CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION
OBSERVATIONS ON PAUL’S CONCEPT OF A HEBREW DEITY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Is it indeed possible to infer a Pauline concept of a Hebrew deity based on the explicit κύριος and θεός citations? Before some observations are made in this regard, it is would be important to determine to what extent, if at all, the study succeeded in:

1.) Finding a possible solution for:

Paul’s ‘inconsistent’ use of the term κύριος within his literary context, as well as the inconsistent association of both the term θεός and κύριος in relation to Jesus as the κύριος and Χριστός.

2.) Offering reasonable arguments to uphold the theory:

that Paul is, for the most part, conceptually consistent in his use of the term θεός, which principally refers to the monotheistic Hebrew deity, while the term κύριος is used ambiguously as a reference for the Tetragram and Jesus as the κύριος.

Therefore, the relevant effectiveness of the study will determined by:

a.) Evaluating if, and to what extent the objective: determine the extent of the impact the explicit κύριος and θεός citations, as found in the authentic Pauline letters, might have had on Paul’s conceptual understanding of θεός and κύριος specifically in relation to Jesus as the Χριστός and κύριος was achieved.

b.) Evaluate if the attempt to consider: the explicit κύριος and θεός citations within its immediate literary conceptual (κύριος and θεός) context against a wider Jewish-Hellenistic literary backdrop produced valuable insights that would support the proposed theory and assist in offering a plausible solution for the defined problem.
5.2 EVALUATING THE JEWISH-HELLENISTIC BACKDROP

The Hebrew manuscript evidence (chapter 2) has shown, without any reasonable doubt, that אל or אהלים and related forms such as אלהי were written as reference to the monotheistic Hebrew deity. This deity was ‘named’ and the ‘name’ written as יהוה primarily. The following written forms (K’šib tradition) could be deduced from the 3rd century BCE onwards:

For אהלים

a.) אהלים
b.) אלה

c.) ה

d.) יהוה

And for יהוה

a.) יהוה
b.) Hwhy

c.) ויי

d.) אדני

The complexity of the matter revolved around the prohibition in uttering the ‘name’ of the Hebrew deity, in other words uttering יהוה. The Q’re tradition (that which ought to be read or uttered) attests to an array of options, from the 3rd century BCE onwards:

a.) אדני
b.) אלהים and

c.) שמיא

The various possibilities offered within the K’šib and Q’re tradition could have forced one to make a distinction between the concept of the Hebrew deity based on its ‘written’ form (especially in terms of the Tetragram) and its ‘oral’ form. Therefore, writing and uttering the term אלהים or יהוה would call a wise creator deity into mind, the monotheistic Hebrew deity
proper, so to speak, the deity that resided on Mount Sinai. The ‘written’ form of the Tetragram could cause one of three concepts: 1.) an authoritative most respectful figure ‘Lord’, 2.) the Hebrew deity proper or 3.) the Tetragram as the most Holy One, the ‘God of the covenant, the personal Hebrew deity. These concepts of the Hebrew deity would concur with the concepts one infers from the Qere tradition. These are but only three deductible concepts from the manuscript data discussed in chapter 2 of this study. These are not the only concepts that could be formulated, but they represent concepts that might have been commonplace from the 3rd century BCE onwards. These concepts however, did not make it easier for the Greek translators and therefore the question is: is it possible to construct a concept of the Hebrew deity in its Greek frame of conceptual reference, considering the complex Kittib and Qere tradition as a backdrop?

The complex backdrop painted by the Kittib and Qere tradition and the concepts they offer for the Hebrew deity would become one of the most influential elements in rendering the Hebrew deity with ‘suitable’ Greek equivalents. One would therefore expect variations, inconsistencies and discrepancies to say the least. It is clear that no standardised system was in circulation and operational from the 3rd century BCE up until at least the second half of the 2nd century. Second, it is reasonable to assume that the alternative Greek equivalents are due to the Kittib and Qere issue. The Greek equivalents for אלהים were:

a.) θεός and
b.) κύριος (or at least the nomina sacra forms for the most part).

