

## Paul's Interpretation of *Yehoshua ben Yoseph* through the Scriptures of Israel as "retrodiction"

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"The beginnings of Christianity were associated with an effort to reclaim, by a new way of reading, the Jewish scripture which was the only scripture known to the infant church. The Christian movement was grounded in the memory of Jesus of Nazareth and in the Easter experience, and neither of these foundational influences could be found mirrored in scripture, if scripture were read in the traditional fashion."<sup>1</sup>

### Prolegomenon

Prof Crewe, Prof Buitendag, honorary guests, colleagues, friends and family, allow me to start with three initial remarks...

**Firstly**, seven years after I was promoted to full professor and two years after being appointed as Head of the Department of New Testament Studies at the University of Pretoria, this is a great moment to share with all of you. I therefore want to express my sincerest gratitude for the effort that each of you made to be here tonight in order to share in this moment. Due to its size and different to the practice at other universities, the University of Pretoria only invites its Heads of Departments to present inaugural lectures, and thus not all its full professors. To be granted this opportunity here tonight, is an exceptional honour and privilege.

**Secondly**, given the composition of our audience – consisting of non-theologians, theologians from other disciplines, biblical scholars and also colleagues from the field of NT studies – my presentation will consist of two sections. The first section will be a brief overview on the meta-narrative of the NT – which should be fairly easy to follow for everyone in the audience. The second section, however, will be of a more specialized nature and will follow a technical analytical approach which narrows down the focus to some of the oldest quotations in early Christianity. Rather than dealing with all three regions of Asia-Minor, Greece and Italy, I decided to concentrate only on the first two due to time constraints.

**Thirdly**, much has been written on biblical hermeneutics, on the presuppositions of readers and on the methods employed to interpret Scripture. It is not the intention of this presentation to focus on these aspects again, or to repeat what biblical scholarship is largely in agreement with in this regard. It is rather the intention to focus here on early Christian hermeneutics – an area related to my research the last 26 years on the textual forms of the OT quotations in the NT.

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<sup>1</sup> S. Brown, *The Scriptural Reading of Scripture and the Coptic Gospel of Truth*, in D.J. Lull (ed), *Society of Biblical Literature 1990 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990) 637-644, here 638.

## The research problem

One of the major debates in biblical scholarship the last number of years had been the issue relating to matters about the canon of the Bible. Whether this involves studies on the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), the Pseudepigrapha, OT or NT scholarship, the issue of canonicity constantly surfaces – despite the fact that the term itself was not in existence during the 1<sup>st</sup> century of early Christianity, but only later introduced during the history of the church. Alongside the debate on the authority that certain ancient documents had for the communities in which they were used, and their place amongst other ancient documents within particular collections, runs a similar debate in modern and post-modern Christian circles – especially in Protestant circles. This debate centres on *the relation between the OT and NT's in the light of the Christ-event*. The fact that the NT authors often quoted from, referred, or alluded to their Scriptures (roughly what is known today as “the OT”) and then very often linked those quotations, references and allusions from their Jewish Scriptures to the Christ-event, has led to the viewpoint of some that “Christ is found in the OT”, i.e. that the OT prophesied about the events that took place regarding the person, Jesus of Nazareth. Augustine was one of the first who stated: “*in vetere novum lateat, et in novo vetus pateat*”.<sup>2</sup> Some NT scholars later even operated with a “prophecy-fulfillment” paradigm.<sup>3</sup> A.T. Hanson is a typical example of this approach with his 1965 publication on “*Jesus Christ in the Old Testament*”.<sup>4</sup> Most OT scholars would, in general, strongly resist this way of thinking and would point to the *contexts*, origin and the destination of each OT document. But even amongst them are some exceptions. In his 1964 publication, A.H. van Zyl wrote a booklet entitled: “*Kyk, Hy kom! Heenwysings na die Christus in die Ou Testament*”<sup>5</sup> (“Behold, He is coming! Pointers to the Christ in the OT”) – where the words “He” and “Christ” are printed with capital letters. The phenomenon continues into recent times. In

<sup>2</sup> Quaest. In Heptateuchum 2.73; PL 34.625.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., for instance, C.F.D. Moule: “It is very striking that, with all the parallels between the New Testament use of scripture and its use in the Qumran writings and in other Jewish literature, the note of *fulfillment* seems to be peculiar to the New Testament” (*The Birth of the New Testament* [London: Continuum, <sup>3</sup>2000], 57).

<sup>4</sup> A.T. Hanson, *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament* (London: SPCK, 1965). However, there seemed to have been a shift in Hanson’s thinking when he presents 15 years later a study entitled “*The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*” (London: SPCK, 1980).

<sup>5</sup> A.H. van Zyl, *Kyk, Hy kom! Heenwysings na die Christus in die Ou Testament* (Pretoria: NG Kerkboekhandel, 1964).

the “*Bybel in Praktyk*” (“Bible in Praxis”), for example, a list is provided which is labeled: “Christ in the Psalms”. Added to all this, there is again recently, during the translation process of the new “Afrikaanse Bybelvertaling” (ABV) by the Bible Society of South Africa, strong pressure from some groups and individuals to use capitals at a number of places in the OT where they are of the opinion that those passages refer directly to Jesus.

Many of these OT texts at issue are better known in such Christian circles to be so-called “messianic texts”. Modern day Christianity is thus still confronted with the question: *Should we understand the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth already from the OT onwards towards the NT (in other words, is the OT thus a “prediction” of Jesus Christ); or should we rather understand the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth through the NT and its own interpretation of the OT (in other words, is the NT “a reflection on the OT in the light of Christ”)?* It is the intention of this contribution to confirm the position of mainstream biblical scholarship that the latter position should be preferred, i.e. that the OT does not predict the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth, but that the NT writers interpreted the Jesus-events in hindsight in the light of the Scriptures of Israel.

Given the plea to print certain nouns and pronouns in capital letters in the translated OT text in order to indicate their nature as texts predicting the Jesus-event, it is yet again confirmed that bible *translation* in itself remains interpretation – in the same manner as the *reading* and *exposition* of the Bible by its readers and exegetes are also interpretations, and just as Paul and the other early Christians read their Scriptures already in their day in an interpretative manner. It is impossible for most Christians today to approach their Bible translations in a purely objective manner. It is for them a religious book with a long dogmatic history which is intertwined with the history of the Christian church. It *contains* for some the revelation of God or the Word of God, whilst it *is* for others the revelation of God and the Word of God. It is for most Christians not a collection of ancient documents that developed over a period of more than a thousand years, and therefore not considered by them to be “*Biblia*” in the plural (a library), but rather a “*Biblos*” in the singular, that is, they consider it to be a single book. Critical biblical scholarship on the text and canon of the Bible also differs in the eastern and western branches of Christianity. Whilst it is hardly present in eastern Orthodox

Christianity, western Catholic and Protestant Christianity, on the other hand, have long established traditions of critical biblical scholarship – at least in some of these circles.

This presentation will now deal with the issue at hand by means of two stages. The first stage will be to briefly unfold the meta-narrative of the NT in five acts. The second stage will narrow down the focus on the fifth act with a closer investigation of Paul's interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth through his Scriptures.<sup>6</sup> Paul is chosen here intentionally, as he represents the earliest stratum of Christianity. His use and interpretation of those Scriptures, as well as his pictures of Jesus (Christology) form a multi-coloured tapestry which has been extensively investigated in biblical scholarship during the last few centuries. No deliberate attempt will be made here to specifically add anything new, except to identify only two narrow strokes of Paul's Christological interpretation of his Scriptures after his conversion to Christianity, as can be seen in some of his oldest letters, namely those to the Galatians in Asia Minor and to the Corinthians in Greece – each of which will be introduced as a scene of the fifth act in the NT meta-narrative.

