Acts 3:20 requires the conclusion that it preserves traces of a purely futurist understanding of Jesus' messiahship. The passages can be read as reflecting some sort of adoptionist or purely futurist messianism only by first presuming what must first be demonstrated—that such views must have characterized the earliest Christian circles. But our constructions of early christologies must surely rest on more than presumptions.

In sum, the use of *christos* in Acts reflects three characteristics: (1) "Christ" is part of the common namelike designation of Jesus in early Christian circles; (2) the term was also used as a title when the author wished to make explicit the claim that Jesus was the fulfillment of Israel's hopes for God's redemption; (3) the author shows special concern to insist that Jesus' crucifixion was predicted in the OT and does not disqualify Jesus from being Messiah (*see* Death of Jesus; Typology).

3.3.2. Usage in the Gospel. The frequent use of *christos* as a title in Acts is to be set alongside the consistent use of the term in this way in all twelve occurrences in Luke's Gospel. The one possible exception is 2:11, where the angel announces the birth of "a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" [*christos kyrios*]. But even here it is probable that the author uses the term as a title, "the Christ, the Lord" (cf. Acts 2:36; assuming that the variant attested in some versions, "the Lord's Christ" [*christos kyriou*], is not the original reading).

Certainly in all other occurrences of *christos* in Luke the term is used as a title (Messiah) and Jesus is explicitly connected with ancient Jewish messianic hopes. This connection is evident in 2:26, where we are introduced to Simeon, who awaited the "consolation of Israel" and had been promised by God that he would live to see "the Lord's Christ" (*see* Simeon's Song). Likewise, in 3:15 the Baptist is asked if he is "the Christ," and replies by contrasting himself with the "mightier" one coming after him. In 4:41 the demons'* knowledge of Jesus has to do explicitly with his messianic status: "they knew that he [Jesus] was the Christ" (cf. Mk 1:34). Thereafter, *christos* does not appear until 9:20 in Peter's acclamation of Jesus as "The Christ of God," a more Judaic-sounding acclamation than the versions in Matthew 16:16 and Mark 8:29. (Note also the Jewish mockery of Jesus in Luke 23:35.)

As with the other Synoptics, Luke also presents a clustering of occurrences of *christos* in the material describing Jesus' final days of conflict in Jerusalem. There is Jesus' question about Messiah being thought of as David's son (20:41), an issue we have dealt with earlier in our discussion of Mark. Unlike Matthew and Mark, in Luke 21:8 Jesus' prediction of deceivers does not explicitly mention false messiahs, but refers only to those who will say, "I am he!" In the Jewish trial, however, the priest demands simply whether Jesus claims to be "the Christ" (22:67), and the following question, "Are you the Son of God, then?" (22:70) should also be taken as an inquiry about Jesus' messianic claim. Jesus' response, "You say that I am," seems less direct than the Markan version (14:62), but is no doubt to be taken as an affirmation. As we have seen, Luke clearly presents Jesus as Messiah. This emphasis is further borne out in the Lukan version of the charges against Jesus before Pilate in 23:2, which includes the statement that Jesus claimed to be "Christ a king." Luke thereby links the Jewish and Roman trials as considerations of Jesus' messiahship. For, in spite of Pilate's statement that he found Jesus innocent of

any of the charges against him (23:13–16, 22), the mockery by both Jews and Romans (23:35–37) and the inscription on the cross (23:38) make Jesus' execution a rejection of his messianic claim.

The final Lukan affirmations of Jesus' messiahship appear in 24:26–27 and 44–47, where the risen Jesus identifies himself as "the Christ," whose sufferings and subsequent glory are predicted in the OT. At the same time, these passages also show that Jesus' messianic status involves a significant departure from more familiar Jewish messianic expectations, especially in light of his crucifixion. Even Jesus' disciples are pictured as ill-prepared for his execution ("O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe," 24:25), and the risen Jesus must "open their minds" to read the OT so as to see that all was predicted (24:27, 45).