To find a ‘suitable’ Greek equivalent for the Tetragram (יהוה), however was much more complex. The terms that were used to render or reproduce the Tetragram, deductible from the 2nd century BCE onwards varied between:

a.) ΙΑΩ
b.) Open space
c.) יהוה
d.) Hwhy
e.) ΚΣ (nomina sacra)
f.) ΘΣ (nomina sacra)
g.) δεσποτής and
h.) θεός

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It should be noted from this position, that none of the above mentioned terms were applied consistently, nor were any of these considered as the ‘norm’ or the ‘most’ suitable Greek equivalent for the Tetragram. Notwithstanding, that such an array of possibilities in rendering the Tetragram had a significant impact on how the Hebrew deity was conceptualised in the Greek frame of reference. The conceptual distinction between אלהים and יהוה was already initiated in the Hebrew text tradition. This conceptual distinction was not only taken to the next level in the Greek frame of conceptual reference, but the concepts underlying both the term אלהים and יהוה became interchangeable – almost to a point of confusion in some instances. The concepts produced by the Greek translators were θεός as the monotheistic Hebrew deity, who could also be κύριος, the authoritative figure and ruler over all and vice versa. The concepts offered by Philo and Josephus, did not only affirm that no standardised system was in place during the first two centuries CE, but they would also indicate that the term θεός was widely accepted as a ‘suitable’ Greek equivalent when reference is made to the monotheistic Hebrew deity. Second, the sensitivity towards the term κύριος used when referring to the Hebrew deity is evident in the writing of Philo, while Josephus shows utter discontent utilising such a term. This would then form the literary conceptual backdrop against which Paul would ultimately construct his concept of a Hebrew deity based on the Greek equivalents attested in the explicit κύριος and θεός citations. Although the final word concerning the Jewish-Hellenistic literary backdrop regarding the terms θεός and κύριος has not yet been spoken, the manuscript data offers sufficient evidence and insights as to why Paul could have adopted his consistent use of the term θεός and ambiguous use of the term κύριος. It is thus indeed possible to construct a plausible Pauline concept(s) of the Hebrew deity based on these terms, as presented by the explicit κύριος and θεός citations. It would thus be fair to state that:

1.) Some discrepancies and inconsistencies related to the term יהוה already existed in the Hebrew text tradition from the 3rd century BCE onwards;
2.) These inconsistencies spilled over into the Greek OT text, which in turn, increased in frequency and complexity;

169 See Woyke’s, Götter, discussion on the Old Testament backdrop on the concept of JHWH, Gottheiten and Göttbilder, 67-72.
3.) Authors such as Paul, Philo and others, writing in the 1st century CE, could not have escaped these complex inconsistencies related to the ‘name’ of the Hebrew deity.

5.3 PAUL’S ΚΥΡΙΟΣ AND ΘΕΟΣ CONCEPTS

The terms θεός and κύριος together with χριστός, are three of the most significant theological terms in the New Testament when a.) one is referring to the Hebrew deity and b.) assigning a title of the utmost authority and conceptual status to Jesus, while c.) emphasising the salvation character of Jesus as the χριστός. Moreover, these terms encapsulate the NT theologie, christo-logie and what one would call kyrio-logie. This section of the chapter has no intention in repeating what has already been written on Paul’s theology and christology. The objective is neither to develop a uniquely different train of thought as proposed by scholars working in the field of Pauline theology and christology. The pre-mediated intent is threefold: 1.) to summarise the theos and kyrios concepts attested in the ‘authentic’ letters of Paul 2.) determining if the Greek equivalents presented in the explicit κύριος and θεός citations pose a ‘unique’ concept of a Hebrew deity and finally 3.) to formulate a possible Pauline concept of a Hebrew deity in relation to Jesus. If one would formulate the objective into a question: could the Greek equivalents for the Hebrew deity, including their underlying concepts, assist in determining Paul’s concept of the Hebrew deity in relation to Jesus as the χριστός and κύριος?

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171 According to Dunn, James D. G. The Theology of Paul the Apostle. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998. Paul’s convictions about God are all too axiomatic and because of this Paul never made much effort to expound on them, 28. Paul’s beliefs about God were common place and he shared such beliefs with his readers, 29. Schnelle, Theologie. According to Schnelle, Paul proclaims two fundamental principals concerning his ‘God’ concept, in his own words: “Er (Paul) ist sowohl Herr der Geschichte als auch Herr des persönlichen Lebens,” 198.

172 Bauckham, “Paul’s Christology,” interprets Rom 10:13; Rom 14:11; Rom 9:33 as “YHWH texts with Jesus Christ as referent”, 2, and Rom 4:7-8; Rom 9:27-28, 29; Rom 10:16; Rom 11:3; Rom 11:34; Rom 15:11 and Rom 12:19 (among others, see also page 7) as “YHWH texts with God as referent”, 6.

5.3.1 SUMMARY: PAUL’S ΚΥΡΙΟΣ AND ΘΕΟΣ CONCEPTS - NON-CITATIONS

In 1 Thessalonians Paul presents a theos-concept that portrays a monotheistic Hebrew deity—the father of Jesus as the κύριος. Paul’s kyrios-concept is related to Jesus as an authoritative person demanding great respect while his christos-concept appears under-developed at this stage. The theos-concept remains unchanged in the Galatian epistle with a much more developed christos-concept. The latter concept is specifically a Jesus induced concept, Jesus is the the christos, the saviour. The kyrios-concept is downplayed and limited to the concept of Jesus as the χριστός and κύριος. In Philemon however, the theos-concept is downplayed while being combined with a dominant Jesus induced christos and kyrios-concept. A frequently applied christos-concept is discernible in Philemon, with Jesus as the χριστός. The saviour and messiah concept is strongly emphasised in this letter. Paul remains conceptually static in terms of his theos-concept as the Hebrew deity, while the kyrios-concept is the typical authoritative nature of Jesus.

