

1 Corinthians 15.28 and the Grammar of Paul's Christology

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1 Cor 15.28 is often regarded as problematic for 'divine Christology' in Paul, because the Son's final submission to the Father is held to tell against his ontological equality with the Father. The current article argues that this conclusion involves a category mistake. The 'grammar' of Paul's Christology requires that we distinguish between what Paul says of and on the basis of Christ's divinity, and what Paul says of and on the basis of Christ's humanity, a strategy sometimes called 'partitive exegesis'. The article evaluates recent solutions to this problem, warrants partitive exegesis from within 1 Corinthians, and offers a partitive reading of 1 Cor 15.28: the Son submits to the Father as the final act of an office he holds as a human, in order to perfect the human vocation of vicegerency over creation.

Keywords: 1 Corinthians, Christology, Messiah, partitive exegesis, Paul, resurrection

Introduction

1 Cor 15.28 is widely regarded as one of the most problematic passages for 'divine Christology' in Paul. The reasoning is: if, in the end, 'the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him',¹ that must tell against ontological equality with the Father; it must qualify or limit Christ's identification with God. The burden of the current article is to argue that this conclusion involves a category mistake. The reading the article will contest implicitly takes 1 Cor 15.28 to speak of the intrinsic dignity of Christ's person, whether that dignity is construed as divine or otherwise. Against this construal of the verse, this article aims to show that Christ's humanity and representatively human messianic vocation are not only presuppositions of Paul's argument but are in centre frame. Rightly relating 1 Cor 15.28 to Paul's divine Christology calls for a consistent distinction between what Paul says of and on the basis of Christ's divinity, and what Paul says of and on the basis of Christ's humanity.

¹ Unless noted, English biblical citations are from the NRSV. Old Testament references follow English numbering unless noted.

Throughout 1 Corinthians, Paul speaks of the one Christ in a twofold fashion, as both divine and human. This distinction is sometimes called ‘partitive exegesis’ by patristics scholars.² Partitive exegesis is a reading strategy that recognises that Paul speaks of Christ in two distinct, complementary registers, the divine and the human, and that distinguishes between what Paul ascribes to Christ insofar as he is divine, and insofar as he has become human. Partitive exegesis does not divide Christ into two acting, ascriptive subjects; instead, it distinguishes two complementary planes on which Paul predicates attributes and acts of the one Christ. Partitive exegesis was common property of pro-Nicene readers, and is implicit in some modern readings of our verse.³ However, at present it has nothing like common currency in scholarly study of Paul’s Christology.

This article will argue that a partitive exegesis of 1 Cor 15.28 is warranted by the grammar of the divine, incarnational Christology Paul articulates in 1 Corinthians.⁴ When we ask how a passage such as 1 Cor 15.28 contributes to Paul’s Christology, we should ask about the register in which Paul is speaking of Christ: divine or human? In the case of 1 Cor 15.28, Paul indicates that this final submission of the Son to the Father is an act that the Son performs as a human, and that is fitting because he is human.

The argument has four steps. The first describes the christological problem many scholars perceive in 1 Cor 15.28, and surveys representative recent solutions. Second, the divine, incarnational Christology evident in 1 Corinthians will be shown to warrant a consistent distinction between what Paul says of Christ considered simply as divine and considered as incarnate. Third, a partitive solution to the problem of 1 Cor 15.28 will be offered, arguing that Paul

2 For an influential discussion of ‘partitive exegesis’ in pro-Nicene biblical interpretation, particularly that of Athanasius (from which I borrow the language of ‘speaking of one Christ in a twofold fashion’), see J. Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, Part 1: *True God of True God* (The Formation of Christian Theology 2; Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004) 208–15.

3 On the details and development of pro-Nicene theology, see e.g. L. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Behr argues that the conflict between what he calls ‘Nicenes’ and ‘non-Nicenes’ turned on the legitimacy of partitive exegesis (*The Nicene Faith*, Part 1, 14).

4 For ‘grammar’ in this sense, see Kavin Rowe’s discussion of whether Paul’s theology is trinitarian: ‘First, the theological grammar in the New Testament presupposes certain basic judgements about the identity of God. The particular grammatical moves of the texts could not be made, that is, unless larger theological judgements have been made that allow these linguistic possibilities. Put thetically: the New Testament speech could not have taken shape in precisely this way unless X or Y is true about God. This “unless” then requires explication in a theological idiom’ (C. K. Rowe, ‘The Trinity in the Letters of St Paul and Hebrews’, *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* (ed. G. Emery and M. Levering; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 41–54, at 44).

figures the end-time subjection of the Son to the Father as the appointed end of the incarnate Son's mediating messianic reign, the last Adam's final, conclusive act of obedience. Fourth, the article concludes with two methodological recommendations.

1. The Christological Problem of 1 Cor 15.28

1 Cor 15.28 concludes a paragraph in which Paul employs the metaphor of 'first fruits' (15.20, 23) to argue that Christ's resurrection guarantees the resurrection of 'those who belong to Christ', and that this will happen in a certain 'order' (15.23). In this paragraph Paul takes Ps 110.1 to project and periodise Christ's present and future reign (15.24–8).⁵ Christ reigns now at God's right hand, and he 'must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet' (15.25). Only at 'the end' (15.24), after defeating death as the last enemy (15.26), will Christ hand over 'the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power' (15.24). Calling Ps 8.6 as witness, Paul concludes that death is numbered among 'all things' subjected to the risen Christ, and that God, the one who subjected all things to Christ, is not himself subject to Christ (15.27). Instead, once all things are subjected to the Son, 'the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him' (15.28). This, of course, is our problematic assertion.⁶

1.1 Readings of 1 Cor 15.28 That Challenge Christ's Divinity

Many scholars take the phrase in 15.28 to indicate that the Son is intrinsically or 'ultimately' subordinate to the Father in a manner that qualifies or

⁵ See e.g. D. M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (SBLMS 18; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1973) 124: 'Ps 110.1c must have seemed invaluable to the apostle precisely because he could find in its "until" a clear scriptural prophecy of a time gap between the onset of Christ's reign and the consummation.' Charles Hill similarly comments: 'An exercise of regal power *amid* existing foes for a duration prior to their final crushing-under-foot is precisely the kingdom envisioned in Ps. 110' (C. E. Hill, 'Paul's Understanding of Christ's Kingdom in I Corinthians 15:20–28', *NovT* 30 (1988) 297–320, at 315; emphasis original). For a defence of a conscious allusion to Ps 110.1 in 1 Cor 15.25b, see W. Hill, *Paul and the Trinity: Persons, Relations, and the Pauline Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015) 123–5. Hill argues against e.g. the choice Jan Lambrecht forces between a 'proof text' and Paul's use of 'a scripture verse ... to express his own ideas' (J. Lambrecht, 'Paul's Christological Use of Scripture in 1 Cor. 15.20–28', *NTS* 28 (1982) 502–27, at 508–9).