Thus, as with the other Synoptics, in Luke the claim that Jesus is "Christ" is not simply an identification of him with Jewish expectations but is a redefinition of the meaning of messiahship. And this redefinition is based almost entirely on the story of Jesus, producing a distinctively Christian notion of "the Christ." Luke emphasizes the sufferings of "the Christ" as the divinely predicted completion and core of his earthly work, issuing in the proclamation of forgiveness to Israel and the world (24:47) recounted in Acts (e.g., 1:8).

Like Matthew, Luke emphatically links Jesus with the OT and Israel. This is reflected in the pattern of occurrences of *christos* in both Gospels. Both Matthew and Luke have important occurrences in their nativity narratives as well as the cluster of occurrences in their final chapters, and both nativity accounts make Jesus' birth the fulfillment of Israelite hopes. To be sure, both Matthew and Luke also make Jesus' messiahship a crisis for Israel, and portray the Jewish rejection of Jesus as a failure to embrace Israel's true king. Modern scholarship has given much attention to the critique of the Jews in these Gospels. In light of the way Christian societies have treated Jews over the centuries, this critique has an uncomfortable ring to it. But the strongly negative portrayal of Jewish opponents of Jesus in the Gospels did not arise from simple maliciousness. It reflects how deeply important to early Christians was the conviction that Jesus was "the Christ," the Messiah understood to have been promised by God in the OT and pictured in various ways (inaccurately, in the eyes of early Christians) in ancient Jewish tradition. For the Christians whose faith is reflected in the Gospels, Jesus was certainly much more than the Messiah of any Jewish expectation, but they never surrendered the claim that Jesus was also the true Messiah.

3.4. John. The profound redefinition of messiahship in early Christianity and the tension with Jewish messianic traditions is nowhere more evident than in John. Of the nineteen occurrences of *christos* in John, only two are formulaic ("Jesus Christ," 1:17; 17:3). In all other occurrences *christos* is used as a title and Jewish messianic expectations are either mentioned or alluded to. Although there is much more to the christology of John than the claim that Jesus is the Messiah, the comparatively greater frequency of *christos* in John and the emphatic way the term functions in the narrative make it clear that Jesus' messiahship is a major feature of the author's faith.

Perhaps most important for assessing the significance of *christos* in John is 20:31, where the author explicitly gives his purpose as seeking to promote belief that "Jesus is the Christ the Son of God." On the

one hand, the acclamation of Jesus as "the Christ" forms a central part of the author's own summary of Christian faith, one of the two titles the author chooses here to portray Jesus. On the other hand, "the Christ" is also "the Son of God," and John regards Jesus' divine sonship as the key christological category, involving the understanding of Jesus as pre-existent and sharing richly in divine glory (e.g., 17:1–5). Thus, 20:31 reflects the claims that Jesus is the Messiah and that this Messiah is much more exalted than Jewish messianic speculations characteristically allowed. Though these claims are also reflected in varying ways in the other canonical Gospels, in John they are asserted with particular force.

Much more than the other Evangelists, John uses Jewish messianic speculations as a foil for the presentation of Jesus. In 1:19–28 he introduces us to Jewish speculations, where Jewish authorities interrogate the Baptist as to whether he claims to be "the Christ," Elijah* or "the prophet"*—and to each he answers negatively. The Baptist acclaims Jesus as "the Lamb of God"* (1:29, 35) and "the Son of God" (1:34), but these titles must be read in connection with 3:25–30, where the Baptist again denies that he himself is "the Christ" and applies the title to Jesus. The author presents the Baptist as a true witness to Jesus, and the Baptist's acclamations refer both to Jesus' divine sonship and his messianic status.

The implied messianism in the Baptist's acclamation of Jesus is confirmed in the narratives reporting the responses to Jesus by, among others, the followers of the Baptist. In 1:41 Andrew refers to Jesus as "the Messiah" (*messias*), and this transliterated Aramaic term is translated by the author as *christos.* In 1:45 Philip describes Jesus as the one predicted in "the law and also the prophets." That the Messiah is in mind is confirmed shortly in the guileless Nathaniel's acclamation of Jesus as "the Son of God … the King of Israel" (1:49). As Jesus' response to Nathaniel suggests (1:50–51), these disciples do not realize the fullness of Jesus' person and status, but John intends us to see that their acclamations of Jesus in messianic categories are correct as far as they go.