## **Unfolding the Meta-Narrative of the New Testament in Five Acts**

### **Act 1: The Jewish Scriptures during the turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE**

The Scriptures of Israel formed a compendium of the understanding of religious Jews about their relation to their Jewish deity, Yahweh, over many centuries. It consisted of law books, history books, prophetic books, and collections of proverbs, hymns and psalms. These different kinds of books were collected over a period of time and transmitted during the time of the second Temple Period on scrolls of which copies were circulated amongst the Jewish communities in the Diaspora. Several Jewish communities in Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece and Rome thus had access to one or more of these scrolls such as the Torah Scroll, Scroll of the Minor Prophets, Scrolls of Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Scroll of the Psalms, and so forth. The Scriptures of Israel were also read, studied and used during cultic events in the history of the Jews. It contained instructions for a lifestyle which was expected to be in accordance with their

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<sup>6</sup> For Paul as a witness to the historical Jesus, see the very recent study of M. Müller, Paul: The Oldest Witness to the Historical Jesus, in: T.L. Thompson & T.S. Verenna (eds), *'Is This Not the Carpenter?' The Question of the Historicity of the Figure of Jesus* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012) 117-130.

religious understanding of the identity of Yahweh and this Deity's involvement in their history as the "people of God". Over a long period of time they have built their future eschatological hope on a figure that would arise from their midst and who would hold an authoritative anointed (messianic) position. The expectation was largely that it would have been someone who will be able to liberate them from their long periods of oppression and rulership under the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans.

There were different expectations and profiles of this figure during the course of history as documented by a variety of writers over the centuries. Such a messianic (anointed) figure could have been a king, a prophet, a high priest – or even a combination of these. Hence, according to some, this figure might be a *royal* figure, similar to king David, and he would be a descendant of him. Kings were considered as "sons of gods", especially by the Egyptian and Roman empires. According to other ancient writers, however, this figure would be someone like the *prophets* Moses and Elijah. Others, yet again, expected someone "like the son of man" – an *apocalyptic figure* described in the vision of Daniel 7. Whereas the royal and prophetic expectations were largely expectations of an earthly human being, the expectation of an apocalyptic figure took a more transcendent shape. These expectations have set the tone for future hope of liberation and salvation.

## **Act 2: The life of Yehoshua ben Yoseph**

A Jewish boy was born in Bethlehem (Mt 2:1, 5; Lk 2:4) – probably during the reign of Caesar Augustus (27 BCE – 14 CE). He eventually grew up in the town of Nazareth in the northern province of Galilee (Mt 2:22-23; Lk 2:39-40). He carried the Hebrew name Yehoshua (Mt 1:21, 25; Lk 1:31), and being the son of the carpenter Yoseph (Mk 6:3; Mt 1:19-20; Lk 2:4), he was most likely commonly known in the village of Nazareth as *Yehoshua ben Yoseph*, or amongst the Greek speaking members of the society, as *Iēsous*. This Jesus of Nazareth came in contact with the religious movement of John the Baptist who preached that someone greater than he will come, that the salvation of God *from sin* has arrived, that people should be converted and be baptised (Mk 1:4; Mt 3:2; Lk 3:3). Jesus let himself be baptized by John (Mk 1:9; Mt 3:13; Lk 3:21), then called a number of ordinary people to follow him as his disciples (Mk 1:16-20; 2:13-

17; 3:13-19; Mt 4:18-22; 8:18-22; 9:9-13; Lk 5:1-11, 27-32; 6:12-16) and started himself to preach. But his ministry developed to another level when he also started healing people and even performing exorcisms. Interacting with ordinary people, with the marginalized of the society, addressing their basic needs, and preaching to them about a future hope, led to a gradually increasing number of followers. He became known and famous in the surrounding areas. Furthermore, being critically outspoken against the religious establishment of his day, and particularly against the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes, soon led to friction and plots to get rid of him. Eventually, being betrayed by Judas Iscariot, one of his own group, and with the instigation of the religious leaders of his own people, he was executed by means of Roman crucifixion.

### **Act 3: The legacy of Jesus of Nazareth: hope and future restoration**

The contents of the message proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth, was largely eschatological in nature. This became clear, amongst other places, in his Sermon from the Boat (Mk 4:1-34), the Mount (Mt 5-7) or the Plain (Lk 6:17-49), his Sermon in the Synagogue in Nazareth (Lk 4:16-30), and his prophetic speeches (Mk 13; Mt 23:37 – 25:46; Lk 21:5-38). His preaching carried the message of hope and future restoration. He indicated that the expectation of restoration and salvation has finally arrived through his own arrival and ministry. The expectation of the Jews over many centuries was that of a political or military leader who would liberate them – so when Jesus arrives from Galilee, the province of his home town in the north, and enters the city of Jerusalem in the southern province of Judea on a donkey, the Jews assumed that this was the moment of liberation and they sang a praise song and honoured him by waving palm branches and throwing their clothes in the road in front of him. But it was not political salvation which Jesus of Nazareth intended to bring. His ministry had a religious, not a political, tone and he focused on a restored relationship with God. He was rather a holy man or prophet figure than a political liberator. This was in line with the preaching of John the Baptist. Future restoration would start with the relationship that people had with God and it would be a restoration of the broken covenantal relationship between God and his people. Later writers would refer in retrospect to this as a “new covenant”. A great deal of Jesus’ teaching thus

centred on the hypocrisy of the religious establishment of his day with its empty and ritualistic following of the Jewish Law. What was required, according to his message, was rather an honest recognition and admission of a sinful relationship with God from which people needed to be converted. This would imply a theological-ethical change in lifestyle. Matthew emphasized in this regard the importance of *a change in attitude* when it comes to the Law. Luke, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of *engagement with the socially marginalized*. But as time went on, the masses became disappointed and impatient that nothing changed on the *political* front, and the religious leaders became itchy and angry about Jesus' criticism. After a brief performance period of three years, the Jew of Nazareth, Yehoshua ben Yoseph, was executed. But his memory lived on and so did his message of hope and future restoration. What he said (logia) and what he did (acts) were told to the younger generation and to those who were still unfamiliar with the life story of Jesus of Nazareth.

There is, however, another side to the story – a more controversial side in the transmission of his identity, about who he was, what he said and done, and particularly, what happened to him after his execution. There were stories that the tomb was mysteriously empty after his burial, that he raised from death, that he appeared to some of those who knew him, and that he even ascended to heaven.<sup>7</sup> It is this side of the story that often divides both biblical scholars and Christian believers. The question was now: *Was Yehoshua ben Yoseph, Jesus of Nazareth, indeed the Jewish messiah in one or more of the profiles in which he was expected to appear?* This was the answer that the four gospel writers intended to answer during the last 40 years of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. But about a decade earlier to these attempts, some letters circulated between the Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, and the earliest Christians in Asia-Minor, Greece and Italy.

#### **Act 4: The Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, and his position to the Jesus movement**

The Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, vehemently denied the identification of Yehoshua ben Yoseph with that of a long expected Jewish messiah. He stood as witness at the clothes of those who

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<sup>7</sup> According to Wellhausen and Bultmann, the historical figure, Yehoshua ben Yoseph, Jesus of Nazareth, was not a Christian, "because being a Christian implies confessing faith in Jesus as resurrected Lord" (M. Müller, *Paul: the Oldest Witness*, 119).

stoned Stephen because the latter was in support of the viewpoint that Jesus of Nazareth was the expected messiah to come. Just prior to Stephen's execution, the latter made a long speech (Acts 7) in which he quoted and referred to the Jewish Scriptures in order to show that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed that expected messiah. Paul thereafter passionately continued himself to prosecute the followers of this new Jewish movement. He arranged for letters of support and introduction from the High Priest in order to visit the synagogues in Damascus where he could sniff out and prosecute supporters of this movement (Acts 9:1-2). On his way to Damascus, however, he had a vision (Acts 9:3). A bright light shone on him and he heard a voice speaking and questioning him about this persecution. On enquiring about the identity of the voice, Saul learnt that it was Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 9:4-5). This event changed the life of Saul forever.<sup>8</sup> Soon hereafter he became the greatest supporter of the very same movement which he persecuted. He now travels the ancient Roman world with the same passion, trying to convince the Jews, Jewish proselytes and non-Jews that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed that long expected messiah<sup>9</sup> (Acts 9:19b-22) – indicating that there is “no other Gospel” (Rom 1:7). But as a Pharisee trained in the Jewish Scriptures, he now faced the challenge *to prove from the very same Scriptures* that this was indeed the case (Acts 13:13ff). Otto Michel has warned long ago, however, that there are notable differences between rabbinic and Pauline hermeneutics:

“Wenn der Rabbiner nicht aus dem Text heraus-, sondern in den Text hineinliest, dann ... deutet [er] umlaufende Traditionen, Sitten und Gewohnheiten in den Text hinein. Anders Paulus. Er liest [zwar wie die Rabbinen] aus dem Text heraus in ihn hinein, was er an dogmatischen, geschichtlichen und ethischen Überzeugungen hat. Aber diese sind ... Versuche, von einem neuen, nicht an Volk und Nationen gebundenen Heilsverständnis aus das ganze Leben und die ganze Geschichte zu verstehen.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> This personal encounter with Christ determined the whole course of Paul's subsequent thought and action (G.F. Hawthorne, et al. [eds], *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993], 682). E.E. Ellis argues that this event had a direct impact on Paul's understanding of Scripture (*Paul's Use of the Old Testament* [Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1981]), 38-39.