⁶ This assertion parallels that of 15.24, 'Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power.' For the parallel as structural see e.g. Hill, 'Christ's Kingdom', 300–1; though cf. the alternative structure of J. Lambrecht, 'Structure and Line of Thought in 1 Cor. 15:23–28', *NovT* 32 (1990) 143–51, who still notes a 'chiastic parallelism between vv. 24b and 28b' (151). Whatever one makes of the paragraph's structure, the conceptual parallel between vv. 24 and 28 is striking. Given this affinity, we will engage 15.24 as well, though 15.28 is the primary focus.

challenges a divine Christology.⁷ For instance, John Ziesler takes 1 Cor 15.24 and 28 to prohibit identifying Christ as God: ‘Things traditionally said about God may now be properly said about Christ, but not that he *is* God, for the element of subordination remains.’⁸ James McGrath writes of 1 Cor 15.27–8, ‘Monotheism is preserved not because Jesus is absorbed into God or included in the divine identity but because even though Jesus reigns over absolutely everything else on God’s behalf, God himself is not subjected to Christ, but Christ is subjected to God.’⁹ Larry Kreitzer suggests that ‘this final theocentric affirmation may arise precisely because the Christocentric content of the previous verses impinged upon the ontological territory of God so much that the note of subordination of Christ to God was thought to be necessary as a concluding remark’.¹⁰ Similarly James D. G. Dunn: ‘Whereas the lordship of Christ is unqualified in relation to other “lords many” (1 Cor. 8.5–6), his lordship in relation to God as Creator is qualified. This presumably helps explain why Paul’s fullest statement of Christ’s lordship (1 Cor. 15.24–28) climaxes in the Lord subjecting himself to the one God of all (v. 28).’¹¹

Each of these statements takes the Son’s subordination in 1 Cor 15.28 to limit or compete with an ascription of divine identity.¹² Such subordination means we cannot say ‘Christ *is* God’; Christ’s subordination clears him off of divine ontological territory he might otherwise ‘impinge’ on, and so on. Each of these readings implicitly treats 1 Cor 15.28 as answering the question either of the Son’s ontology or of his intrinsic relationship to God. Each treats this verse, particularly the assertion of subordination, as speaking directly of Christ’s being, whatever that being might be. All these scholars submit this verse as evidence in the trial of Christ’s divine nature and essential relationship to God the Father.

7 My engagement with this question was initially prompted by, and remains indebted to, that of Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 5–13, 120–2.

8 J. A. Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, rev. edn 1990) 39–40 (emphasis original).

9 J. F. McGrath, *The Only True God: Early Christian Monotheism in its Jewish Context* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009) 50.

10 L. J. Kreitzer, *Jesus and God in Paul’s Eschatology* (JSNTSup 19; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1987) 159.

11 J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 248–9. See also J. D. G. Dunn, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2010) 110–12.

12 Similar statements can be found in A. W. Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1962) 187; E. Schweizer, *The Good News according to Mark* (trans. D. H. Madvig; London: SPCK, 1971) 282–3; R. E. Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994) 194 n. 289.

1.2 Responses from Advocates of Divine Christology

Responses to this challenge from those who endorse divine Christology are diverse.¹³ In his collection of essays on 'the New Testament's Christology of divine identity', Richard Bauckham's sole reference to our passage simply asserts that the subjection of angelic powers to Christ is evidence of his participation in the unique divine sovereignty.¹⁴ Gordon Fee suggests, '[I]t is unlikely that Paul is thinking in terms of Christ's *person* here, but rather of his *role* in salvation history.'¹⁵ Chris Tilling, who questions the validity of Fee's ontological/functional distinction,¹⁶ prioritises 'the wider pattern of Christ-relation language' that he discerns in Paul over elements of subordination, and appeals to the 'relational nature of Paul's epistemology' to preserve space for 'mystery, paradox and tension'.¹⁷ And Wesley Hill has recently offered an intricate reading of our passage, finding in it 'mutual, asymmetrical subjection' between Father and Son.¹⁸ On Hill's reading, Christ is the subject of 1 Cor 15.25b, which identifies him as God by means of its allusion to Ps 110.1. Hill also takes 'the commensurate designation of God as "Father" (v. 24) and Christ as "Son" (v. 28)' to include Christ within the divine identity. Hence: 'Explicating this text requires reference both to what unites God and Christ on the sovereign side of the Sovereign-ruled (or Creator-creature) divide as well as to what distinguishes God from Christ in terms of their personal uniqueness'.¹⁹

13 While at least one modern proponent of divine Christology (N. T. Wright) appeals in passing to the solution developed here, no recent scholarly work on Paul's Christology that I have encountered does so in detail. Hence, a 'partitive' reading of our verse is essentially absent from contemporary *neutestamentliche* debates about Paul's Christology. It is worth nothing that Larry Hurtado's treatment of the verse is difficult to categorise. On the one hand, he sees the passage as consistent with the worship of Jesus, arguing that such worship was 'actually a requisite demonstration of their reverence for God "the Father"' (L. W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 641). On the other hand, Hurtado treats 1 Cor 15.20–8 as an example of Jesus as 'God's chief agent', balancing the cosmic scope of Christ's rule against its temporal limitation and derivative character (L. W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015³) 100).

14 R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 177.

15 G. D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007) 113 (emphasis original). Further, 'The Son obviously does not cease to exist, nor is he here being placed eternally under the Father's authority; rather, in the event described in this passage, his functional subordination in his role as Messiah, and thus as currently reigning messianic Lord, is now completed, so that the "one God" ... is all in all' (113–14). This solution has broad affinities with mine, though see the critique below.

16 C. Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology* (WUNT II/323; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012) 36, 39–40.

17 Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology*, 246–7.

18 Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 120–33, at 120.

19 Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 128, 133.

1.3 *Evaluation of Responses*

Can any of these readings be said to have solved the problem posed by our first group of scholars? Tilling's solution, it seems, either dodges the question or pushes it back a step. What is a 'relational epistemology', and how does it enable us to conceive of the Son as both divine and submissive to the Father? Whatever promise Fee's solution holds, it is somewhat lacking in conceptual clarity and contextual warrant. Can a 'role' submit to someone? Does the context of Paul's assertion distinguish 'role' from 'person'? As to Hill's reading, I take his evidence for the passage's inclusion of Christ within the divine identity to be convincing, and his response to be the most substantive of those here surveyed. Nevertheless, it is not clear why we are to infer only 'personal uniqueness' from the Son's eschatological subjection to the Father. Is it simply that the evidence for the Son's divinity in the passage prevents us from inferring anything to the contrary in his submission? Or does Paul himself delimit the scope and significance of this submission?

In any case, the goal of this article is not so much to show that any of these solutions are incorrect as that they are insufficient. Specifically, in order to answer the challenge that many pose to divine Christology from 1 Cor 15.28, one must query the implicit premise noted above, namely that the passage's assertion of subordination describes Christ's intrinsic relation to the Father. In order to do that, it is necessary to discern both the divine, incarnational Christology evident in 1 Corinthians and the indications in 1 Cor 15.28 and its context that Paul is speaking of Christ as a human, with reference to his humanity. To these two tasks we now turn.

2. **The Divine Christ of 1 Corinthians as Warrant for Partitive Exegesis**

This section sketches the divine, incarnational Christology of 1 Corinthians, then derives from it a methodical conclusion. The section has two parts. The first part argues that in 1 Corinthians, Paul identifies Christ as the one true God of Israel. The second part prepares for the exegesis of 1 Cor 15.28 to follow by articulating two implications, one conceptual and one hermeneutical, of Paul's assertion that it was this divine 'Lord of glory' who was crucified (1 Cor 2.8). The overall methodological conclusion at which this section aims is this: if, for Paul, Jesus is the divine Son incarnate, then it is legitimate to ask of any christological passage, 'Is Paul speaking of Christ in a divine register or in a human one?'

2.1 *Christ's Identification as the One True God of Israel*

In 1 Corinthians, Paul identifies Jesus the Messiah as the one true God of Israel. That is, to borrow Richard Bauckham's phrase, Paul includes Jesus within

the unique identity of God.²⁰ The aim of this section is to show that these two ways of putting the matter should be taken as complementary, equally valid and equally necessary.

