

New Testament Christology

- Method
- NT Eschatology
- Titles of Christ
- Christology of Jesus
- Pre-Pauline Christology
- Christology in the Gospels
- Christology of Paul
- Christology of Hebrews

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Method

- Effect of preunderstandings (R. Brown)
 - Start with what we think it means to be human or divine and fit Jesus into that.
 - “...most Christians tolerate only as much humanity as they deem consonant with their view of the divinity...”
 - Clusters around significant events in Jesus’ life.

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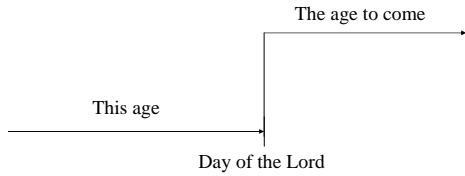
Method

- Unity and diversity in NT Christology
 - Different Christologies in the NT.
 - James Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the NT*: unity consists in the common conviction that “in and through Jesus something decisive for human salvation occurred.”
 - Ben Witherington, *The Many Faces of the Christ*: the unity is a common narrative of what God has done in Christ.

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NT Eschatology

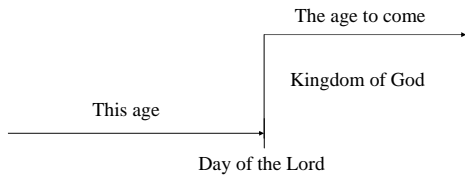
- OT saw history divided into two ages, separated by the Day of the Lord.



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NT Eschatology

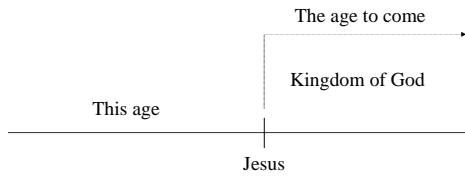
- Kingdom of God = reign of God; the new reality of the age to come.



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NT Eschatology

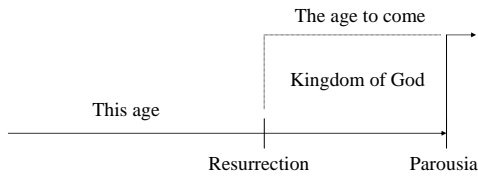
- Jesus is the pivot point of history.
- The kingdom of God broke into history in Jesus' ministry.



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NT Eschatology

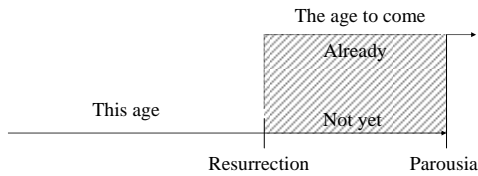
- Jesus' resurrection marked the inauguration of the kingdom.
- His parousia will bring the kingdom in its fullness.



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NT Eschatology

- We live “between the times.”
- The kingdom is “already” and “not yet.”
- We live by the principles of the kingdom now.



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Titles of Christ

- Christ or Messiah
 - Jesus accepted this title from others.
 - He reinterpreted it in terms of the Son of Man.
 - The “Messianic Secret” (W. Wrede).
- Son of God
 - Royal messianic figure, not necessarily divine.
 - Unique knowledge of and intimacy with God.

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Titles of Christ

- Jesus called himself the Son of Man.
 - Doesn't necessarily mean Jesus' humanity.
 - Three categories of sayings: present ministry, suffering and death, coming in glory (Dan. 7).
 - Jesus may have developed suffering aspect from Servant Songs in Isaiah.
 - Jesus saw his mission as Messiah in terms of the Son of Man.

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Titles of Christ

- Lord
 - Sir, Master, Lord, God. Lord over what?
 - More appropriate after Jesus' exaltation.
- Savior
 - Used 17 times of Jesus in the NT.
 - Much less common than "Lord."
- God
 - Used very sparingly of Jesus.
 - All of these are contested.

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Titles of Christ

- Jesus as divine wisdom incarnate.
 - See Pr. 3:19-20; 8:22-36; Baruch; Sirach; Wisdom of Solomon.
 - Wisdom as preexistent divine agent through whom God created the world.
 - Wisdom comes to earth for human salvation.
 - Jesus taught in wisdom speech (parables).
 - See Mk. 6:2; Mt. 12:42; Col. 2:2-3; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Mt. 11:19.

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Christology of Jesus

- The Christology of Jesus
 - Book by Ben Witherington III.
 - Jesus' self-consciousness or self-understanding.
 - Indirect evidence for his identity.
- Why look at this?
 - Link between Jesus and early church.
 - Does the church's high Christology go directly back to Jesus himself?
 - Does it draw out implications of Jesus' ministry?
 - Did the church invent it?

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Christology of Jesus

- Jesus' relationships
 - John the Baptist: the Coming One; more than the last of the prophets.
 - The Pharisees: a different view of holiness.
 - The disciples: calling the eschatological community of Israel.

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Christology of Jesus

- Jesus' experiences and deeds
 - Exalted view of his own authority.
 - Activities with messianic associations.
 - Crucified as king of the Jews.
 - Visionary experiences confirmed his Sonship.
 - Exorcisms and healings: Solomonic or messianic figure.
 - Acted as God's agent.

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Pre-Pauline Christology

- Prayers and confessions (some in Aramaic)
 - *Maranatha. Abba.*
 - “Jesus is Lord.”
- Christological hymns: V-pattern.
 - Shows “Christological monotheism” (Wright).
 - “Binitarianism” (L. Hurtado).
- Q material: kingdom of God, Jesus as wisdom and Son of Man.
- Christological use of the OT.

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Christology in the Gospels

- Mark
 - Jesus as Son of God, suffering Son of Man.
- Matthew
 - Jesus as new Moses, teacher, messiah of Israel.
 - Jesus as fulfillment of OT, as Immanuel.
- Luke
 - Jesus as friend of sinners, as universal savior.
 - Jesus’ prayer life; the ascension.
- John: Jesus as Word, Son, God’s agent.

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Christology of Paul

- Being “in Christ.”
 - See handout.
 - A real spiritual union with Christ.
- Jesus as the Last Adam.
 - Romans 5; 1 Corinthians 15.
 - Parallels between Adam and Christ.
- Other characteristic passages
 - Romans 3:21-22a; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Phil. 2:9-11.

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Christology of Hebrews

- Most common title: Jesus as Son.
- Distinctive title: Jesus as high priest.
- Also: *prodromos* (forerunner), *archegos* (champion, pioneer), example, apostle.
- Covers whole career of Jesus.
 - Preexistence through ministry
 - Death and resurrection
 - Exaltation, heavenly session
 - Return

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Christology of Hebrews

- Interdependence of humanity and divinity.
 - Explicit declarations of divinity.
 - Necessity of his humanity.
 - Reality of his temptation.
 - High priest is both divine and human.
 - Made perfect in suffering.

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Christology of Hebrews

- The work of Christ in Hebrews
 - Once-for-all sacrifice.
 - Defeated Satan and released his captives.
 - Initiated perfect and permanent covenant.
 - Present work of intercession.

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