<sup>9</sup> See the studies of P. Nagel, “The Explicit Kurios and Theos Citations by Paul: An Attempt at Understanding Paul's Deity Concepts” (Unpublished PhD thesis; Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2012) and D.B. Capes, “Paul's Use of Old Testament Yahweh-Texts and Its Implications for his Christology” (Unpublished PhD thesis; Fort Worth: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990).

<sup>10</sup> O. Michel, *Paulus und seine Bibel* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1929), 102.



**Act 5: Saul interpreting the Scriptures of Israel in the light of Yehoshua ben Yoseph**

According to Luke's description in Acts, Paul's experience of this Theophany, or rather Christophany, on his way to Damascus, changed his life. Similar to other prophets in the past, Paul thus also had a vision – but this time it is not God, but Jesus who appears to him. This event made Paul believe that *Yehoshua ben Yoseph* was not just the Jew from Nazareth, but that he was the resurrected Christ (1 Cor 15). This event changed Paul from being a persecutor of Jesus-followers to a devoted Christian missionary (Gal 1:15-16). He travels the ancient world to share this message, establish and visit the earliest Christian congregations and writes letters to several of them. His message is quite simple: It is the "good news" (gospel) that Jesus of Nazareth, *Yehoshua ben Yoseph*, was the long expected Jewish messiah (Christ). In his letter to the Philippians in Greece, he explains how this Messiah, who has the nature of God, humbled himself by becoming human and taking on the nature of a servant (Phil 2:5-11). This human, Jesus, was God's obedient son who died a representative death for all in order to facilitate God's remission of sin. According to Paul's correspondence, the history of the Jewish people is now extended to even include the non-Jews as well – going as far back as the common ancestors of all humanity, i.e. Abraham and even Adam himself. The Jewish salvation history makes now provision for the salvation of all who accept this good news (Rom 2:28) and who believe (1 Cor 1:21) that *Yehoshua ben Yoseph* was the mediator who brought reconciliation between God and humanity (Rom 1:3) through his death by crucifixion (1 Cor 1:18). It is "through Christ" that people are now reconciled with God, not by anything that they could do, but by God's grace who accepted the executionary death on the Roman cross of *Yehoshua ben Yoseph*, the Christ, as a "sacrifice" (cf Gal 3:13) for the forgiveness of sins and justification by God (Rom 1:17). By accepting this message, believers are spiritually recreated and now live forever with God's Spirit dwelling in them (Rom 8). All this puts the Mosaic Law in a whole new perspective (Galatians) so that believers are now "free in Christ" and requirements, such as circumcision, or abstinence from the eating of meat sacrificed to pagan gods, become obsolete. Paul passionately emphasizes the urgency to accept this message (1 Thess) – including the ethical implications of it once it has been accepted (Corinthians): cf. the relations between man

and woman (1Cor 7), owners and slaves (Phlm), parents and children, Christian love (1Cor 13), Christian joy (Phil 4:4), Christian hope (1Cor 13) and perseverance (Phil).

Being trained by Rabbi Gamaliel in the exposition and interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures, it comes as no surprise then that Paul often quotes, refers, alludes and interprets these Scriptures in an exegetical and rhetorical manner during the course of his argumentative communication. But the very same Scriptures were now being used and interpreted to argue the case that Jesus of Nazareth was the long expected messiah of the Jews. Paul writes to the Corinthians that *“I delivered to you as of first importance... that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures”* (1 Cor 15:3-4). To the Galatians he wrote that *“the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe”* (Gal 3:22). Caneday aptly formulates the situation: “The Christian community’s theological beliefs that not only transcend but also shape its hermeneutics, inform Paul’s actual appropriation of OT texts. Accordingly, Paul’s appeals to the OT reflect this matrix of the community’s beliefs that bear directly upon the way Scripture is to be employed.”<sup>11</sup> A mere two cases would now have to suffice in order to illustrate how Paul quotes from and alludes to his Scriptures in order to *scripturally substantiate* the death and resurrection of Yehoshua ben Yoseph.

## **Scene 1: Putting the Crucifixion in Perspective by Interpreting Yehoshua ben Yoseph as Liberator of the Law in Asia Minor**

**(Paul’s quotation from Deut 21:23 in his Letter to the Galatians)<sup>12</sup>**

Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians either between 50 – 52 CE during his stay in Corinth (if the southern Galatian theory is accepted), or during 52 – 55 CE from Ephesus (if the northern

<sup>11</sup> A. Caneday, ‘Redeemed from the Curse of the Law’. The Use of Deut 21:22-23 in Gal 3:13. *Trinity Journal* 10/2 (1989) 185-209, here 187.

<sup>12</sup> See G.J. Steyn, Can we reconstruct an early text form of the LXX from the quotations of Philo of Alexandria and the New Testament: Torah Quotations overlapping between Philo and Galatians as a Test Case, in S. Kreuzer, M. Meiser & M. Sigismund (hrsg), *Die Septuaginta – Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte* (WUNT 286; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012) 444-464.

Galatian theory is accepted)<sup>13</sup> – the more generally accepted theory. He quotes explicitly from six texts within the short space of Gal 3:1-14, of which five of them are from the Torah (Gen 15:6; 12:3; Deut 27:26; Lev 18:5; Deut 21:23) and one from the prophet Habakuk (2:4).<sup>14</sup> The quotation from Deut 21:23 in Gal 3:13 is the last of the six in the list.

LXX Deut 21:23	Gal 3:13
... οὐκ ἐπικοιμηθήσεται τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ ξύλου, ἀλλὰ ταφῇ θάψετε αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ, ὅτι <b>κεκατηραμένος ὑπὸ θεοῦ πᾶς κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου·</b> καὶ οὐ μιανεῖτε τὴν γῆν, ἣν κύριος ὁ θεός σου δίδωσίν σοι ἐν κλήρῳ.	Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρᾳ, ὅτι γέγραπται· <b>ἐπικατάρματος πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου, 14</b> ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.
...his corpse must not remain all night upon the tree; you shall bury him that same day, for <b>anyone hung on a tree is under God’s curse.</b> You must not defile the land that the LORD your God is giving you for possession (NRSV).	Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “ <b>Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree</b> ”— <sup>14</sup> in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (NRSV).

### 1.1 The context of Deut 21:23

The *regulation* of Deut 21:22-23 about the body of someone who had been executed is situated within the religious and social laws of Deut 12 – 28. The *instruction* requires that the body be removed “from the tree” the same day before night falls. Scholars concluded that this hanging meant the public display of the corpse of a criminal by impalement on a post in exposing the body after the execution itself (cf. 1 Sam 31:10). The intention was then “to heap

<sup>13</sup> Cf. U. Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 118; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1975), 304; A.B. du Toit, “Chronologie van Paulus”, in A.B. du Toit (ed), *Handleiding by die Nuwe Testament. Band V: Die Pauliniese Briewe – Inleiding en Teologie* (Pretoria: NG Kerkboekhandel, 1984) 23-37, here 35.