This identification is most strikingly evident in 1 Cor 8.5–6.²¹ In 1 Cor 8.4, probably citing the Corinthians' letter, Paul affirms that 'there is no God but one'. This traditionally Jewish monotheistic confession, which Paul fully endorses, constrains what follows. Paul then acknowledges that non-Jews multiply deities: 'Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth – as in fact there are many gods and many lords' (8.5). Pagans offer allegiance to many 'gods' and 'lords', a practice that Paul, with all Jews, opposes. By contrast, Paul asserts that Christians owe allegiance not to many gods and lords, but to one God and one Lord: 'yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist' (8.6). Paul here reformulates the Shema^c of Deut 6.4.²² It is crucial to recognise that Paul does not add Christ as 'one Lord' alongside the 'one God' of the Shema^c.²³ Such an addition would constitute ditheism, a repudiation of the Shema^c itself.²⁴ Instead, Paul identifies Jesus as the 'Lord' whom the Shema^c confesses as one. That is, 'the term "Lord", applied here to Jesus as the "one Lord", is taken from the Shema^c itself'.²⁵ Hence, as David Lincicum observes, 'Paul does not present this as a *correction* or an *addition* to the *Shema^c*, but as an interpretation of it that discloses its true referent'.²⁶

20 See Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 19, and throughout.

21 The discussion here of 1 Cor 8.5–6 is especially indebted to Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 97–104, 210–18. For treatments that support the primary conclusions drawn here, see also N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991) 125–32; N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 4; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013) 661–70; O. Hofius, "'Einer ist Gott – Einer ist Herr": Erwägungen zu Struktur und Aussage des Bekenntnisses 1Kor 8,6', *Paulusstudien II* (WUNT 143; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002) 167–80; O. Hofius, 'Christus als Schöpfungsmittler und Erlösungsmittler: Das Bekenntnis 1 Kor 8,6 im Kontext der paulinischen Theologie', *Paulusstudien II*, 181–92; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 89–94, 562–4; E. Waaler, *The Shema and the First Commandment in First Corinthians* (WUNT II/253; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 358–446; Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 112–20.

22 For the most extensive case to date that in 1 Cor 8.5–6 Paul consciously echoes the Shema^c, see Waaler, *The Shema and the First Commandment*.

23 Contra e.g. McGrath, *The Only True God*, 41–2. See the apt response in Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 116–17.

24 Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 101.

25 Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 213.

26 D. Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy* (WUNT II/284; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 139 (emphasis original). Cf. Hofius, "'Einer ist Gott – Einer ist Herr'", 180: 'Das Bekenntnis 1Kor 8,6 ist ... nicht eine Erweiterung und Ergänzung des Schema^c, sondern seine Auslegung und Entfaltung.'

Therefore, Paul's understanding of the 'one God' has room enough, so to speak, to include Jesus. This validates Bauckham's language of 'the inclusion of Jesus in the unique divine identity'.²⁷

On the other hand, since Paul affirms that there is only one God, who is the one Lord, it is just as valid and necessary to say that, in confessing Jesus to be the 'one Lord' of the Shema^c, Paul identifies Jesus *as* the 'one God', the only God who merits the title. As Paul certainly would have known, κύριος ('Lord') in Deut 6.4 was not a mere title, but a surrogate for יהוה, God's personal proper name.²⁸ In the syntax of the Shema^c, יהוה names the subject: it is this God who is 'one'. And the sense of κύριος in 1 Cor 8.6 is determined by its source in the Shema^c. By lifting κύριος from the Shema^c and laying it on Christ, Paul names him as the one true God of Israel. The name that belongs only to God belongs to Christ.

Further, by asserting that 'all things' are 'through' Christ (δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα, 8.6), Paul names Christ as God's mediatorial co-agent in the creation of all things. On the one hand, since Paul confesses only one God (cf. 8.4), who is creator of all, Paul here places Christ on the divine side of the line between creator and creation, thereby reinforcing his identity as the only God. Therefore, in the act of creating all things, Christ is not a passive tool but an acting subject. On the other hand, Paul clearly casts Christ's agency as mediate: all things are 'from' God the Father (ἐξ οὗ), and we exist 'for him' (εἰς αὐτόν), whereas all things are 'through' Christ (δι' οὗ), 'we' included (καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ). Hence, 1 Cor 8.6 presses us to speak of God and Christ in terms of both identity and distinction. Paul both identifies Christ as God and distinguishes him from 'the Father'. Christ is indeed distinct from the Father, yet such distinction is an internal differentiation within God, not a distinction between God and one who is not God.²⁹

27 Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 19.

28 For an overview of recent discussion regarding how early and how prevalent was the use of κύριος as a surrogate for יהוה in Greek translations of the Old Testament, see J. A. Staples, "'Lord, Lord': Jesus as YHWH in Matthew and Luke", *NTS* 64 (2018) 1–19, at 3–11, who concludes, 'It can therefore be established that, regardless of what is found on the pages of our earliest manuscripts or was originally written in the Old Greek, κύριος was read in place of the Tetragram from a very early date and certainly by the first century' (11). Cf. esp. M. Rösel, 'The Reading and Translation of the Divine Name in the Masoretic Tradition and the Greek Pentateuch', *JST* 31 (2007) 411–28. Based on a survey of material evidence and devotional practices traceable to the first century, David Capes concludes, 'So when Paul quotes a text containing the divine name from the LXX, he knows he is making reference to the unique, covenant name of Israel's God' (D. B. Capes, *The Divine Christ: Paul, the Lord Jesus, and the Scriptures of Israel* (Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018) 19). See also C. K. Rowe, 'Romans 10:13: What Is the Name of the Lord?', *HBT* 22 (2000) 135–73, at 157 n. 66.

29 As Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 120 rightly insists, 'Rather, in a non-competitive and mutually complementary way, affirming God the Father and Jesus together *as* the "one God" of Deut

Another means by which Paul identifies Jesus as the one true God of Israel in 1 Corinthians is his interpretation of scriptural passages in which he takes the name YHWH , in the form of its Greek surrogate $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$, to refer to Jesus.³⁰ We have already witnessed this in Paul's allusion to Deut 6.4 in 1 Cor 8.6; here two biblical citations are worth noting.³¹ The first citation is of Jer 9.24 (LXX 9.23) in 1.31, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.' Paul's citation compresses LXX Jeremiah's 'in this' ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\acute{o}\upsilon\tau\omega$) and 'that they understand and know that I am the LORD' (... $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\gamma\acute{\omega}\ \acute{\epsilon}\iota\mu\iota\ \kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$) into a boast 'in the Lord' ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\acute{\omega}$). In the preceding verses, Paul asserts that God chose those who had no humanly reckoned worth in which to boast (1.26–8), 'so that no one might boast in the presence of God' (1.29). Christ alone is for the Corinthians all they could wish to boast in – wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (1.30). It is God who caused the Corinthians to be 'in Christ Jesus', so that their boasting would be in 'the Lord' (1.30–1). Paul's goal in this passage is to remove all grounds for boasting other than Christ, and Paul's compressed citation supports this claim. Since Christ himself is all that warrants boasting, Paul takes Jeremiah's passage to name Christ 'the Lord', the one God of Israel, in whom alone it is right to boast.³²

Second, in 10.26, Paul cites Ps 24.1 (LXX 23.1) in order to warrant the purchase of previously sacrificed meat: 'For, "the earth and its fullness are the Lord's".' So that we can discern the referent of 'the Lord' in this verse, we need to trace that referent back through the preceding verses. This 'Lord' is the same Lord whom Paul warns the Corinthians not to provoke in 10.22, in language about YHWH borrowed from Deut 32.21. How might they provoke him? By partaking of the cup and

6:4 and affirming their irreducible distinction from one another as unique agents or "persons" is to do justice to both of those elements present in 1 Cor 8:6' (emphasis original). Hofius' comments in 'Christus als Schöpfungsmittler', 186–7 are similarly on-point. And H.-C. Kammler, 'Die Prädikation Jesu Christi als "Gott" und die paulinische Christologie: Erwägungen zur Exegese von Röm 9,5b', *ZNW* 95 (2003) 164–80, at 174–5 rightly identifies the differentiation implied in these prepositional phrases as 'einer *inner-göttlichen* Unterscheidung' (emphasis original).