5.3.2 GREEK EQUIVALENTS ATTESTED IN THE EXPLICIT CITATION – UNIQUE ΚΥΡΙΟΣ AND ΘΕΟΣ CONCEPT?

In the first Corinthian letter a highly developed christos-concept is visible, almost to the extent of inducing Paul’s theos-concept. This christos-concept transcends the crucified Jesus as the κύριος and ‘becomes’ an entity who is neither the earthly and crucified Jesus, nor the transcended monotheistic Hebrew deity. Stated differently, existentially the christos-concept would be closer to Paul’s theos-concept than his kyriο-concept, the latter which is related to Jesus. Apart from the christos-concept, the kyriο-concept deduced from the explicit citations also presents a unique characteristic, that of ambiguity. Paul intentionally and implicitly used the κύριος citations with the intent to call the personal Hebrew deity to mind for the Jews among his readers. This would have ‘forced’ the Jewish believers to consider their personal Hebrew deity, κύριος, in association with Jesus as the κύριος. The concept Paul had in his mind while deploying the explicit κύριος citation was primarily the personal Hebrew deity, the Tetragram. The ambiguity lies in the fact that in some instances

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174 For Schnelle, Theologie, the basis for the Christology relies on the premise that God acts in and through Jesus Christ. God is the one that raised Jesus from the dead (cf. Thess 1:10), 186; see also Woyke, Götter, 104-155; cf. Meeks, “Social Context,” who interprets the paradox of the Messiah’s crucifixion, as presented by Paul, as the end of the boundary-setting of the Torah.

175 Cf. Dunn, Theology, 245. For Schenlle, Leben und Denken, God as the origin and subject of salvation history in 1 Thessalonians, was the Primat der Theologie, 183; see also Schnelle, Leben und Denken, 199-200 in terms of 1 Thessalonians presenting Paul’s ‘shaping’ theology; cf. Hahn, Theologie, 311-312.

176 See the conversion from ‘Gotter’ to ‘Gott’ based on 1 Cor 9b-10 in Woyke, Götter, 104-155.
Paul’s *kyrios*-concept is explicitly Jesus as the κόριος, while in other cases the *kyrios*-concept as the Tetragram is made explicit while Jesus as the κόριος is implicitly implied. It would be unreasonable to suggest that Paul only had the Tetragram or Jesus as κόριος in mind – it was merely a case of implicit and explicitness. **Finally, the concept underlying the term θεός is never anything other than the monotheistic Hebrew deity. This term, for Paul, would always designate the creator and just Hebrew deity, the one who has the ability to raise Jesus as the κόριος and χριστός from the dead.** Even though this is the case, it would also be fair to say that the closest, conceptually speaking, that the earthly Jesus would come to ‘be’ the Hebrew deity would be through the underlined concept of the term χριστός in some instances. What follows next is a brief summary of the *theos* and *kyrios*-concepts presented in the explicit citations. In summary:

a.) the *kyrios*-concept deduced from the explicit citations presents a unique characteristic, that of ambiguity. Paul intentionally and implicitly used the κόριος citations with the intent to call the personal Hebrew deity to mind for the Jews among his readers;

b.) The ambiguity lies in the implicit and explicit use of the term κόριος in referencing to κόριος and the Tetragram respectively;

c.) The concept underlying the term θεός is never anything other than the monotheistic Hebrew deity. This term, for Paul, would always designate the creator and just Hebrew deity, the one who has the ability to raise Jesus as the κόριος and χριστός from the dead.