<sup>14</sup> See A.H. Wakefield for a discussion on the hermeneutical significance of these quotations in Gal 3:1-14 (*Where to Live. The Hermeneutical Significance of Paul’s Citations from Scripture in Galatians 3:1-14* [Atlanta: SBL, 2003]).

shame on the victim after his death". This would imply that such a person broke the covenant and was under God's curse.<sup>15</sup> Both the Hebrew and the Greek versions of Deut 21:23 utilize a *subjective genitive*, indicating that such a person is "ein von Gott Verfluchter" – contrary to the *objective genitive* of the latter rabbinic traditions.<sup>16</sup> "The association of Deut 21:22-23 with crucifixion rather than with post-mortem impalement may be seen in the evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls<sup>17</sup> which indicated that crucifixion was probably also practiced by Judaism and not only by the Romans.<sup>18</sup> The Temple Scroll reads for instance: "You shall hang him on the wood so that he dies" (11QT 64.8, 10–11).<sup>19</sup> This practice by the Jews is also referred to by Philo of Alexandria (25 BCE – 50 CE).<sup>20</sup> The *substantiation* of the instruction in Deut 21:23 is that someone who is hung on a tree is cursed by God and the elevated corpse will desecrate the land of inheritance. It was believed that the spirits of people who were not buried would not enjoy repose in the after-life so that the law reduces the risk of probable defilement of the whole people, following "the ancient conception that the land must be protected against ritual pollution".<sup>21</sup> This practice of burying the corpses of the crucified is also attested later during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE by Josephus.<sup>22</sup>

## 1.2 Paul's use and application of Deut 21:23

### 1.2.1 Selection of Deut 21:23

The two citations from Deut 27:26 in Gal 3:10 and Deut 21:23 in Gal 3:13 are probably the earliest engagements with Deuteronomy in NT literature.<sup>23</sup> Caneday is correct in stating that two questions ought to be asked here in order "to determine Paul's warrant for employing Deut

<sup>15</sup> D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (4th ed.; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), Dt 21:22–22:12.

<sup>16</sup> P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, Bd. 3 (München: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969), 544.

<sup>17</sup> D. Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2010), 146.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J.B. Green et al. (eds), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 854; D.A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28* (Word Biblical Commentary vol. 33B; Dallas: Word, 2002), 824.

<sup>19</sup> See also 4QpNah 3–4.1.7–8.

<sup>20</sup> See Spec. Leg. 3.152; Post C. 61; Somn. 2.213.

<sup>21</sup> G. Von Rad, *Deuteronomy – A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1966) 138.

<sup>22</sup> cf. Josephus J.W. 4.5.2 §317.

<sup>23</sup> Similar D. Lincicum, *Paul and Deuteronomy*, 142.

21:22–23 in Gal 3:13: (1) How did the NT writers, Paul in particular, use the OT to document their creed? (2) Upon what basis did the apostle select Deut 21:22–23 to give credence to his assertion in Gal 3:13a?”<sup>24</sup> The crucifixion of Yehoshua ben Yoseph was problematic within the theological framework of early Christianity. It communicated the policy of no tolerance by the Roman Empire against anyone who had not complied with their laws – being that due to criminal offenses or to political resistance. The tragic end of a messiah who was expected to liberate his people and to triumph over foreign rulership would have been difficult to explain to outsiders by those who were devoted followers of this movement. Studies by Lindars<sup>25</sup> and Kim<sup>26</sup> have argued therefore that Paul used Deut 21:23 as a polemic reaction to his enemies who already quoted this text.<sup>27</sup> Others, however, thought that this text had its origin in an early Christian *Testimonia* collection, as “part of an early Jewish-Christian midrashic exposition of the Akedah” that made a typological link between Isaac and Jesus.<sup>28</sup> But a more acceptable reason for the selection of this passage still remains that held by mainstream scholarship, which argues that Paul uses the Jewish exegetical method of *gezerah shewah* where verbal analogy is used with the same words being applied to two separate cases.<sup>29</sup> With or without any connection to a possible debate about the negative perception of the crucifixion, Paul links the law about those who hang “upon a tree” with the event of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth.

More difficult than deciding between the northern- and southern Galatian theories is the identification of any possible connections with the role of the Attis-cult which had its origins in Hellenistic Asia-Minor with Cybele, as *magna mater*,<sup>30</sup> or even earlier in Greece during the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>31</sup> It is virtually impossible to determine responsibly whether knowledge of this cult

<sup>24</sup> A. Caneday, *Curse of the Law*, 187.

<sup>25</sup> B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 232–37, here 233.

<sup>26</sup> S. Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

<sup>27</sup> R.N. Longenecker takes a similar approach when referring to “Paul’s catena of polemically motivated passages in Gal. 3:10–13” (Negative Answer to the Question ‘Who Is the Prophet Talking About?’ Some Reflections on the New Testament’s Use of the Old, in: G.K. Beale [ed], *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994] 375–386, here 385.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. M. Wilcox, ‘Upon the Tree’ - Deut 21:22–23 in the New Testament. *JBL* 96 (1977) 85–99, here 86, 99.

<sup>29</sup> A. Caneday, *Redeemed from the Curse of the Law*, 187.

<sup>30</sup> See H.-J. Klauck, *Die religiöse Umwelt des Urchristentums Bd.1* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1995), 106–111.

<sup>31</sup> “There we find depictions of the Mother with an accompanying male god who is identified as Attis” (H. Bowden, *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010], 102).

by Paul might have played a role in his selection of the “tree text” of Deut 21:23. The role of the cross during the passion of Christ, on the one hand, and the annual Attis-festivities between 22 and 25 March as practiced in Rome during the midst of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, on the other hand, are nonetheless striking in some aspects with its polarity between “Trauer und Freude” and “Tod und Leben”:

<b><i>Attis festival</i></b>	<b><i>Christ's passion</i></b>
A pine tree is cut and decorated with wool and cymbals.	
“Dendrophoroi” carry the tree-trunks on 22 March with <i>arbor intrat</i> through the city streets to the temple.	Simon of Cyrene carries the cross through the streets (Mk 15:21; Mt 27:32; Lk 23:26)
“Bloody day” ( <i>dies sanguis</i> ) is then celebrated on 24 March during which people whipped and cut themselves until blood is shed.	The crucifixion (Mk 15:24; Mt 27:35; Lk 23:33)
Then follows the “day of joy” ( <i>hilaria</i> ) on 25 March	The empty tomb on the third day (Mk 16:6; Mt 28:2; Lk 24:2)

### 1.2.2 Introducing Deut 21:23 and its textual traditions

Just prior to quoting this passage, Paul makes the statement in Gal 3:12: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law (ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου) by becoming a curse for us (γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα)”. The quotation from Deut 21:23 is then introduced with the well-known and common introductory formula regularly used by Paul: “as it is written” (ὅτι γέγραπται). Introductory formulae are powerful indicators of hermeneutical activity by an author. This indicates the authority of the Torah for Paul, on the one hand, and his intention, on the other hand, to explicitly draw attention to this specific passage. By quoting from a Greek version of his Scriptures (LXX) he links the “curse” referred to in his statement (*κατάρα*) with that of the quotation itself (*ἐπικατάρατος*). But the actual word used by all the LXX manuscripts at this place reads *κεκατηραμένος* and not the word *ἐπικατάρατος* that Paul uses in his quotation. Paul’s word occurs frequently elsewhere in Deuteronomy, whereas the LXX word is found only once more (Deut 23:4). It is difficult to determine whether this is due to Paul’s use of another *Textvorlage* of the same passage, or whether this is merely part of his “consistently inconsistent citation of

scripture”.<sup>32</sup> Whereas Paul’s quotation in Gal 3:13 differs from Deut 21:23, his contemporary, Philo of Alexandria, is very close to the reading of LXX Deut 21:23<sup>33</sup> in *Post.* 26. Both the LXX and Philo have the perfect participle (the LXX in the nominative, Philo in the accusative) + ὑπὸ θεοῦ, whereas Gal 3:13<sup>34</sup> uses the adjective ἐπικατάρατος and lacks ὑπὸ θεοῦ. There are two possibilities here. Galatians might have omitted ὑπὸ θεοῦ due to theological reasons in order not to put the emphasis on *God’s* cursing, but rather on the *fact* of being cursed when you hang on a cross. Alternatively, its absence in Galatians might represent another textual tradition that steered away from the use of God’s name – as it is already implied with the use of the perfect participle. However, in the *latter part* of the quotation, the LXX and Galatians are closer when both use πᾶς + praesens participle *nominative* (Gal 3:13 with the masculine article)<sup>35</sup> – whereas Philo lacks πᾶς and follows the praesens participle *accusative* with the article. But Philo’s use of this text should be classified in this case as a paraphrase, rather than as an explicit quotation. A case for this might be made from (a) the way in which the quoted words are introduced, lacking an expected ὅτι, (b) the consistent use of the accusative, and (c) from the position of φησὶν which appears only after the quoted words. If this is true, then Philo is probably closer to the original LXX text form in the first part of the quotation, but Galatians in the second part.