30 See esp. D. B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology* (WUNT 11/47; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1992); and now Capes, *The Divine Christ*. For a tabulation of all such passages in the undisputed Pauline epistles, see Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 186–8.

31 In the interest of space we pass over the allusions in 10.21 (Mal 1.7, 12) and 10.22 (Deut 32.21, where $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$, lacking in the LXX, is supplied by Paul). Further, while many scholars take the referent of $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ in the citation of Isa 40.13 in 1 Cor 2.16 to be Christ, the arguments of H.-C. Kammler, *Kreuz und Weisheit: Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu 1 Kor 1,10–3,4* (WUNT 159; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 232–5 in favour of a reference to the Spirit have sowed enough seeds of doubt for me to pass over it here.

32 Similarly Kammler, *Kreuz und Weisheit*, 142–3.

table 'of the Lord', and also the cup and table of demons (10.21). Why are these two commensalities incommensurable? Because the Lord's cup and table enact communal participation in the blood and body of Christ (10.16). The 'Lord' in view throughout is Christ. The Lord at whose table the Corinthians feast is the Lord who owns all things because he created all things (cf. 8.6). In 1 Cor 10.26, Paul identifies Christ as the Lord whom Ps 24.1 praises as possessor of all because he is the creator of all.³³

These two citations confirm that, in 1 Corinthians, Paul identifies Christ as the one true God of Israel. For Paul, God's personal proper name identifies Christ. Not only that, Paul assumes his letter's recipients will not require any argument in order to accept this astonishing identification.³⁴ For Paul, Christ and God are not two figures standing so close together that, observed from the right angle, their outlines blur into each other. Paul does distinguish between Christ and God the Father, a distinction difficult to describe without using the traditional theological term 'person'. Nevertheless, when the question is not the relationship of Christ to the Father but the relationship of the one God to all created reality, Paul straightforwardly identifies Christ as God. Christ is the one Lord of the Shema' (8.6), the Lord in whom alone one may boast (1.31), the creator who owns all (10.26). Christ's identity as God is the only pillar sufficient to bear the conceptual load of this repeated scriptural ascription of the name of God to Christ.³⁵ If, for Paul, Jesus were not God simply and absolutely, these passages could not be talking about him.

Such identification does not admit of degrees. A person might be more or less closely identified *with*, say, a cause or concept, based on the extent to which they embody or advocate it. But there is no 'more' or 'less' in being identified *as* someone. The relation of identity between Christ and God that we have discerned in 1 Corinthians is not a near-fit that could still be tightened by taking in some theological fabric. The matter is more like picking a suspect out of a line-up: the identification either succeeds or fails. Being creator and possessor of all (10.26), and being the right referent of God's personal, proper name (1.31; 8.6; 10.26), are identifiers that pick one, and only one, out of the line-up of all conceivable 'gods' and 'lords'.

33 Similarly D.-A. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (BHT 69; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986) 287 n. 11; Capes, *Yahweh Texts*, 140–5; Hofius, 'Christus als Schöpfungsmittler', 189–90.

34 Cf. the broader observation of S. J. Gathercole, 'Paul's Christology', *The Blackwell Companion to Paul* (ed. S. Westerholm; Oxford: Blackwell, 2011) 172–87, at 180: '[T]hroughout his letters, Paul appears to *assume* this divine Christology rather than arguing for it: it seems to be a commonly accepted view in the earliest Pauline communities' (emphasis original).

35 At the conclusion of his in-depth study of this same phenomenon in Rom 10.13, Kavin Rowe makes the same point with reference to identity of the God whom Paul served: 'Paul's God and the God of Israel are the same God only if YHWH is so identified with Jesus and Jesus with YHWH that the first two commandments are not violated' (Rowe, 'Romans 10:13', 171).

2.2 *Two Entailments of the Divine Christ's Crucifiability*

The Christ whom Paul proclaims in 1 Corinthians is not only divine but also, to co-opt a term from historical Jesus studies, 'crucifiable'. Indeed, Paul knows nothing if not that Jesus Christ was crucified (2.2). One of Paul's most potent, paradoxical renderings of this act is found in 1 Cor 2.8: 'None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης)'. This phrase has only one precise parallel in the New Testament, in James 2.1, and none in the Old Testament. However, the phrase is used as a divine acclamation in Greek Enoch 22.14, 27.3 and 27.5.³⁶ Further, we should recall that, via his citation of Jer 9.23 LXX in 1.31, Paul has named Christ the one divine Lord just a few sentences prior. By calling Christ 'the Lord of glory' in 2.8, Paul again identifies Christ as the one to whom alone the unique divine glory belongs.³⁷ So, in 1 Cor 2.8, Paul announces that it is this divine Christ who was crucified. Paul does not shy from the paradox but presses all the way into it. In an argument packed with paradoxes, this tops them all: the one this world's rulers crucified is the world's maker and true ruler, sovereign over faithful and faithless alike.³⁸

Two entailments of the divine Christ's crucifiability are worth noting here, the first conceptual and the second hermeneutical. First: Paul does not merely place Christ on 'the divine side of the line which monotheism must draw between God and creatures'; he places Christ on both sides of the line at once.³⁹ Christ's having been crucified pertains to, has reference to, took place in his human existence. Even if we abstain from terms such as 'person' and 'nature', an adequate

36 Further, the phrase's equivalent recurs frequently with the same sense in the portions of 1 Enoch attested in Ethiopic. See 1 En. 27.3, 5; 36.4; 40.3; 63.2; 75.3; 83.8. On the basis of these Enochic parallels, Hofius takes 'Lord of glory' in 2.8 as a 'Gottesprädikation' ("Einer ist Gott - Einer ist Herr", 179). Others who take the phrase to predicate divinity include C. C. Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric* (NovTSup 69; Leiden: Brill, 1992) 235-40; N. Walter, 'Alttestamentliche Bezüge in christologischen Ausführungen des Paulus', *Paulinische Christologie: Exegetische Beiträge* (ed. U. Schnelle and H. Hübner; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000) 246-71, at 257-8; Kammler, *Kreuz und Weisheit*, 214-15; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 136; J. A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) 177.

37 Cf. the ubiquitous biblical phrase 'the glory of the Lord', e.g. Exod 16.7; Num 14.10; 1 Kgs 8.11; Ps 104.31; Isa 60.1; Ezek 3.23; Luke 2.9; 2 Cor 3.18; 8.19. Also relevant for fixing the sense of 'Lord of glory' are the phrases 'God of glory' (Ps 28.3 LXX; Acts 7.2) and 'king of glory' (Ps 23.7-10 LXX).

38 On the fit of 1 Cor 2.8 within the fabric of paradoxes that constitutes Paul's argument in 1 Cor 1.18-2.16, see e.g. J. M. G. Barclay, 'Crucifixion as Wisdom: Exploring the Ideology of a Disreputable Social Movement', *The Wisdom and Foolishness of God: First Corinthians 1-2 in Theological Exploration* (ed. C. Chalamet and H.-C. Askani; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015) 1-13, esp. 10-12.