**5.3.3 The ΚΥΡΙΟΣ and ΘΕΟΣ concepts in the Romans epistle**

The most plausible concept underlying the term θεός in Rom 2:24; Rom 3:11, 18, which would include Rom 1:1-3:20 for that matter is the monotheistic Hebrew deity, the creator and rightful judge. The term θεός in Rom 4:3 would hold the same conceptual value as with the other three cited texts mentioned. Noteworthy is that the translation of יהוה with the the term θεός did not originate in the Pauline school, but this was a theological-conceptual shift that was made by the Greek scribes that translated the Hebrew Scriptures. The term κόριος in Rom 4:8 (Ps 31:2) validates the assumption that θεός is the primary term used when Paul refers to the monotheistic Hebrew deity. The same could be inferred from the cited text in Rom 9:26 (Hos 2:1b-c). This conjecture is due to the fact that Paul does not share the theological-conceptual view of the Greek translators (in this case at least), that the term κόριος reproduces the Tetragram. In the mind of Paul, the term κόριος in Rom 4:8 refers to
no one other than Jesus as the χριστός and κύριος (cf. Rom 4:23-24), a term Frenschkowski would categorise as an epithet, metonym or title. One could, with a reasonable amount of certainty, conclude that Paul is for the most part consistent in his use of the theo, kyrio and christo-concepts in Romans 1 up until Romans 8. The four explicit θεός (Rom 2:24; Rom 3:11, 18 and Rom 4:3) and one explicit κύριος citation (Rom 4:8) did not deter Paul from conceptualising that the term θεός as a reference to the monotheistic Hebrew deity, while the term κύριος refers to Jesus as the χριστός and κύριος. The inter-relatedness and theological-conceptual data of the explicit citations in Romans 9 proved to be a bit more complex.

The Hos 2:1b-c citation (Rom 9:26) again attests to the θεός concept denoting the monotheistic Hebrew deity. The subject matter related to the term κύριος in Rom 9:28 (Isa 10:22) and Rom 9:29 (Isa 1:9) strongly suggests a monotheistic Hebrew deity concept and not a mere epithet or title for Jesus as the χριστός. The literary conceptual context captured in Romans 9 is one of those rare cases where it is extremely difficult to distinguish between the concept underlying the χριστός, κύριος and θεός terms. It appears as if Paul not only allowed his Vorlage to dictate, but Paul also adopted the concept that the term κύριος ‘represents’ the personal Hebrew deity of Israel, the Tetragram. The latter permitted Paul to bridge the theological conceptual fissure between the χριστός and θεός, including the κύριος referent. A clear, unambiguous distinction between the referent of the κύριος, χριστός and θεός terms in Romans 9, is thus extremely difficult to determine. Paul ingeniously sets the theo-logic stage for what would become the grand θεός doxology finale in Rom 11:33-36. What would be interesting is if Paul allowed for this conceptual bridge to be extended to chapter ten leading up to Romans 11.

The pivotal terms in support of Paul’s christo, kyrio and theo-logic are evenly spread in Romans 10; with the term κύριος dominating the cited content yet again. The most obvious and most likely conclusion is that the term κύριος refers to Jesus as the κύριος (cf. Rom 10:9), the risen χριστός (cf. Rom 10:7). Paul’s christ-kyrio-logic remains intact - this includes his theo-logic. Both the term χριστός and κύριος refer to Jesus, while the term θεός refers to non other than the monotheistic Hebrew deity. The theo-kyrio-logic however, remains uncertain and with that the conceptual relation between the referents implied by the term θεός and κύριος. As expected, the term θεός dominates Romans 11, with the term κύριος again limited to the cited content (cf. Rom 11:3 and 34). Paul’s theological-conceptual frame of reference implies that he not only knew that the term κύριος coins a Greek equivalent for the

Tetragram, but he also allowed openness for the readers to interpret both the term θεός and κύριος to call the personal monotheistic Hebrew deity to mind. Paul’s more integrated theo-kyrio-logie in relation to his χριστός concept was introduced in Romans 9, while balanced in Romans 10 and ultimately made more public in Romans 11. Paul’s intent with his intertwined theo-kyrio-christo-logie introduced in Romans 9 was to ensure optimal theological effectiveness with the explicit representation of his theo-kyrio-logie in Romans 11, and ultimately the grand finale in the form of a doxology in Rom 11:33-36. For the optimal impact of the doxology Paul had to make a theological-conceptual shift from Jesus as the χριστός and κύριος to θεός as the κύριος. The latter term was not primarily to denote the authoritative nature of θεός, but is to explicitly call upon a deity as the personal-covenant Hebrew deity. The explicit κύριος citations in Rom 10:13 and Rom 10:16 ensured the possibility for a dual conceptual understanding; on the one hand Jesus as the κύριος and χριστός and on the other hand, the cosmic rule of θεός as הַнный. In Rom 11:3 and 11:34 however, in the mind of Paul that is, the term κύριος appears to be conceptually limited to the θεός as הַнный.

A strongly emphasised theo-logie, with the open possibility of a theo-kyrio-logie rooted in a christo-logie suited a more indicative mode of interaction as is apparent in Rom 1-11. With the transition from a more indicative mode of conversing to a more imperative mode, Paul ensures to deploy his theo-kyrio-christo-logie with the term θεός dominating Rom 12:1-4, with χριστός as the mediator with an in-cooperating function (Rom 12:5). This includes his kyrio-logie as one of authoritative rule demanding service (Rom 12:11). It does seem as if Paul kept with his theo-kyrio-logie evident from the cited content in Rom 12:19. The wrath of κύριος had the reasonable potential not just to call θεός as the Hebrew deity into mind, but also the personal Hebrew deity. Paul’s dominating theo-logie explicitly denoted by the term θεός in Rom 13:1-6, while Jesus as the κύριος and χριστός concludes this chapter (cf. Rom 13:14). Paul’s theo-kyrio-logie becomes even more evident in Romans 14, again with a possible varied conceptual undertone.