### 1.2.3 Interpreting Deut 21:23

The quotation from Deut 21:23 is part of Paul’s larger argument in his Galatian Letter (3:6-14) “that Gentiles are children of Abraham through faith in Christ rather than by Torah observance”.<sup>36</sup> Both before and after the quotation from Deut 21:23, Paul refers to “Christ” – a nomer adapted from the confession that “Jesus is the Christ”. He applies the quotation at the

<sup>32</sup> A.H. Wakefield aptly formulated this phrase (*Where to Live*, 58).

<sup>33</sup> J. Maier pointed out that Y. Yadin and most commentaries assume that 11Q19 “...das Verbot Lev 19,16 in eine erweiterung von Dt 21,22.23 eingebaut hat”. Maier disagrees with this view. Cf. J. Maier, *Studien zur jüdischen Bibel und ihrer Geschichte* (Berlin/Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 278.

<sup>34</sup> E.E. Ellis classifies the quotation in Gal 3:13 as one that is “at variance with the LXX and the Hebrew where they vary” (*Paul’s Use*, 150, 152).

<sup>35</sup> The inclusion of the article in some of the LXX witnesses is probably the result of later influence from the NT text tradition (D.-A. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums. Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* [BzHTh 69; Tübingen: Mohr, 1986] 54).

<sup>36</sup> “Paul seeks to ground in Scripture his assertion that the Galatian Gentile believers received the Spirit through the hearing of faith and not by law observance (3:2)” (D. Lincicum, *Paul and Deuteronomy*, 143).

end of his quotation list as “Christological punchline”.<sup>37</sup> He addresses the crucifixion by explicitly linking the Christ event to God’s curse on everyone who “hangs on a tree.” Paul explains Jesus’ crucifixion death to be an intermediary role that he took between God and humanity. By means of the act of his substitutionary death on the cross, this messiah (Christ) redeemed Paul and the Galatians from the curse of the law by becoming the curse of God. Lincicum argues convincingly that, according to Paul, it is “only by enduring the curse himself (that) Christ (was) then able to nullify its power and release the blessing that is the curse’s structural opposite”.<sup>38</sup> This redemption turned out not to be of a political nature, but of a religious nature. In his interpretation of Deut 21:23, Paul does not negate or deny the fact that everyone who is executed by crucifixion is cursed by God according to Deuteronomy, but according to Paul’s interpretation of the passage, precisely because of God’s curse of the crucified Jesus, two consequences resulted from that action: (a) It happened so that (ἵνα) in Christ Jesus (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) Abraham’s blessing could now also reach the non-Jews, and (b) so that (ἵνα) Paul and the Galatians might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (διὰ τῆς πίστεως). Bruce aptly summarized Paul’s interpretation of this passage as follows:

“Those who had claimed that Jesus had been raised from the dead were proved true witnesses, for Paul had now seen the risen Lord for himself and heard Him speak. Jesus, raised from the dead, was manifestly the object of the divine approval. God had reversed the curse involved in his death. Why then should He suffer the death on which the divine curse rested?” “The *form* of the argument was such as Paul was perfectly familiar with in the rabbinic schools, but no rabbi had ever been so audacious as to formulate this particular argument – that the Messiah himself should assume the curse denounced upon the breakers of God’s law in order to liberate them from that curse. But Paul’s conclusion was inevitable; that Jesus was indeed the Messiah He was now sure, but Jesus had died an accursed death. The scandal of the cross, at which Paul had stumbled for so long, was resolved into the saving act of God.”<sup>39</sup>

#### 1.2.4 Summa

It is clear that the context of the passage in Deuteronomy carries an exclusively negative connotation regarding God’s curse which is attached to the one who is crucified. But there is no

<sup>37</sup> D. Lincicum, *Paul and Deuteronomy*, 145.

<sup>38</sup> D. Lincicum, *Paul and Deuteronomy*, 146.

<sup>39</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame. The Rise and Progress of Christianity from its First Beginnings to the Conversion of the English* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, [1958] 1985), 86.



reference whatsoever, neither implicit nor explicit, to the crucifixion of a messiah or to Jesus as crucified Christ in the legal code of Deut 21:22-23.<sup>40</sup> Watson confirms that “...the scriptural text functions as a valid piece of legislation, and not as a prophecy of Christ”.<sup>41</sup> The hermeneutical link with the death of Yehoshua ben Yoseph by crucifixion is only made in the NT by Paul himself who reinterprets the passage in the light of the Christ event when “Paul found a unique connection between curse and crucifixion”.<sup>42</sup> Ciampa is correct in pointing out that “Paul does not say the verse *refers* to Christ, however, but indicates that we can learn from it how Christ’s death might provide a means of redemption from a curse”.<sup>43</sup> This passage in Deut 21:23 – one of the oldest in the written Christian tradition – clearly is no prediction of Jesus’ death, but rather a Pauline interpretation in the light of Jesus’ crucifixion.

## **Scene 2: Putting the Resurrection and Exaltation in Perspective by Interpreting Yehoshua ben Yoseph as Conquerer of Death in Greece**

**(Paul’s allusion from Ps 110:1 and Ps 8:7 in his Corinthian Correspondence)<sup>44</sup>**

Scholars agree that Paul wrote several letters to the Corinthian congregation in Greece. In the light of his remark in 1 Cor 5:9-11, it is clear that he wrote a letter prior to that which is known today as 1 Corinthians. That letter has been lost. He also referred in 2 Cor 2:4 to a so-called “Letter of Tears”.

<sup>40</sup> So also, C.D. Stanley: “A glance at the original passage would have shown that the verse Paul quotes actually refers to the ancient practice of hanging the dead body of a convicted criminal on a tree for public display, not the redeeming death of a crucified Messiah” (*Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* [London: Continuum, 2004], 125-126).

<sup>41</sup> “What (Paul) can do is to reflect on the scriptural connection between public execution and the divine curse, and to ask what light that connection sheds on the redemption Christ has achieved” (F. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* [London: T&T Clark, 2004] 420-421).

<sup>42</sup> D. Lincicum, *Paul and Deuteronomy*, 146.

<sup>43</sup> R.E. Ciampa, Deuteronomy in Galatians and Romans, in: M.J.J. Menken & S. Moyise (eds), *Deuteronomy in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2007) 99-117, here 103.

<sup>44</sup> See G.J. Steyn, *A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011) 112-145.

LXX Ps 110:1	1 Cor 15:25-27a
Εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου <b>LXX Ps 8:7</b> καὶ κατέστησας αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου, <b>πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ</b>	δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεῦειν ἄχρι οὗ <b>θῇ πάντα τοὺς ἐχθρούς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ.</b> ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος· <b>πάντα γὰρ ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ.</b> ὅταν δὲ εἴπῃ ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται, δῆλον ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα.
“Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool” (NRSV)  You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet (NRSV)	For he must reign until <b>he has put all his enemies under his feet.</b> <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup> For “ <b>He has put all things in subjection under his feet.</b> ” But when it says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him (NRSV).

## 2.1 The contexts of Psalms 110:1 and 8:7

Psalms 110 reflects a festival act from the earliest times and contains age-old traditions.<sup>45</sup> Being “a blessing on the national leader in war”,<sup>46</sup> the enemies of David’s messiah-king are subjected under his feet. Imagery of Near Eastern monarchy<sup>47</sup> is utilised and the image corresponds with Sumerian-Akkadian imagery where the conqueror took an honorary position at the right hand side of the god.<sup>48</sup> The Psalm also resembles Egyptian imagery in this regard. The footstool of Tutankhamen of Egypt is carved with pictures of his enemies, and with other Egyptian kings being shown resting their feet on their enemies’ heads. The practice symbolises the victorious

<sup>45</sup> Cf. H.-J. Kraus: “Die Frage ist nur, um welchen Festakt es sich handelt, welche Traditionen im einzelnen erkennbar sind und wie der Ablauf des kultischen Ereignisses zu erfassen ist” (*Psalmen 60-150* [BKAT XV/2; Neukirchen-Fluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, <sup>5</sup>1978], 929).

<sup>46</sup> M.D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return (Book V, Psalms 107-150)* (JSOT Suppl. Ser 258; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1998), 116.

<sup>47</sup> H.W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989).