In 7:25–44 Jewish messianic speculations are played off against the messianic identity of Jesus. The crowd wonders if the authorities secretly think that Jesus is "the Christ" (7:26), but some find difficulty reconciling this interpretation of Jesus with a tradition that "when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from" (7:27, a messianic tradition not otherwise clearly attested). In 7:31 there is an allusion to the Messiah as one who performs signs, and Jesus' signs are taken by some as suggesting Jesus' messiahship. A little later we read (7:40–44) that while some conclude that Jesus is "the Christ," others have difficulty reconciling Jesus' Galilean background with traditions that Messiah will come from Bethlehem and be a descendant of David.

Again, in 12:34 the crowd refers to a tradition that "the Christ remains forever" and questions how this can be reconciled with Jesus' prediction that he will be "lifted up." And the Samaritan* woman alludes to a tradition that Messiah "will show us all things" (4:25), finding in Jesus' uncanny knowledge of her life a suggestion that he may be "the Christ" (4:29).

The accuracy of John's references to Jewish messianic traditions is an interesting question that cannot detain us here. Some of these traditions are not otherwise clearly attested, but recent research

suggests that John includes some material of Palestinian provenance and these references to Jewish messianic traditions may be more valuable than some have recognized (see, e.g., M. de Jonge, 1972/73).

More germane to the present discussion is the question of what the author's point is in these passages. In brief, it seems that John is utilizing irony in the passages where the Jews cannot reconcile Jesus and their messianic traditions. The Jews unwittingly show that they do not properly understand their own traditions and/or do not really know enough about Jesus whom they think they know and can dismiss so easily. Thus, in light of passages such as 1:1–18 and 6:41–45, the reader sees that the Jews do not really know where Jesus comes from (heaven) and that Jesus does fulfill the tradition about Messiah's origin being unknown. Similarly, in 12:34 the Son of man who is to be "lifted up" does also "remain forever," for he has come down from heaven and ascends back to heavenly glory with God, thus fulfilling the messianic tradition invoked here. We are probably to take 7:40–42 as ironic also—John expects his readers to know the Christian tradition that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and so fulfills what "the Scripture said" about the birthplace of the Messiah.

The interplay between Jewish messianism and the early Christian redefinition is also evidenced in 10:22–39. Here "the Jews" ask Jesus directly if he claims to be "the Christ" (10:34), and Jesus' response is an indirect affirmation (10:25–39). But Jesus also quickly employs the Father/Son language to describe his status, and its offensiveness to the Jews (10:33, 39) shows that it is intended to connote much more than a simple identification of Jesus as the Messiah of Jewish expectation. In this incident the Jews' problem is not their difficulty fitting what they know of Jesus into some specific messianic tradition, but an inability to accept the claim that Jesus the Messiah is the Son of God who shares in divinity with the Father (10:37–38).

Other passages confirm that *christos* is an important christological title in John and that the author wishes to present Jesus as the true Messiah. In 9:22 it is the confession of Jesus as "the Christ" that leads to synagogue expulsion, a passage commonly thought today to reflect the christological controversies between the Johannine Christians and the Jewish authorities of their own day. In a manner unique among the Gospel writers, John twice links the term *christos* explicitly with the Semitic term "Messiah" (*messias*, 1:41; 4:25). The Fourth Evangelist considers Jewish definitions of the Messiah inadequate, but he does not surrender the basic category in portraying Jesus.

Within the Lazarus episode, structurally important as the seventh and climactic "sign" in John, Martha's acclamation of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of God" (11:27) both affirms Jesus' preceding self-description as "the resurrection and the life" and corresponds to the Evangelist's own description of the proper Christian confession in 20:31.