The explicit and emphasised theo-kyrio-logie in Rom 14:1-10 is unique in terms of its intensity. The theo-kyrio-logie dominates vv. 1-10, the latter which is confirmed by the explicit kyrios-theos citation in Rom 14:11. It remains debatable if the term κύριος in Rm 14:1-10, confirmed in Rom 14:11a, refers to Jesus as the κύριος in the theological conceptual sense of the word (cf. Rom 14:14). The term χριστός in Rom 14:9 suggests a Jesus as κύριος and χριστός frame of reference in Rom 14:10. Stronger evidence in support for such a kyrio-christo flavoured theo-logie is the topic on mortality and that one’s mortality is constituted by
κόριος, which makes it highly unlikely that any other theological concept is implied other than Jesus, who died. The theos-kyrios inter-relatedness is not so much based on theological-conceptual commonalties, but rather that they represent existentially different entities. The term θεός refers to the immortal transcendent entity, while the term κόριος refers to Jesus as the mortal, in and through whom, every believer’s mortality is constituted—not as an emphasis of their mortality but that this κόριος is the living κόριος (cf. Rom 14:11a). The concept of ‘living’ in correlation with κόριος together with the term θεός could have triggered a dual theological concept: a.) the risen κόριος (cf. Rom 14:9) and b.) θεός as the living κόριος, ‘Lord’ and ruler. A third possibility could also be inferred, namely that of Jesus as the risen κόριος—and because Jesus morphed from mortal being to immortal being every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that he is θεός. Even though the term κόριος refers to Jesus, the theo-kyrio-logie developed in Romans 14 should not be underestimated. Such a theological view does provide ample plausible ground to regard Jesus as the New Testament יהוה.

The ‘uniting’ and ‘final’ chapter (Romans 15); considered to ‘conclude’ the ‘primary’ epistle addressed to the fellow followers of Christ living in Rome, attests to Paul’s christological theology, or differently stated, his theological christology. The well-known and frequently used concept that θεός is the father of Jesus as the κόριος and χριστός is again introduced in Rom 15:6 with an all too familiar dominance of the term χριστός and θεός in combination. The dual potential, based purely on its use within the thought-context of the term κόριος is again made possible by the explicit citation in Rom 15:11, but what the kyriological gained from Romans 9 onwards had been toned down in Romans 15—which one would have expected if Paul wanted to frame his christological theo-logie or theological christo-logie. If and to what extent Romans 16 is considered to form part of the ‘main’ body of the Romans epistle could account for the developed christo-kyrio-logie of Romans 16. The term θεός features only in three verses (cf. Rom 16:20, 26 and 27) with the deployment of both the χριστός and κόριος terms that dominates the literary conceptual context. Such a ‘developed’ kyriological Christology does not blend in well with Paul’s theological, christological and kyriological concepts introduced throughout Romans 1-15. This does not necessarily imply that Romans 16 should be considered ‘non-Pauline’, but the ‘out-of-the-ordinary’ features of this chapter does demand closer investigation. The theological-conceptual impact presented

178 Michel, Römerbrief, 338-339, Käsemann, Romans, 409, Wilckens, Die Römer, 132 and Schlier, Der Römerbrief, 440 would not reject Rom 16:1-27 as not being authentic Pauline material. What is indeed plausible is the fact that Romans 16 did not form part of the ‘original’ main Romans epistle.
in Romans 16 is thus intentionally ignored when some concluding remarks on the Romans epistle are formulated. The kyrio and theos-concept discernible from the Romans epistle could thus be summarised as:

a.) Romans 1-8: Paul theos-concept is presented by the term θεός and refers to the monotheistic Hebrew deity, while his kyrios-concept is called to mind using the term κύριος referring to Jesus as the κύριος and χριστός (explicit citations in Rom 2:24; Rom 3:11, 18; Rom 4:3, 7 support the theos-concept);

b.) Romans 9-11: Paul’s intent with his intertwined theo-kyrio-christo-logie introduced in Romans 9 was to ensure optimal theological effectiveness with the explicit representation of his theo-kyrio-logie in Romans 11, and ultimately the grand finale in the form of a doxology in Rom 11:33-36. For the optimal impact of the doxology Paul had to make a theological-conceptual shift from Jesus as the χριστός and κύριος to θεός as the κύριος (The explicit κύριος citations, Rom 9:28, 29; Rom 10:13, 16 and Rom 11:2c-3; Rom 11:34, support the ambiguous kyrios and christos-concept);