<sup>48</sup> H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen II*, 932.

and conquering position of the ruler when he placed his feet on the neck of his enemy's defeated king in order to demonstrate his triumph.<sup>49</sup>

Being part of the liturgical Hallel, the suspicion is that Ps 110(109) probably already took a kerygmatic key position in the messianic thinking of early Judaism.<sup>50</sup> But the passage from Ps 110(109):1 was not messianically interpreted in earlier rabbinical literature.<sup>51</sup> There is also very little evidence that it might have been quoted in the DSS and it seems as if the text itself did not play an important role in the Qumran community.<sup>52</sup>

Psalm 8, in turn, belongs to the group of Psalms that prefer to speak of "the Lord" (יְהוָה) rather than of "God" (אֱלֹהִים).<sup>53</sup> The LXX, however, translated אֱלֹהִים in this Psalm as "angels".<sup>54</sup> The Psalm was probably compiled in the late first half of the second century B.C.E.<sup>55</sup> It is one of those sacred (cultic) songs, which can be described as a "hymn" and of which the object was to simply sing praise to God.<sup>56</sup> It praises the Lord's glory and his creation.<sup>57</sup> Psalm 8 is a song that was probably compiled from two tradition elements, the first is found in vv. 2–3, the second in vv. 4–9.<sup>58</sup> The first part describes the glory of the heavens as God's work in creation, whilst the second part compares man to the heavenly realm. As is the case with Psalm 110, there are also

<sup>49</sup> S.J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary. Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 49.

<sup>50</sup> A. Strobel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (NTD 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 91. D.M. Hay says that it is "fair to suppose that in the NT era a messianic interpretation of Ps.110 was current in Judaism, although we cannot know how widely it was accepted" (*Glory at the Right Hand. Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* [SBLMS 18; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973], 30).

<sup>51</sup> Cf. H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) 272.

<sup>52</sup> H. Braun, *Qumran und das Neue Testament II* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1966), 313.

<sup>53</sup> Similar also J.A. Soggin: "im sonst jahwistischen Psalm kann Elohim nicht 'Gott' heissen, wie 'A, Σ, Θ es möchten" ("Textkritische Untersuchung von Ps. VIII vv.2–3 und 6," VT 21 (1971) 565–71, on p. 570).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. F. Siegert: "Überall, wo <sup>e</sup>lohim eine Mehrzahl meint, ändert die Septuaginta interpretierend ab entweder in *οἱ θεοὶ* oder in *ἄγγελοι*: so Ps 8,6; 89(88),7; 138(137),1" (*Zwischen hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament. Eine Einführung in die Septuaginta* [Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum Münsteraner Judaistische Studien 9; Münster: Lit Verlag, 2001], 172). See also A. Schenker, 'Götter und Engel im Septuaginta-Psalter. Text- und religionsgeschichtliche Ergebnisse aus drei textkritischen Untersuchungen,' in E. Zenger (ed.), *Der Septuaginta-Psalter: sprachliche und theologische Aspekte* (HBS 32; Göttingen/Freiburg: Herder, 2001), 185–95.

<sup>55</sup> O. Kaiser, 'Erwägungen zu Psalm 8,' in: K. Seybold & E. Zenger (ed.), *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung. Für Walter Beyerlin* (HBS 1; Freiburg: Herder, 1994) 207–21, on p. 215.

<sup>56</sup> J.K. West, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1981), 35, 442. So also E.R. Dalglish, The Use of the Book of Psalms in the New Testament. *SWJT* 27/1 (1984), 25–39, here 34.

<sup>57</sup> M.D. Goulder thinks similarly, and considers this Psalm to be an evening Psalm in the liturgy on the basis of Ps 8:4 (*Psalms of the Return*, 110).

<sup>58</sup> O. Kaiser, *Erwägungen zu Psalm 8*, 207; W. Beyerlin, Psalm 8. Chancen der Überlieferungskritik, *ZThK* 73 (1976) 1–22.

no explicit quotations from Ps 8:7 to be found in the early Jewish literature. However, allusions to Ps 8:5 and 8:7 occur in 1QS 3:17–18 and 11:20.<sup>59</sup>

## 2.2 Paul's use and application of Psalm 110:1 and Psalm 8:7

### 2.2.1 Selection of Pss 110:1 and 8:7

Paul's quotation from Ps 8:7 in 1 Cor 15:27 is preceded by Ps 110(109):1 in 1 Cor 15:25. Attention was drawn to the fact that "Paul offers the earliest documentation of a christological exegesis of these psalms".<sup>60</sup> But there is a strong possibility that Ps 110:1 and Ps 8:7 were already connected by a pre-Pauline tradition of messianic psalm interpretation.<sup>61</sup> Early Christianity probably identified two important christological elements in Ps 110(109):1 regarding their understanding of the exaltation of Christ, namely the resurrection motif and the motif of everything which is submitted under his feet as triumphant King. Especially the latter element was also identified in Ps 8:7. This might actually have been the link which was made between the two passages and might explain why they were combined in the tradition so that Ps 110(109):1 and Ps 8:7 were quoted in close connection with each other in the early Christian tradition. These two texts were probably identified and closely connected on the basis of the similar phrase, ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ which occurs in both Ps 110(109):1 and Ps 8:7. A possible conflation between Ps 8:7 and Ps 110(109):1 is suggested in Mark 12:36.<sup>62</sup> The presence of ὑποκάτω in the Markan reading serves as proof of this. The combination of these Psalms occurs then here by Paul in 1 Cor 15:25-27 as well as in Eph 1:20-22, and later by the unknown author

<sup>59</sup> Cf. B.H. McLean, *Citations and Allusions to Jewish Scripture in Early Christian and Jewish Writings through 180 C.E.* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 67. Also G.H. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, in G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson (eds), *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 919-995, here 945.

<sup>60</sup> R.B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) 84. He also saw the passages presented "as prophecies of Christ's enthronement at the right hand of God and ultimate authority over all creation".

<sup>61</sup> R.B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination. Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) 109.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. C.J. Breytenbach, *Das Markusevangelium, Psalm 110,1 und 118,22f. Folgetext und Prätext*, in C.M. Tuckett (ed), *The Scriptures in the Gospels* (BETHL CXXXI; Leuven: University Press, 1997) 197-222, here 212-13. Contra A.F.J. Klijn who stated that the "title" is only to be found in the Gospels and in Acts 7:56 (*De Brief aan de Hebreëen* [PNT; Nijkerk: G.F. Callenbach, 1975], 41). C. Koester distinguishes here between the meanings of the OT and Jewish traditions on the one hand, and the early Christian traditions on the other hand (*Hebrews* [AB 36; New York: Doubleday, 2001], 215).

of Hebrews in Heb 1:13 and 2:8. Some also see this combination being alluded to in passages such as Phil 3:21 and 1 Pet 3:22.<sup>63</sup> The former of these is then similar to the declaration made in 1 Cor 15:27 and is built upon Ps 8:7. No wonder that attempts were made in scholarship to argue in favour of a so-called *Testimonia* collection.<sup>64</sup> This remains, however, speculative and no concrete evidence of early Christian Testimonia during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE were found to date.

### 2.2.2 Introducing the conflated allusion and its textual traditions

It is technically more correct to take the occurrence of Ps 110(109):1 here in 1 Cor 15:25 rather as an allusion,<sup>65</sup> than as an explicit quotation,<sup>66</sup> in the light of the absence of a clear introductory formula. Hays thus appropriately observes that “...the most striking thing of Paul’s use of these psalms is its allusive character; neither is introduced with a citation formula, and the messianic/eschatological interpretation is assumed rather than asserted”.<sup>67</sup>

Given the fact of the importance of the quotation from Ps 110(109):1 in the NT, it is quite disappointing that there are no extant fragments of it that were found amongst the DSS. In cases such as 4QPs<sup>f</sup> (4Q88)<sup>68</sup> nothing of the material overlaps with these Psalm quotations. The Psalm also lacks in Codex B amongst the LXX witnesses. This means that some important textual traditions are absent for the purposes of a comparative text critical investigation. In the case of Ps 8:5–7, a comparison between the *Hebrew texts* of the MT and 5/6HevPsalms also

<sup>63</sup> E.g., E. Grässer, ‘Die Heilsbedeutung des Todes Jesu in Hebr 2,14–18,’ in M. Evang & O. Merk (ed.), *E. Grässer: Aufbruch Und Verheissung. Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Hebräerbrief* (BZNW 65; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992) 181–200, 192; H.-F. Weiss, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (KEK 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 194.