39 The quoted phrase is from R. Bauckham, 'The Worship of Jesus in Apocalyptic Christianity', *NTS* 27 (1981) 322-41, at 335, who is speaking not of Paul but of Revelation.

conceptual paraphrase of 1 Cor 2.8 must describe a single agent, one ‘who’, who has a twofold manner of existence, two ‘whats’. One ‘what’ warrants Christ’s identification as the one true God; the other renders him crucifiable.

To approach our second, hermeneutical, implication, there are three basic ways of responding to the argument of this whole section. First, one could deny that 1 Corinthians identifies Christ as the one true God of Israel.⁴⁰ The previous section was an effort to show, albeit briefly, that such a denial fails to account for Paul’s inclusion of Christ in the Shema^c and his repeated identification of Christ as the one Lord, YHWH , of whom scripture speaks. Second, one could posit that Paul’s Christology is fundamentally incoherent, internally inconsistent. This seems a counsel of despair. Paul’s is an agile, supple intellect. A radical distinction between creator and creature, operative in the demand to serve the one true God and reject idolatry, is basic to Paul’s theology (Rom 1.20, 25), vocation (1 Thess 1.9) and his moral appeals to the Corinthians (e.g. 1 Cor 10.7, 14, 22). Rather than positing self-contradiction, might it not be more plausible to allow that when Paul ascribed both divine and human qualities to Christ he knew what he was doing?⁴¹ For Paul, these categorically distinct realities coalesce in the one Christ, and in that unity retain their difference. This leaves open a third response, one that I recommend and will employ in the remainder of this article.

This third response, which is a hermeneutical implication of the divine Christ’s crucifiability, is to recognise that Paul speaks of the single Christ in a twofold way, corresponding to Christ’s twofold manner of existence. He is both Lord of glory and crucifiable, or, to use equally valid language, both God and man. Given this twofold manner of existence, we should ask of each of Paul’s christological predications: in what sense does this apply? To which aspect of Christ’s existence does this refer? The two aspects of Christ’s existence that we have seen in 1 Corinthians warrant a ‘partitive’ exegesis, a reading of Paul that recognises that he speaks of Christ on two complementary planes, neither of which constricts the other.

Further, while my case for the validity of partitive exegesis does not depend on this, and space prohibits a full investigation, it is worth noting that Paul himself arguably employs just such a partitive expression on two occasions. In Rom 1.3 Paul declares that the gospel concerns God’s Son, ‘who came into being by means of the seed of David as it pertains to the flesh’ ($\tau\omicron\upsilon\delta\ \gamma\epsilon\nu\omicron\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\ \sigma\acute{\pi}\epsilon\rho\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \Delta\alpha\upsilon\iota\delta\ \kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\alpha$).⁴² Here, I would suggest, Paul employs the

40 As do e.g. McGrath, *The Only True God*, 41–5; Dunn, *The First Christians*, 107–10.

41 Cf. Wainwright on John 1.1: ‘The man who wrote “The Word was with God, and the Word was God” knew that his statement contained a paradox’ (*The Trinity*, 8).

42 Translation adapted from M. W. Bates, ‘A Christology of Incarnation and Enthronement: Romans 1:3–4 as Unified, Nonadoptionist, and Nonconciliatory’, *CBQ* 77 (2015) 107–27, at 120. For a full justification of this interpretation of Rom 1.3, see 114–23. Cf. the parallel, incarnational uses of $\gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ in Gal 4.4 ($\acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\pi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\lambda\epsilon\nu\ \acute{\omicron}\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\delta\ \tau\omicron\nu\ \upsilon\iota\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \gamma\epsilon\nu\omicron\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\ \gamma\upsilon\nu\alpha\iota\kappa\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \gamma\epsilon\nu\omicron\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\nu\ \acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\ \nu\acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\nu$).

partitive qualifier κατὰ σάρκα to specify that Jesus' Davidic ancestry pertains to his humanity, precisely because as God's 'Son', who 'came into existence' (γενομένου) as a human, Jesus has, so to speak, another 'origin' that is independent of, and unconstrained by, his human one. Similarly, in Rom 9.5, Paul specifies that it is 'as pertains to the flesh' that the Messiah descends from the Israelites (ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα).⁴³ Why does Paul conceptually delimit the scope of this predication to the Messiah's 'flesh'? I would argue that it is because, in the subsequent phrase, Paul acclaims Christ as the one 'who is God, over all, blessed forever, amen' (ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν).⁴⁴ If this reading of these two phrases is accurate, then further support for partitive exegesis is found in Paul's own partitive predications.

Too much Pauline scholarship is governed by a tacit zero-sum equation between divinity and humanity, such that the more Christ is one the less he must be the other. However, in light of the absolute distinction between creator and creature that Paul, as in this respect a mainstream first-century Jew, both assumed and articulated, it is a category mistake to regard divinity and humanity as, as it were, entities that compete for the same space. My recommendation is that Pauline exegetes recognise two distinct, non-competitive, non-contradictory registers in Paul's predications of Christ: the divine and the human. We need not, indeed should not, assume that these two resonances, both present in 1 Corinthians, contradict each other.

3. A Partitive Solution to the Problem of 1 Cor 15.28

This section offers a partitive solution to the christological problem of 1 Cor 15.28. Specifically, the Son submits to the Father as a human, as the final act of an office he holds as a human, in order to perfect the human vocation of vicegerency over creation. The Son's submission to the Father effects the successful end of his

⁴³ Translation mine.

⁴⁴ Whether Christ is the referent of θεός in Rom 9.5b is, of course, endlessly disputed. For substantive defences, see e.g. M. J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 143–72; Kammler, 'Die Prädikation Jesu Christi als "Gott"'; G. Carraway, *Christ Is God over All: Romans 9:5 in the Context of Romans 9–11* (LNTS 489; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013); S. J. Gathercole, 'Locating Christ and Israel in Romans 9–11', *God and Israel: Providence and Purpose in Romans 9–11* (ed. T. D. Still; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017) 115–39, at 118–22. Kammler aptly comments on the partitive force of κατὰ σάρκα in Rom 9.5, 'Durch die Hinzufügung des Artikels wird betont eine Einschränkung zum Ausdruck gebracht: "insoweit als das Leibliche in Betracht kommt". Von daher legt sich die Annahme nahe, daß Paulus bei der Formulierung τὸ κατὰ σάρκα neben dem Aspekt der menschlich-irdischen Herkunft Jesu noch einen anderen Aspekt im Blick hat: nämlich den seines göttlich-himmlichen Ursprungs. Genau dieser zweite Aspekt würde in V. 5b ausdrücklich angesprochen' ('Die Prädikation Jesu Christi als "Gott"', 167). Similarly Harris, *Jesus as God*, 156.

messianic mediation of the Father's rule over the cosmos, and offers to the Father a climactic act of human obedience, both of which bring fitting closure to the Son's saving, incarnate work as Messiah. Versions of a partitive solution have been offered by many pre-modern readers, some more satisfying, some less.⁴⁵ Further, glimpses of this solution are present in some modern works.⁴⁶ And at least one modern commentary develops this solution at some length.⁴⁷ The point is not that this solution is new, but that it is sufficient and contextually satisfying, it follows the grammar of Paul's Christology, and the reasoning informing it deserves broader currency. The following sections discuss three observations on our verse that support a partitive reading.