c.) Romans 14-15: The explicit citations in Romans 14 again supports the ambiguous kyrios-concept in Romans 14, while the citations in Romans 15 attests to Paul’s christological theology, or differently stated, his theological christology;

d.) Romans 16: If and to what extent Romans 16 is considered to form part of the ‘main’ body of the Romans epistle could account for the developed christo-kyrio-logie of Romans 16. Such a ‘developed’ kyriological christology does not blend in well with Paul’s theological, christological and kyriological concepts introduced throughout Romans 1-15.

5.3.4 The KYRIOS and THEOS concepts in the 1st Corinthian letter

What is evident from the first four chapters of the first Corinthian epistle is that the term θεός refers to the wisdom of the cosmos, the all powerful Hebrew deity. Second, is the all too familiar concept of Jesus as the χριστός and κύριος. This remains undisputed throughout the Pauline literature and especially in the Corinthian letters. The latter does not however, exclude nuanced variations of such concepts. Four such theological-moulded altering instances are found in the first four chapters (1 Cor 1:31; 1: Cor 2:8, 16; 1 Cor 3:20). These instances do bring a slightly nuanced concept of the term κύριος to the fore. Of these four the term κύριος in 1 Cor 1:31 should be understood and conceptualised as referring to Jesus as
the χριστός (cf. 1 Cor 1:30). Although the use of the term κύριος seems out of place in terms of the immediate literary conceptual context, Paul deliberately chose and adapted his Vorlage to read the term κύριος as part of the cited text for authoritative emphasis, which he slotted in neatly between 1 Cor 1:30 ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ and εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν (1 Cor 2:2).

The θεός citation in 1 Cor 2:9, preceded by the rare combination of the τῶν κύριων τῆς δόξης, is considered within the New Testament text as a whole. A plausible inferred theological concept in this case is a kyrio-theo-logie—a concept where the theological undertone supporting both the term κύριος and θεός appears to be overlapping. Paul does make it possible, ever so slightly, to conceptualise κύριος as referring to the same entity as does θεός—especially with the explicit citation in 1 Cor 2:9 in combination with 1 Cor 2:8. If considered within the immediate literary conceptual context, there is no obvious reason why the term κύριος in 1 Cor 2:8 would refer to any other entity other than Jesus. The same could be said for the term κύριος in 1 Cor 2:16a, although one cannot ignore the range of possibilities this explicit κύριος citation offers. Even though one could eventually consider 1 Cor 2:16a as referring to the same entity as does the term χριστός in 1 Cor 2:16b, and therefore Jesus in 1 Cor 2:2. It does appear as if a more independent kyrio-logie is enforced by the explicit κύριος citation in 1 Cor 2:16. Stated differently, the term κύριος is used more independently from Jesus as the χριστός, or so it seems to be in the first few chapters of first Corinthians.

The concept underlying the term κύριος in 1 Cor 3:20, related to wisdom, correlates with the underlying concept suggested with the term θεός in 1 Cor 3:19. If Paul had the same referent in mind when he used the term κύριος in 1 Cor 3:5, remains uncertain. What appears to be certain is the fact that the referent of the term χριστός (1 Cor 3:1, 11 and 23) and the term θεός are distinguished from one another. The theo-kyrio-logie of 1 Corinthians 3 is clearly determined by the explicit κύριος citation in 1 Cor 3:20 in combination with the use of the term θεός in 1 Cor 3:19. The theo-logie of 1 Corinthians 3 is thus two-fold: a.) christologie and b.) kyrio-theo-logie. 1 Corinthians 4-7 does not pose any ‘out-of-the-ordinary’ concepts related to the terms θεός, κύριος and χριστός. In general, Jesus is referred to as the χριστός and κύριος while the monotheistic Hebrew deity is called to mind with the use of the term θεός. The latter concepts are true for chapter eight for the most part. Paul’s theos and kyrios concepts in 1 Cor 8:4-6 do offer dynamic concepts in this regard. The mono-theistic character of the Hebrew deity represented by the term θεός appears to be challenged in 1 Cor 8:5. Paul recognises the ‘reality’ that there are many θεοί in heaven and on earth; there are also many κύριοι. The theological issue is not ‘if’ other θεοί do indeed exist, neither did Paul
want to engage the multitude of κύριοι as opposed to Jesus as the κύριος. Paul’s theo-logie, and with that his kyrio-logie, remains intact. His primary intent is to emphasise the unity of θεός as father and Jesus as the χριστός and κύριος.