<sup>64</sup> So, for instance, K. Snodgrass: “The frequent use of Psalm 8 and Psalm 110 in combination reflects christological *testimonia* brought together by the church” (The Use of the Old Testament in the New, in: G.K. Beale [ed], *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994] 29–54, here 45).

<sup>65</sup> So rightly by A. Lindemann, *Der Erste Korintherbrief* (HzNT 9/1; Tübingen: Mohr, 2000) 347; H. Conzelmann, *1 Cor*, 272–3; R.B. Hays, *Echoes*, 84; A.C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGCNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1234. C.D. Stanley omits this in his discussion of the explicit quotations (*Paul and the Language of Scripture* [SNTSMS 74; Cambridge: University Press, 1992] 206, n. 85). But it is not correct to see Ps 8:7 here also as an allusion, due to the reference ὅταν δὲ ἐπιγῇ in 1 Cor 15:27b.

<sup>66</sup> M. Silva sensed the difference, but handles them as part of those quotations that belong to his grades B (“trivial difference(s) without textual (or hermeneutical) significance”) and C (“difference(s) of textual (or hermeneutical) interest”) as a “measure of agreement between Paul and OG” (‘The Greek Psalter in Paul’s Letters: A Textual Study,’ in R.J.V. Hiebert, C.E. Cox & P.J. Gentry (ed.), *The Old Greek Psalter. Studies in Honour of Albert Pietersma* [JSOT Suppl Ser 332; Sheffield: Academic Press, 2001] 277–88, on pp. 277–8).

<sup>67</sup> R.B. Hays, *Conversion of the Imagination*, 109.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. P.W. Skehan; E. Ulrich & P.W. Flint, A Scroll Containing “Biblical” and “Apocryphal” Psalms: A Preliminary Edition of 4QPs<sup>f</sup> (4Q88), *CBQ* 60 (1998), 267–282.

shows no differences. The same applies to a comparison between the *Greek texts* of the (reconstructed) LXX and the Michigan Papyrus. Paul's allusion to Ps 8:7 in 1 Cor 15:27 is echoed by the author of Eph 1:22. Both these readings in the Pauline literature are identical and no textual variations amongst the witnesses are to be found in either of them. The reading of Ps 8:7 (8:6) in 1 Cor 15:27 (although not exact) have no implications for the transmission of the LXX text or for the understanding of Paul's hermeneutics.<sup>69</sup> In cases like these, the author merely adjusts the syntax to the context, for instance by changing the verb from second person to third.<sup>70</sup>

### 2.2.3 Interpreting Pss 110:1 and 8:7

Richard Hays is correct in observing that "it is indisputable that 1 Cor 15:25-27 presupposes a Christological reading of Pss 8 and 110."<sup>71</sup> It is a question about who or what exactly is intended as Christ's enemies that will be subjected under his feet.<sup>72</sup> Despite the viewpoint that it is "particularly mistaken to impose Paul's exposition on Hebrews",<sup>73</sup> the intention might probably indeed have been in the case of Hebrews (as in 1 Cor 15:24-26) to be "every rule and authority and power" – with *death* as the last ultimate enemy, being referred to between the quotations from Ps 110(109):1 and Ps 8:7 in 1 Cor 15:26.

In Greek mythology, Thanatos was the personification of Death,<sup>74</sup> who "possessed the function of an angel of death, coming to mortals when their allotted timespan had run out."<sup>75</sup> He is sometimes portrayed being clad in a black robe and always bearing a sword. A relief from Ephesus also pictures him with wings and a sword. Death is the ultimate conqueror of all and

<sup>69</sup> See M. Silva and his grading categories as "measure of agreement between Paul and OG" (*Greek Psalter*, 277–8).

<sup>70</sup> M. Silva, *Greek Psalter*, 280.

<sup>71</sup> R.B. Hays, *Conversion of the Imagination*, 109.

<sup>72</sup> See also J.C. Miller, 'Paul and Hebrews: A Comparison of Narrative Worlds,' in G. Gelardini (ed.), *Hebrews: Contemporary Methods – New Insights* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 245–264, here 253, n. 30. P. Ellingworth, however, reckons that such a question is misconceived, because "Hebrews offers no exegesis of the second line of the quotation, except indirectly via Ps. 8 in Heb. 2:8f." (*The Epistle to the Hebrews* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 131).

<sup>73</sup> P. Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 131.

<sup>74</sup> "Death or Thanatos is also personified in Greek and Latin texts (Hesiod *Theog.* 211; *Orphic Hymns* 87; Aristophanes *Frogs* 1392; Euripides *Alcestis*, passim; Cicero *De natura deorum* 3.17.44; Vergil *Aeneid* 11.197) but is never worshiped (*Kleine Pauly* 5:648–49)" (D.E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16* [Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 52B; Dallas: Word, 2002] 401).

<sup>75</sup> M. Grant & J. Hazel, *Gods and Mortals in Classical Mythology: A Dictionary* (New York: Dorset Press, 1979), 328.

the depictions of those captured by Hades and those locked in the prison of Tartarus strongly remind of the Ancient Near Eastern images of the conquering king with his foot on his subjected enemies. The submission of death as the last enemy in 1 Cor 15:26 in connection with Ps 110(109):1 and Ps 8:7, confirms not only the rulership as King in the process of Christ's exaltation, but also his resurrection. This becomes clear also from its applied context in Acts 2:32–34. The passage in 1 Cor 15:25 relates then to the resurrection and it argues how death, as the last enemy of Christ (i.e. the messiah), will be subjected under his feet during his reign. The subjugation "under his feet" (ὕπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ) in the phrase present from Ps 110(109):1 and Ps 8:7, is a *crux interpretum*. The question was asked: "whose feet"?<sup>76</sup> It was convincingly argued that it is Christ,<sup>77</sup> not God,<sup>78</sup> to whom the enemies are subjected in 1 Cor 15:27–28. Important to note is thus the messianic (christological) and apocalyptic (eschatological) dimensions that were connected here with these two Psalms – both of which are linked to the kingship of Christ, as given to him by God. Paul thus "employs a little apocalyptic drama" here in 1 Cor 15:23–28.<sup>79</sup> Hence, one could argue that Ps 8:7 is specifically alluded to in 1 Cor 15:27 (and in Eph 1:22) in an eschatological manner<sup>80</sup> with a christological<sup>81</sup> application or interpretation. It is preceded and combined in by Ps 110(109):1 and followed by

<sup>76</sup> H. Conzelmann pointed out that there are four suggestions: (a) it refers to the whole of v. 24 (Heinrici, Lietzmann); (b) to the two *ὅταν*-clauses (Bachmann); (c) to the second *ὅταν*-clause (Schmiedel); (d) the element of proof lies in *ἕως* (sic! Paul says *ἄχρι*) οὕ, "until"; "the *σύνθρονον* εἶναι, "sharing of the throne", has accordingly its limits" (Weiss) (1 Cor, 272).

<sup>77</sup> Cf. H. Conzelmann: "Through the transposition of the verb into the third person, Christ becomes the agent" and he subjects the enemies to himself (1 Cor, 273). So also understood by J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977) 359; G.D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 755–6; A.C. Thiselton, 1 Cor, 1234.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Black, 1971) 356–7.

<sup>79</sup> A. Lindemann, 'Paulus und die korinthische Eschatologie: Zur These von einer "Entwicklung" im paulinischen Denken,' *NTS* 37 (1991) 373–99, on p. 383; A.C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGCNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 1230.

<sup>80</sup> So D.-A. Koch, *Schrift als Zeuge*, 287; E. Grässer, 'Beobachtungen zum Menschensohn in Hebr 2,6' in M. Evang & O. Merk (ed.), *Erich Grässer: Aufbruch Und Verheissung. Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Hebräerbrief* (BZNW 65; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992) 155–65, here 164. C.E. Cox, however, is sceptical about such a possible eschatological interpretation and refers to Schaper who says that the word *ἄνθρωπος* "was used in Num. 24.7, 17 to refer to a messianic saviour figure. Of course, that *ἄνθρωπος* was so used in the Pentateuch does not mean that it was employed in that same sense in 8.5 ..." (C.E. Cox, Schaper's *Eschatology* Meets Kraus's *Theology of the Psalms*, in R.J.V. Hiebert; C.E. Cox & P.J. Gentry (eds), *The Old Greek Psalter. Studies in Honour of Albert Pietersma* [JSOT Suppl Ser 332; Sheffield: Academic Press, 2001] 289–311, here 296).