3.1 *The Action of the Human Jesus*

First, 1 Cor 15.28 depicts the action of the human being Jesus of Nazareth. The entire passage presupposes Christ's humanity, and in 15.21 Paul writes, 'For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being.' That this verse reports the actions of the human Jesus is hardly controversial, yet it is strangely absent from the theological conclusions many draw from the passage. Here appears a telling irony. When scholars conclude that 1 Cor 15.28 subordinates the Son to the Father in a manner that clashes with the Son's full deity, they assume that the verse speaks to who the Son is intrinsically. In other words, such a reading presupposes that the verse speaks in absolute, essential, ahistorical terms of the Son's inherent relation to the Father. That reading overlooks the programmatic role of Christ's humanity in this verse. Whatever we understand the Son's intrinsic relation to the Father to be, submitting to the Father is an act the Son performs as a human. This is not incidental to the scope and significance of his submission. The presence of the Son's humanity means that 1 Cor 15.28 is not playing a zero-sum game in which submission entails absolute ontological inferiority.⁴⁸ If the fact of Jesus' crucifixion does not efface his identity as 'Lord of glory' (2.8), neither does his last-day submission to God the Father.

45 See e.g. Hilary of Poitiers, *The Trinity* 11.30; Epiphanius of Salamis, *Pan.* 11.69.74.6, 75.1, 75.3–77.6; John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 39.7; Ambrose, *Fid.* 5.12.147; Jerome, *Epist.* 55.5; Augustine, *Div. quaest.* LXXXIII 69.1; Aquinas, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians* 15.3.949.

46 E.g. Hill, 'Christ's Kingdom', 311 n. 36: 'The best approach to this seems to be to keep in mind that the ruling spoken of is messianic and mediatorial, in which Christ executes to perfection the role in which the first Adam proved delinquent' (cf. 319–20); Wright, *Climax*, 30: 'We must remember that he is not here talking about the relation between Jesus and God *per se*.'

47 R. E. Ciampa and B. S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) 767–8, 776–9.

48 Hence the common question of whether 1 Cor 15.24–8 is 'Christocentric' or 'theocentric' has limited heuristic value at best, and at worst erects a false theological antithesis. For one treatment of the passage that is driven by this question, see S. M. Lewis, 'So That God May Be All in All: The Apocalyptic Message of 1 Corinthians 15,12–34' (Tesi Gregoriana: Serie Teologia 42; Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1998) 63–6.

3.2 *The End of the Son's Messianic Mediation*

Second, 1 Cor 15.28 narrates the end of the Son's messianic mediation, the completion of the specifically redemptive rule that the Father delegated to him.⁴⁹ Jesus holds the office of Messiah as a human, for humans. And the sequence of events in 1 Cor 15.20–8, especially vv. 24–8, forecasts the final tasks of this redemptive rule. That Christ is 'the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep' implies both the promise of his people's resurrection and an order: theirs follows his.⁵⁰ This 'order' (τόγματι, v. 23) Paul finds in the 'until' of Ps 110.1: Christ must reign until all his enemies are subdued, death included (v. 26). In 1 Cor 15.24–8, Paul reasons from Pss 110.1 and 8.6 about the present reality and future completion of Christ's reign. That Paul says Christ 'must reign until' presupposes that he reigns now. That Paul cites Ps 110.1 to make this point presupposes that, while Christ's reign culminates in believers' resurrection, it began at his own resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand (cf. Rom 8.34).⁵¹ Paul elsewhere asserts that Christ's messianic reign began at his resurrection, when he was 'appointed Son of God in power' (Rom 1.4).⁵² That Jesus' deputised reign as Messiah has an end point no more contradicts his divinity than does the fact that it has a starting point.

1 Cor 15.28 asserts that once all things, including death, have been subjected to the Son, the Son will himself submit to the Father. As 15.24 states, at the end, once

49 E.g. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1914²) 355, 358; A. Schlatter, *Die Korintherbriefe* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1950) 195–6; F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953) 369–70; E.-B. Allo, *Saint Paul. Première Épître aux Corinthiens* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1956) 407; Hill, 'Christ's Kingdom', 320; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 111–12; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 575; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 776–7; N. A. Meyer, *Adam's Dust and Adam's Glory in the Hodayot and the Letters of Paul: Rethinking Anthropogony and Theology* (NovTSup 168; Leiden: Brill, 2016) 173.

50 So many scholars, e.g. Lambrecht, 'Christological Use', 505; Hill, 'Christ's Kingdom', 299. It is only by overlooking this point that J. Martini, 'An Examination of Paul's Apocalyptic Narrative in First Corinthians 15:20–28', *CTR* 8 (2011) 57–70, at 70 can conclude, 'Significantly, the solution is not because Christ was raised so the believer will be raised.'

51 Noted by e.g. Lambrecht, 'Christological Use', 506; Hill, 'Christ's Kingdom', 320; W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, vol. IV: *1Kor 15,1–16,24* (EKKNT 7/4; Düsseldorf: Benziger, 2001) 172.

52 Translation mine. For resurrection as messianic enthronement in Rom 1.4, see e.g. U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, vol. I: *Röm 1–5* (EKKNT 6/1; Zurich: Benziger, 1978) 57; T. R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018²) 42–3, 46–7; C. G. Whittett, 'Son of God, Seed of David: Paul's Messianic Exegesis in Romans 1:3–4', *JBL* 119 (2000) 661–81, at 676–7; J. R. D. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 41–2; Bates, 'Incarnation and Enthronement', 125–7; J. W. Jipp, *Christ Is King: Paul's Royal Ideology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015) 174–8. Further, Capes has argued that the same logic is evident in Rom 14.9: the end for which Christ 'died and lived again' was 'that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living' (*Yahweh Texts*, 53–4, 123–30).

‘those who belong to Christ’ have been raised ‘at his coming’ (v. 23), he will deliver the kingdom ‘to God the Father’. At the successful completion of his messianic mission, Christ will return to the Father the keys to his office: mission accomplished. Once all enemies have been subdued, the general will return to the king who commissioned him and will render fitting submission to that king.⁵³ This, I would suggest, illumines the purpose for which the Son submits to the Father, ‘that God may be all in all’ (v. 28): ‘All things will be directed to God without obstruction or need of mediation.’⁵⁴ This conception of Christ’s messianic reign could imperil his divinity only if our passage were the only evidence for his divinity. Instead, we have seen elsewhere in 1 Corinthians that this ‘general’ is also himself ‘king’ in the fullest possible sense. This one who submits to the Father also bears the name YHWH (1 Cor 8.6). By virtue of that name, and the unique divine identity it singles out, lordship remains his even after he delivers the kingdom to the Father.⁵⁵ Since Christ holds his messianic vicegerency by virtue of his humanity, its limited duration does not exclude or mitigate his divine sovereignty. This holds whether the evidence for Christ’s divine identity in 1 Corinthians comes only from other passages, or, as Wesley Hill and others have argued, from 1 Cor 15.24–8 as well.⁵⁶

3.3 *Christ’s Culminating Act of Requisite Human Obedience*

Third, Paul scripturally figures the Son’s submission to the Father as a culminating act of requisite human obedience. Christ’s final act of submission to the Father concludes his representative enactment of human vicegerency. Three of Paul’s Old Testament sources in vv. 20–8, two implicit and one explicit, support this point. We begin with the explicit citation of Ps 8.6 in 15.27. Paul cites this verse with minor modifications to assert that ‘all things’ are subjected to Christ, the ‘all’ proving that death itself is included (15.26).⁵⁷ By calling Ps 8.6 as witness

53 Ciampa and Rosner deploy this analogy in detail (*First Corinthians*, 767–8, 776–7). If one keeps the analogy within its proper scope, as they do, it is entirely apt.