The terms χριστός and κύριος in combination are more dominant in 1 Corinthians 10 than any other chapter in the Pauline literature. This includes a clear existential distinction between the referent of the term χριστός and θεός. The chrispto-logie as well as the theo-logie remains intact, whereas the kyrio-logie demands the conception that Jesus is the κύριος (cf. 1 Cor 10:21-22) with the term κύριος referring to the Hebrew deity (cf. 1 Cor 10:9 and 1 Cor 10:26). What seems to be quite obvious is that Paul’s deductable christo-logie, theo-logie and kyrio-logie in the Corinthian correspondence, particularly evident in 1 Cor 8 and 10, are socio-culturally induced. It is thus reasonable to assume that the Hellenistic θεός and κύριος concepts of his time would have had a major impact on Paul’s thought processes. Ironically, in the case of 1 Cor 10:26 (cf. 1 Cor 10:9), one would have expected the introduction of a more ‘Hellenistic’ concept of the term κύριος and not so much a concept that is rooted in the Jewish scripture. The latter might pose the question: would Paul be more inclined to rely on his Jewish roots or Christian beliefs when confronted by the religious dynamic society of his time?\(^\text{180}\) Paul’s theology with regard to the theological significant terms in question, remains integrally inferred from chapters eleven and twelve.\(^\text{181}\)

1 Corinthians 14 would be considered to be of key importance in understanding the conceptual relationship between the terms κύριος and θεός. Moreover, the explicit citation in 1 Cor 14:21 (Is 28:11-13) assigned to λέγω κύριος would be the focal point in discovering the key to Paul’s theology and kyriologie in this chapter. The term θεός remains the undisputed monotheistic deity, whereas the term κύριος holds the potential to call both Jesus as the κύριος or the Tetragram to mind. In this case, it is reasonable to understand the term κύριος (cf. 1 Cor 14:21, 37), conceptually and logically speaking, as referring to the personal Hebrew deity. It should be re-iterated at this stage, that the conceptual nuance between אֱלֹהָם and יהוה was introduced by the Jewish scriptures, which spilled over into the Greek version of these texts with the term θεός (equivalent for אֱלֹהָם) and κύριος (equivalent for יהוה). The nuanced character, portrayed by these terms, became more complex in the Hellenistic period; the very complexity Paul is struggling with. It is the challenge to remain true to the Jewish

\(^\text{179}\) The argument is only valid, and with that logical, if the premise is accepted that the term κύριος is the most suitable reading.
\(^\text{181}\) 1 Corinthians 13 is the only chapter with no explicit reference to the terms θεός, κύριος and χριστός.
roots captured and maintained by the Jewish scriptures, while simultaneously interpreting the Jewish scriptures. The *theo*-logie in 1 Corinthians 14 is thus supported by the *kyrio*-logie (cf. 1 Cor 14:21 and 1 Cor 14:37). In 1 Corinthians 15 it is the christology that supports Paul’s theology. This is the most christological dense chapter in Pauline thought. It is almost as if Paul wanted to counter balance the Jewishness of his *kyrio*-logie in 1 Corinthians 14 by putting his conscience at rest with an overwhelming amount of references to *χριστός*. Paul goes even further with the dominant use of the term *κύριος* in 1 Corinthians 16, whereby he confirms the fact that Jesus as the *χριστός* is the *κύριος*. It would have been confusing for the readers of Paul if he had jumped from *κύριος* as the Tetragram (1 Corinthians 14) to Jesus as *κύριος* (1 Corinthians 15). Paul’s deductible thought sequence looks as follows:

- Kyriological supported theology (1 Corinthians 14)
- Christological supported theology (1 Corinthians 15)
- Theological supported kyriology (1 Corinthians 16)

These three chapters in particular, is an example of Paul’s balanced Christological-kyriological theology. Not that he intended it to be this way, but this is clear evidence of a Jew that applied and interpreted the Hebrew deity in terms of Jesus as the *Χριστός* and *κύριος* in an attempt to establish reasonable coherence between religious Jews and faithful Christ followers, between Jewish texts and Christian contexts. In summary:

a.) 1 Corinthians 1-13: *Christo-kyrio* induced *theo*-logie, in some instances challenged by the explicit citations;
b.) 1 Corinthians 14: Kyriological supported theology, made possible by the explicit *κύριος* citations;
c.) 1 Corinthians 15: Christological supported theology;
d.) 1 Corinthians 16: Theological supported kyriology.