<sup>81</sup> Cf. F. Schröger: "Fest steht, daß der Psalm schon von Paulus (1 Kor 15,27) und vom Verfasser des Eph (Eph 1,22) christologisch verstanden wurde ..." (*Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger* [Biblische Untersuchungen 4; Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1968], 82).

a brief exegetical commentary. After the failure of the first Adam, all things are subjected to the second Adam “who triumphs through obedience, and fulfils the destiny of race”.<sup>82</sup>

#### 2.2.4 *Summa*

Arguing from Christ’s resurrection, Paul utilizes the conflation of Pss 110:1 and 8:7 to illustrate Christ’s final victory and the subjugation of death as the last enemy under his feet. Neither of these Psalms were written, presented or intended as referring to the Jesus events. Paul finds the motif of royal rulership and victory over enemies in a pre-Pauline tradition that already combined these passages and interpreted them in an eschatological and Christological manner. This pre-Pauline conflation of Pss 110:1 and 8:7 is one of the oldest in early Christianity – but the Psalms themselves were clearly no *predictions* of Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation. Such a perspective should rather be ascribed to an early Christian interpretation of these passages.

### 3. Conclusion

This study underlined once again the viewpoint that the Scriptures of Israel did not intend to *predict* the events surrounding the life and death of Yehoshua ben Yoseph. A range of expectations did arise however, from a diversity of OT authors about different messianic figures during the centuries prior to the birth of Jesus. Some were longing for a royal, political and military saviour like King David who would come to liberate them from foreign rulership. Others were looking forward to a sage, a “man of God”, a prophet like Moses or Elijah who would engage in miracles and who could provide insight into the plan of God. Luke, for instance, picks up this motif and casts the Jesus story into this mold. Yet others expected someone “like the son of man” to come – an apocalyptic figure who would restore creation at the end of time. But none of these figures were explicit *predictions* about Yehoshua ben Yoseph. The OT does not

<sup>82</sup> A.F. Kirkpatrick (ed.), *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge: University Press, 1906) 36; G. van den Brink, De Schrift zegt of Schrift fantaseert? (2). Het gebruik van het Oude Testament in Hebreeën, in A.G. Knevel, et. al. (eds), *Bijbel en Exegese. Verkenningen in de katholieke brieven en Hebreeën* (Theologische Verkenningen 7; Kampen: Kok Voorhoeve, 1993), 211-217, here 212. G.H. Guthrie wrote in this connection: “It is vital to understand the ideal relationship communicated here, Adamic kingship being squarely in focus” (‘Hebrews,’ 945).



*predict* the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth;<sup>83</sup> rather, the NT authors interpret their Scriptures christologically in hindsight after these events in the light of the miraculous life and ministry of Jesus, his unexpected death by crucifixion, the empty tomb and his *post mortem* appearances.<sup>84</sup> This is more in line with Hanson's comment on 2 Cor 3:17 as "...an example of Paul's tendency to read back, so to speak, the Messiah into the Old Testament".<sup>85</sup> Verenna, in a similar vein, argues that "Paul's Jesus Christ is exactly what Paul interprets from Scripture. Paul finds his anointed saviour in Isaiah, in Moses, in Daniel, in David; he is in the wilderness, stranded in the Diaspora, a wandering pious Jew, an exile from his own home himself."<sup>86</sup> Koch spoke about "Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums",<sup>87</sup> and Juel called this approach "Messianic Exegesis" or "*Christological interpretation* of the OT in Early Christianity".<sup>88</sup> Thus, the Archimedian point of the early Christian writers was their *belief* that Yehoshua ben Yoseph was the long expected messiah, the son of God, from the royal lineage of King David, and they projected this belief back when reading their Scriptures. Runia too, confirms that "De Bijbelschrijvers hebben vanuit hun geloof naar de werkelijkheid gekeken en de werkelijkheid vanuit hun geloof ingekleurd".<sup>89</sup>

Hence, in the light of the absence of OT predictions about Jesus, this study would thus like ***to propose the coinage of a new term in canonical biblical scholarship, namely the term "retrodiction"*** – in opposition to "prediction". The term "retrodiction" is not a neologism, but an existing *terminus technicus* which is already in use in several other scientific disciplines. Price uses it in its scientific context in the sense that "A retrodiction occurs when already gathered

<sup>83</sup> Contra H.M. Shires: "One of the most widespread N.T. uses of the O.T. is to see it as a series of predictions that have been realized, especially in the life of Jesus and also in the experiences of the young church" (*Finding the Old Testament in the New* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974], 43) and "In the N.T. it becomes equally true that the most important role of the O.T. is to point forward to the events of the N.T. and that it is Jesus who for the first time makes clear the significance of the O.T." (*OT in the New*, 45).

<sup>84</sup> "For the early Christians, Christ was seen as the goal of all Jewish history, and thus the O.T. as the primary record of that history is viewed in the light of Christian belief" (H.M. Shires, *OT in the New*, 38).

<sup>85</sup> R.P.C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture*. (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2002) 79-80.

<sup>86</sup> T.S. Verenna, Born under the Law: Intertextuality and the Question of the Historicity of the Figure of Jesus in Paul's Epistles, in T.L. Thompson & T.S. Verenna (eds), *'Is This Not the Carpenter?' The Question of the Historicity of the Figure of Jesus* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012) 131-159, here 158-159.

<sup>87</sup> D.-A. Koch, *Schrift als Zeuge*.

<sup>88</sup> D. Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

<sup>89</sup> K. Runia, *Wegen en doolwegen in de nieuwere theologie* (Kampen: Kok, 1998).

data is accounted for by a later theoretical advance in a more convincing fashion.”<sup>90</sup> The term can simply be defined as “*using present information to make an assertion about the past, or to explain a past event or the state of affairs in the light of present information*”.<sup>91</sup> This is precisely what the early Christian writers, such as Paul of Tarsus, did with their Scriptures. Koch’s perspective on this matter is that...

“... Paulus (ist) mit dem zeitgenössischen Judentum und den frühen Christentum vor und neben ihm davon überzeugt, dass nicht nur die Gebote und ethischen Weisungen, sondern die gesamte Schrift inklusive ihre geschichtlichen Überlieferungen und prophetischen Aussagen auf die Gegenwart zielen und gegenwärtige Gültigkeit besitzen. Diese prinzipielle Gegenwartsbezogenheit der Schrift bringe Paulus in einer Art hermeneutischer Grundregel zum Ausdruck, die Schrift sei ‘*um unserer willen*’ geschrieben worden (Röm 4:23-24; 1 Kor 9:10), ‘*uns zur Lehre*’ (Röm 15:4) und ‘*uns zur Warnung*’ (1 Kor 10:11)”.<sup>92</sup>

The use and interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures should therefore rather be approached from a kerygmatic and rhetorical angle. Biblical scholarship ought to take seriously Stanley’s observation, that...

“With all the recent interest in hermeneutical questions, relatively little attention has been paid to the *rhetorical* significance of these appeals to Scripture.” “In most cases ... the ancient author quotes a passage from Scripture as part of a broader argument designed to convince others to believe or act in a certain way. This is a *rhetorical* act, and should be investigated as such.”<sup>93</sup>

The OT authors did not predict Jesus of Nazareth, it is the NT writers who retrodict those events in the light of their OT Scriptures.

*Ich danke Ihnen für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit und Geduld – I thank you for your attention and patience.*

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<sup>90</sup> M.C. Price, “The Everett Interpretation” 1995 at [www.hedweb.com](http://www.hedweb.com), accessed on 18 August 2012.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com) and [www.wordsmith.org](http://www.wordsmith.org), accessed on 18 August 2012.

<sup>92</sup> D.-A. Koch, *Schrift als Zeuge*, 323-324) – summarized in the words of C. Haslebach, “Die Bedeutung und hermeneutischen Implikationen der Verweise auf die Schöpfungsordnung und den Fall Evas in 1. Timotheus 2” (Unpublished MTh thesis; Pretoria: Unisa, 2012), 75.

<sup>93</sup> C.D. Stanley, *The Rhetoric of Quotations: An Essay on Method*, in C.A. Evans & J.A. Sanders, *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel. Investigations and Proposals* (JSNT.S 148; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 44-58, here 44.

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