54 Meyer, *Adam’s Dust*, 173; cf. Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, 358; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 575.

55 Hence I concur with those who argue that Paul does not assert an absolute end to Christ’s reign. Some distinction between the manner of Christ’s reign between his resurrection and *parousia* and the sovereignty he exercises after ‘the end’ seems required by the grammar of Paul’s Christology. For a variety of attempts to distinguish between the sense in which Christ’s reign ends and that in which it continues, see e.g. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 30.4; Augustine, *Div. quaest.* LXXXIII 69.4, 9; Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, 355; C. Wolff, *Der Erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (THNT 7; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000²) 387.

56 Again, Hill argues that, by making Christ the subject who places all things under his (own) feet in 1 Cor 15.25b, a role reserved for God in Ps 110.1, Paul indicates ‘an overlap of identity between Christ and God when read together with the “Father” (πατήρ) and “Son” (υἱός) titles in 15.24 and 28’ (Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 120–33, at 123). Similarly Wright, *Climax*, 30.

57 For Paul’s modifications, see R. E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, ‘1 Corinthians’, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand

to Christ's present reign as Messiah, Paul figures this reign as fulfilling the vicegerency God conferred on humanity at creation. Adam was a ruled ruler, exercising dominion over creation under God. This dominion was fatally distorted by Adam's disobedience, yet 1 Cor 15.27 takes Ps 8.6 to say that this dominion is principally restored in Christ's present reign as resurrected Messiah.⁵⁸ In his current reign and coming defeat of death, the resurrected Christ reinstates human dominion, in his own person bringing to fruition God's original purpose for humanity. And a key requisite of this purpose is obedience. While Paul does not make the point explicit here, he elsewhere argues that Christ's obedience overcame the disastrous effects of Adam's disobedience (Rom 5.12–21). The adamic overtones of Ps 8.6 in 1 Cor 15.27 should at least prime our ears to hear representative, climactic notes in Jesus' human obedience in 15.28. Just as Christ's present reign representatively restores human dominion, so also his final act of obedience is a representative one.

This brings us to the second Old Testament passage, Gen 1–3, the backcloth to 15.21: 'For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being.' While Paul does not cite a specific passage or develop this discussion further, he clearly presupposes the narrative in Gen 1–3 of Adam's disobedience and its catastrophic consequences. That this passage is Paul's source in 15.21 is confirmed by his explicit engagement with Gen 2.7 in 1 Cor 15.45–50.⁵⁹ The problem solved by Christ's resurrection and death-defeating reign is the legacy of Adam's fateful disobedience.

Our third Old Testament passage is alluded to in 15.24, which says that the 'end' will come when Christ delivers the kingdom to God the Father 'after destroying every ruler and every authority and power' (ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν). Together with 15.25, 15.24 bears striking affinities with Dan 7.9–14 and 26–7.⁶⁰ In the former, 'one like a son of man'

Rapids: Baker, 2007) 695–752, at 745. Paul anticipates the citation of Ps. 8.6 in 15.27 by inserting πάντως into the allusion to Ps 110.1 in 15.25. As Meyer comments, 'The synchronizing of Pss 8 and 110 does not merely indicate that Ps 8 has been read messianically, but that Ps 110 has been read with the cosmic-anthropological overtones of Ps 8' (*Adam's Dust*, 171).

58 Cf. Meyer, *Adam's Dust*, 168. For other discussions of how Christ's reign as resurrected Messiah brings God's frustrated purposes for humanity to fruition, see e.g. Wright, *Climax*, 27–8; E. J. Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (HTA; Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 2006) 938–9; Ciampa and Rosner, '1 Corinthians', 747–8.

59 On which, see especially N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 3; London: SPCK, 2003) 347–56; Meyer, *Adam's Dust*, 117–35.

60 For fuller discussion, see Meyer, *Adam's Dust*, 170–1. Paul's evocation of Dan 7 in these verses is also noted by Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, iv.156–7; Wright, *Resurrection*, 335–6; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 768–9; M. V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 144; J. T. Hewitt and M. V. Novenson, 'Participationism and Messiah Christology in Paul', *God and the Faithfulness of Paul: A Critical Examination of the Pauline*

comes to the Ancient of Days and receives universal dominion (Dan 7.13–14, ESV). In the latter, the ‘dominion’ (ἐξουσίαν) of the fourth beast is taken away, to be consumed and destroyed ‘until the end’ (ἕως τέλους), and dominion is given instead to ‘the people of the saints of the Most High’, whom ‘all dominions’ (πάντα αἱ ἐξουσίαι) will serve (ὑποταγήσονται) and obey (Dan 7.26–7, ESV). Not only the notion of a kingdom being given ‘until the end’ to God’s delegate (whether individual or corporate), but also the terms for the powers that this delegate subdues (ἀρχή, ἐξουσία, δύναμις), and the verb naming their subjection (ὑποτάσσω) are common to Dan 7 and 1 Cor 15.24.⁶¹ This strongly suggests that Paul’s conception of Christ’s kingdom in our passage draws materially on Dan 7. As reigning ‘son of man’, Christ representatively effects the rule of the ‘saints of the Most High’; his dominion is also theirs.

What do these allusions and citation add up to? As Messiah, the reigning ‘son of man’, Jesus rules as a representative human, restoring adamic vicegerency over creation and bringing that ruled rule to its divinely determined destination.⁶² As the ‘last Adam’ (1 Cor 15.45), Christ is the ‘human being’ (15.21) whose resurrection reverses the results of Adam’s sin. As the man to whom all things are subjected, he now achieves humanity’s appointed telos. All of these overlapping scriptural roles constitute crucial context in which to read the Son’s submission to the Father at ‘the end’ (15.24). Given that humanity’s deviance from its appointed destiny was instigated by the sin of one man, it is fitting for the final feat of the last Adam’s mediatorial reign to be an act of obedience. The human destiny is fulfilled when Christ not only restores human dominion over creation but enacts humanity’s stipulated subjection to God in his own person.

Theology of N.T. Wright (ed. C. Heilig, J. T. Hewitt and M. F. Bird (WUNT 11/413; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016) 408–9.

61 My base text is Rahlfs, which includes some phrases that the editors of the Göttingen text exclude; Theodotion differs as well, though with close synonyms. However, as Meyer points out, ‘Since Paul is not quoting or alluding to a specific phrase (or phrases) *per se* it is not necessary to sort out which textual tradition is most prominent. What is striking is the confluence of themes and vocabulary: An end (τέλος) marks the transition from the reign (ἐξουσία, ἀρχήν) of the enemy of God and God’s people to the submission (ὑποτάσσω) of all authorities to God’ (*Adam’s Dust*, 171).

62 So e.g. Wright, *Resurrection*, 336: ‘The result is the establishment of a final, stable “order” in which the creator and covenant god is over the Messiah, and the Messiah is over the world – with the Messiah, in other words, taking precisely the position marked out in Genesis 1 and 2 for the human race, and in Daniel 7 for “the people of the saints of the Most High”: under the creator, over the world, reflecting the divine image into the world in terms of bringing the creator’s victorious, wise, rescuing order to the world that would otherwise be subject to the destructive rule of death and all the powers that lead to it.’ Similarly Barrett on 15.25: ‘Messiah and Man can thus be used to interpret each other’ (C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; London: A & C Black, 1992²) 359).