The tension between Jewish messianic traditions and the Johannine understanding of Jesus has led some scholars to suggest that *christos* was not such a major christological title for John (e.g., Maloney). Certainly, the Johannine view of Jesus as "the Son (of God)" is the key to the author's christology and the controlling motif in his presentation of Jesus. It is as "the Son" that Jesus' true transcendent significance is best disclosed. But John does not consider *christos* an inadequate title. Rather, he

considers Jewish messianic speculations inadequate for a proper understanding of who Messiah is, and he regards the Jewish authorities as incapable of accepting the proper definition of Messiah and the divine Son. John does not reject *christos* as a christological title in favor of others, such as "Son of man" or "Son of God." He demands the recognition that Jesus, the divine Son and the Son of man, is "the Christ." He reflects a redefinition of "the Christ" category in light of Jesus' divine significance, and prefers the combination of "Christ" and "Son of God" as the way of confessing Jesus properly.

For John, Jesus is more than the messianic king of Israel, but he is the messianic king, albeit of such a transcendent stature as not imagined by "the Jews." This view of Jesus as Messiah is precisely why the author so sharply criticizes the Jewish authorities for rejecting Jesus. Jesus flees the crowd's attempt to make him king "by force" (6:15) after the bread miracle; but this should not be taken as a total rejection of the royal-messianic office, for other passages show that John affirms Jesus as the true king. For example, at Jesus' last entry into Jerusalem, the crowd greets Jesus as "the King of Israel" (12:13). In this event John sees the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, with its prediction of Zion's king coming to the city (12:14–16). Thus, however shallow the crowd's understanding as they acclaim Jesus king, the Evangelist sees the royal title as proper to Jesus.

The intertwining of the author's views of Jesus as royal Messiah and as transcendent Son of God appears also in the passion narrative.* In 18:33–38 Pilate asks Jesus if he claims to be "king of the Jews," the Roman interpretation of the messianic claim. Jesus' response comprises a rejection of ordinary earthly kingship but an affirmation of his higher kingship and a consequent mission to "bear witness to the truth" of God. Subsequently, the author continues to weave together the theme of Jesus' kingship and his divine sonship. Several times Jesus is referred to contemptuously by the Romans as "king" (18:39; 19:3, 14–15), and in 19:19–22 the kingship theme is emphasized in the uniquely Johannine account of Pilate's (*see* Pontius Pilate) refusal to remove the title on the cross. The charges against Jesus in John are a combination of the messianic and transcendent aspects of his christology. In 19:12 "the Jews" accuse Jesus of making himself a king against Caesar, but in 19:7 Jesus is accused of blasphemy for making himself "the Son of God." Though the Jewish and Roman opponents of Jesus are ignorant of the ironic truth of their mockeries and charges, the reader of John is to see the greater truth of Jesus' divine sonship and royal status.

Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, where *christos* is almost entirely confined to the passion and nativity accounts (Mt and Lk), in John *christos* appears throughout the whole book, suggesting the title's importance for the Fourth Gospel. Uniquely, John makes it clear that the Baptist is not Messiah and has the Baptist endorse Jesus as Messiah. John is also unique in having Jesus' first disciples acclaim him in a variety of messianic terms. Jesus is recognized as Messiah by the Samaritan woman, and at several points John portrays the inability of "the Jews" to recognize Jesus' messiahship. All these data make it evident that the author believes Jesus to be the true Messiah and considers Jesus' messianic significance an important feature of Christian faith.

John does not play off one christological title against another. He uses an abundance of honorific titles—many more than the other Evangelists—to describe Jesus (e.g., the several "I am" formulas; *see* Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992).

"I Am" Sayings). "Son of man" is not a preferred alternative to "Christ" (contra Maloney). The Son of man, who has actually come down from heaven, is "the Christ, the Son of God"—this is the heart of John's faith.