### 5.3.5 The ΚΥΡΙΟΣ and ΘΕΟΣ concepts in the 2nd Corinthian letter

As is the case in the first Corinthian letter, a christologically supported theology is at work in the 2nd Corinthian epistle, with the implementation of the term *κύριος* and with that a *kyrio*-logie that appears to be deployed at key sections of the epistle. The latter is specifically made possible with the employment of explicit *κύριος* citations. This is palpable for the most part of the epistle, with the exception of chapter seven, which only attests to the term *θεός*. The
pertinent question is if the explicit κόριος citations in 2 Cor 3:16 (Exod 34:34a) and 2 Cor 10:17 (Jer 9:23a) offer a ‘new’ concept of the Hebrew deity and the relationship with Jesus as the χριστός and κόριος? Logically speaking, and for all practical purposes, the term κόριος in 2 Cor 3:16 is a reproduction of the Tetragram and thus refers to the personal Hebrew deity. The kyrio-logie inferred from 2 Cor 3:15-18 is not that obvious, as if it refers to Jesus as the χριστός. Paul’s intent was to be ambiguous, to force the reader to ponder the κόριος idea. What Paul is suggesting here is that when Moses is read (the torah), a veil covers the reader’s mind. This veil is removed when turning towards κόριος (2 Cor 3:16). In Exod 34:34 it is Moses who covers his face, but when κόριος is addressed the veil is removed. This κόριος for Paul is ὁ κόριος who is also the spirit (2 Cor 3:18), and those who’s faces are unveiled see the glory of κόριος. Paul then concludes with καθάπερ ὑπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος (this comes from κόριος the spirit). There should be little or no doubt that the κόριος in this literary context refers to none other than the Hebrew deity who resides on Mount Sinai. The concept introduced by Paul in this case is a pneumatological supported kyrio-logie—the referent of which is clearly distinguished from χριστός, but the same cannot be said for the term θεός. The explicit κόριος citation in 2 Cor 10:17 does not offer any other κόριος concept than Jesus as the χριστός and κόριος.

5.4 PAUL’S CONCEPT OF A HEBREW DEITY

Paul’s concept of a Hebrew deity is aligned with the Old Testament concept of such a Hebrew deity in general. Paul’s concept would thus be in line with Jewish contemporaries and Jewish thought in general between the 3rd century BCE and the 2nd century CE, at least until the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Paul also shared the inferred practise that the term θεός was predominately used to refer to the Hebrew deity. One major difference in this regard would be the fact that Paul intentionally used the term κόριος to refer to the personal Hebrew deity, the Tetragram. Deploying such a possible ‘profane’ term would not have been common place among Jewish thought, nor would it have been an accepted practice.

The explicit κόριος citations in particular as well as the θεός citations are considered to be the ‘missing’ link between the Hebrew deity and Jesus as the κόριος and χριστός. Paul made the conceptual shift between the Tetragram as the personal Hebrew deity who delivered the Israelites from Egypt, the ‘God’ of the covenant, the one who spoke through the prophets, who initiated the deliverance of the Jews and Jesus as the κόριος and χριστός who became the crucified personal deity. Paul’s concept of a Hebrew deity should therefore not be
characterised as being ‘incoherent’ but rather ambiguous. For Paul θεός, as the living Hebrew deity, became the personal covenantal ‘God’—for the Israelites as יהוה, while Jesus became the χριστός and κύριος, the personal ‘God’ for both Jew and gentile. Paul constructs a christologically induced theology governed by his ambiguous kyrio-logie.

5.5 PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research study made an attempt to propose a possible solution for Paul’s alleged ‘incoherent’ understanding of a Hebrew deity in terms of Jesus as κύριος and χριστός based on his explicit κύριος and θεός citations. Apart from the obvious outcomes of such a research venture, recognising limitations and observing future research possibilities form part and parcel thereof. The limitations would evidently be that the socio-religious or Hellenistic context of both the terms κύριος and θεός, especially with regard to Emperor Cults, were deliberately underplayed. The Greco-Roman conceptual context of the terms κύριος and θεός could have contributed to a better understanding of these terms and the potential conceptual value they convey.

This research study however could be regarded as a stepping stone for the following proposed future research endeavours:

a.) An in-depth text-critical investigation into the history of both the OG and NT text (with a particular focus on dominating manuscript witnesses) with regard to the terms θεός and κύριος. Such an investigation would shed some light on possible scribal traditions that might have existed at various intervals.

b.) An investigation into the use of the terms θεός and κύριος in ‘non-Biblical’ text in the second temple period and to determine what conceptual possibilities they hold.

c.) A final suggestion would be to investigate the works of Philo and how his concept of the terms θεός and κύριος relate to his contemporaries, including NT authors.

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These are but a few proposals suggested for this interesting field. The conceptual potential of the terms θεός and κόριος, terms used to refer to a possible deity, project and communicate. None of these proposed studies, including this study, would offer absolute or final remarks on these terms, but a tapestry of studies in this regard could produce a responsible and plausible conceptual understanding of the terms θεός and κόριος.