3.4 Conclusions

The scope and significance of the Son's subjection to the Father in 1 Cor 15.28 are conditioned decisively by his humanity. This submission is not eternal but enacted at the consummation of all things. The submission Paul predicates of the Son refers not to his 'naked' divinity, but to an act he performs in and by virtue of his humanity.⁶³ Hence it is not special pleading to take Paul's predication of submission as referring precisely, and only, to the Son's act as a human, not to his divine existence or intrinsic relation to the Father. Instead, to perceive such a limited scope of this predication is to follow the way Paul's words run, to keep them in the channel that the context carves out. By contrast, to take the Son's submission in 1 Cor 15.28 to indicate intrinsic inferiority is like measuring the air temperature to find out the day of the week, or weighing a person to discover how tall they are. Those qualities are distinct. One does not tell you the other; they cannot be plotted on a single axis. So with the Son's divine and human characteristics and the activities they underwrite. Therefore, I suggest that at least some pre-modern readers were right to read the passage in this way, limiting its scope to what Christ does as the incarnate God-man, and therefore as conceptually delimited from who he is considered simply as divine.

How is reasoning about 1 Cor 15.28 in the manner recommended here not simply a convenient way to exclude evidence that might damage the case for 'divine Christology'? In addition to the contextual argument above, I have argued that a distinction between divine and human registers in christological predications belongs to the grammar of Paul's Christology evident elsewhere in 1 Corinthians (1.31; 2.8; 8.6; 10.26). To ask 'Is this spoken of Christ with reference to his divinity or his humanity?' is a necessary response to the twofold-ness in Paul's account of Christ. For a proponent of divine Christology, to employ partitive exegesis is to use a resource the position itself affords, not an expedient smuggled in to shore it up. To assert that a proponent of divine Christology cannot make such a distinction would be to prohibit him or her from defending the position with resources intrinsic to it. In such a case it would not be the proponent of divine Christology who is in danger of special pleading.

4. Two Methodological Suggestions

The solution to the christological problem of 1 Cor 15.28 offered here is by no means new, yet the reading strategies and conceptual distinctions it involves are widely neglected, and sometimes precluded, by modern students of Paul's

63 The term 'naked' is borrowed from Cyril of Alexandria, to refer to Christ in his divinity alone, apart from his assumed humanity. See *That the Christ Is One* (PG 75.1324); translation and discussion in J. A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts* (VCSup 23; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 221–2.

Christology. In closing, then, I offer two methodological suggestions that follow if such partitive exegesis is indeed warranted by the divine and human substance of the Christology of 1 Corinthians.

First, if Paul identifies Jesus of Nazareth as YHWH , the $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ who created all and who alone is to be worshiped, then we would do well to guard against reductionism and zero-sum thinking on two fronts. The first is ‘monotheism’. As is often remarked, Paul’s is an expanded monotheism: it includes not only the Father but also Jesus and, arguably, the Spirit.⁶⁴ If Paul identifies Jesus as YHWH , his ‘monotheism’ will not be preserved by reserving ultimacy for the Father, maintaining that the worship of Jesus redounds to the glory of the Father, or finally subordinating the Son to the Father. Either Jesus is the one true God, or Paul is guilty of idolatry and blasphemy.⁶⁵

Hence, when we observe Jesus’ personal distinction from God (the Father) that is everywhere evident in Paul’s Christology, we should ask not how this distinction qualifies or limits his identity with God, but how it comports with that identity. As Wesley Hill has argued, accurately tracing the contours of Paul’s Christology calls for ‘redoubled’ discourse concerning Jesus’ relation to God. In one mode of discourse we must say that Paul identifies Jesus as God, full stop. In another, complementary mode we must describe his personal distinction from God the Father.⁶⁶ If we treat Jesus’ distinction from God the Father as mitigating statements by which Paul identifies Jesus as God, we are not finding Paul’s balance but failing to perceive his paradoxical fullness. Identity as God and distinction from God (the Father) must be spoken together, at once, as distinct and complementary modes of predication. Nothing less will do justice to Paul’s Jesus.

64 On the Spirit in relation to God and Jesus in Paul, see especially Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 138–66. On Paul’s ‘expanded’ monotheism, see e.g. C. K. Rowe, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016) 89–91, especially his comments on Rom 10.13: ‘Now notice what the Roman Christians have learned: the Lord whom we are to confess is Jesus, and yet the Lord spoken of in the book of the prophet is obviously the one Lord of the Shema. The proximate juxtaposition of these two statements enlarges the referent of the word *Lord* – again, God’s own name in Israel’s Scripture – to include Jesus without placing him in competitive relation to God. In God’s case, oneness can include distinction without ceasing to be oneness. This is the underlying logic of 1 Corinthians 8:6, too’ (90; emphasis original).

65 As Rowe observes, ‘Paul’s “doctrine” of God must yield the conclusion that in Pauline theology we either see a complete contradiction with the OT (as many Jews today would still hold) or a fundamental theological seed of Nicaea’ (‘Romans 10:13’, 172). Similarly Walter on 1 Cor 2.8: ‘Hier nennt Paulus, und zwar – man möchte zunächst denken: ohne speziellen Anlaß – im Zusammenhang mit seiner Kreuzigung, Jesus den $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ τῆς δόξης, eine Formel, die auf jemanden anders als Gott selbst zu beziehen für jeden Juden, der nicht selbst Jesus als den “Herrn” bekennt, geradezu gotteslästerlich klingen muß’ (‘Alttestamentliche Bezüge’, 257).

66 See especially Hill, *Paul and the Trinity*, 99–119.

A second front on which we should resist zero-sum thinking is Paul's portrait of Jesus himself. As we have seen, scholars often take statements Paul makes of Jesus as a human to qualify, limit or clash with what he says of Jesus as divine. But we have seen that Paul himself places Jesus on both sides of the divine-human line. Paul can, as it were, draft a ledger with a divine column and a human column and predicate of Jesus things that are true in and by virtue of each. Hence, in contemplating Paul's rendering of the identity of Jesus, we should resist setting human predications against divine ones. For Paul, the Son's final submission to God does not imperil his divinity any more than his earthly submission does. The exalted Son's human act of submitting to God does not negate his identity as and equality with God any more than his being crucified negates his identity as 'the Lord of glory' (1 Cor. 2.8).

A second, positive recommendation: we should seek to discern the grammar of Paul's Christology in a manner that allows us to speak within it ever more fluently. If the argument of this article holds, then to distinguish between divine and human registers in Paul's christological predications is no more an imposition on his discourse than to observe that, as a speaker of Koine Greek, Paul never uses the nominative case for the object of a verb. When Paul ascribes the unique name of God to the Son, he is, as it were, speaking in a divine 'case'. When Paul ascribes obedience and suffering and death to the Son, he is speaking in a human 'case'. When Paul asserts that the Lord of glory was crucified, he speaks in both 'cases' at once, predicating a human fate of a divine subject. Paul is not speaking of two subjects, but of one subject in two registers, on two planes, with reference to two realities that unite in one agent. Just as knowledge of a language's grammar can help a reader to perceive and explain the coherence of a sentence's syntax, so a deeper knowledge of Paul's christological grammar enables one to perceive coherence where another reader might posit contradiction.

Many scholars seem to assume, rather than to argue, that Jesus' distinction from God militates against his identity with God, and that his confessedly human traits somehow mitigate would-be divine ones. If Paul speaks of Jesus in both registers in the space of a single letter, and sometimes a single sentence, some scholarly approaches might not be perceiving problems in Paul, but bringing problems to him. How might we more finely calibrate our reading of Paul's Christology by using concepts culled from Paul himself?⁶⁷

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