4. Conclusion

Modern scholarship has been criticized justly for depending too heavily on studies of the NT christological titles in its attempt to determine the nature of NT christology. No treatment of any or all the titles can disclose fully the christological faith of the NT writers. But titles such as "Christ" are significant indications of the faith of authors such as the four Evangelists. In all four Gospels, "Christ" is an important way of referring to Jesus. One can say that "Christ" is for the Evangelists an essential christological term. But they all show an awareness that early Christian faith involved both an appropriation and a major adaptation of the significance of the term as applied to Jesus.

In varying ways two major modifications of the Messiah category are reflected in the Gospels: (1) The crucifixion of Jesus was both a major obstacle to Jewish acceptance of Jesus as Messiah, requiring justification from the OT, and also the event that demanded of the early Christian circles a reformulation of the nature of the Messiah and his work; and (2) the early Christian conviction about the transcendent significance or nature of Jesus makes the Messiah much more exalted in nature and more centrally important for religious life than Jewish tradition was characteristically prepared to grant. (It would be anachronistic to read back into the Gospels the details of the "two nature" christology of later centuries. But only a shallow reading of the Gospels can fail to note the exalted, even transcendent, role and qualities attributed to Jesus in differing ways by each of the Evangelists.)

In the modifications of the Messiah category and the dogged insistence on retaining "Christ" as a title for Jesus in the four Gospels, we see something of the essence of early Christian faith, a religious movement that emerged initially as a distinctive development of the pre-Christian biblical tradition. In this development Jesus became "the Christ" for all nations and not just for Israel. But the Gospels show that early Christians tied their confession of Jesus as "the Christ" to the biblical heritage and to Israel's hopes for a redeemer. However much "Christ" became part of the name-formula for referring to Jesus, for the Evangelists the term retained a connection with ancient visions of God's decisive eschatological intervention on behalf of his people. For the Evangelists the Jewish rejection of Jesus was their rejection of Israel's Messiah.

As perhaps no other christological title, the Evangelists' use of "Christ" shows the Jewish roots of Christian faith and the innovation this faith represented.

See also SERVANT OF YAHWEH; SON OF DAVID; SON OF GOD; SON OF MAN.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: M. Casey, *Son of Man* (London: SPCK, 1979); O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963); N. Dahl, *The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974) 37–47; M. de Jonge, "The Use of the Word 'Anointed' in the Time of

Jesus," *NovT* 8 (1966) 132–48; idem, "Jewish Expectations about the 'Messiah' according to the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 19 (1972/73) 246–70; idem, "The Use of *ho christos* in the Passion Narratives," in *Jesus aux origines de la christologie,* ed. J. Dupont (Leuven: Leuven Univ., 1975) 169–92; idem, *Christology in Context* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988); J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1981) 192–219; W. Grundmann et al., "χρίω κτλ," *TDNT* 9.493–580; F. Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology* (New York: World, 1969); M. Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul* (London: SCM, 1983) 65–77; D. Jones, "The Title *christos* in Luke-Acts," *CBQ* 32 (1970) 69–76; D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple* (SBLDS 31; Missoula: Scholars, 1977); J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); idem, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); W. Kramer, *Christ, Lord, Son of God* (SBT 50; London: SCM, 1966); F. Maloney, "The Fourth Gospel's Presentation of Jesus as 'the Christ' and J. A. T. Robinson's Redating," *Downside Review* 95 (1977) 239–53; C. F. D. Moule, "The Christology of Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts,* ed. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn (New York: Abingdon, 1966) 159–85; J. Neusner, W. S. Green, E. Frerichs, *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: University Press, 1987); K. Rengstorf, "χρίστος" *NIDNTT* 2.334–43; R. Schnackenburg, "Die Messias frage im Johannesevangelium," in *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze,* ed. J. Blinzler, O. Kuss, F. Mussner (Regens burg: Pustet, 1963) 240–64; S. S. Smalley, "The Christology of Acts Again," in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament,* ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1973) 79–94; M. Smith, "What Is Implied by the Variety of Messianic Figures?," *JBL* 78 (1959) 66–72.

L. W. Hurtado