

**THE DESCENT OF CHRIST IN EPHESIANS 4:7-11:
AN EXEGETICAL INVESTIGATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO THE INFLUENCE OF TRADITIONS ABOUT MOSES
ASSOCIATED WITH PSALM 68:19**

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**The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4:7-11: An Exegetical Investigation
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This study attempts to demonstrate that the most probable interpretation of the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:7-11 involves a descent of Christ as the Spirit who distributes gifts to his church subsequent to the ascent of Eph. 4:8. The investigation begins with a history of the interpretation of Eph. 4:7-11. Most modern interpreters favour either a descent to the underworld (or the grave) between Christ's death and resurrection or a descent from heaven to earth at the incarnation. Textual and grammatical problems relevant to the proposed exegesis are also discussed.

A major portion of the study deals with the ascent-descent imagery associating Ps. 68:19 (quoted in Eph. 4:8) and Moses as found in Tg Psalms and the rabbinic literature. The author of Ephesians, had he been aware of these traditions associating Psalm 68 with Moses, would have been predisposed to think in terms of a subsequent descent, because Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah was followed by his descent to distribute it as 'gifts' to men.

Although it is clear that both Tg Psalms and the rabbinic literature are later than Ephesians, there is evidence from a number of early sources that such Moses-traditions were in circulation prior to the first century CE. The association of these traditions with Ps. 68:19 as employed by the author of Ephesians appears to exist through the connection of Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah with the celebration of the Jewish feast of Pentecost on the one hand, and the Christian use of Psalm 68 in connection with Pentecost (described in Acts 2) on the other. Ps. 68:19 was already understood to refer to the ascent of Christ and the gift of the Spirit in a layer of tradition older than Ephesians. Familiarity with the Moses-traditions connected with an ascent and descent of Sinai would have suggested a subsequent descent. Thus the author's innovation did not lie in the use of the psalm in a christological sense, nor in the introduction of a subsequent descent of Christ inferred from the ascent mentioned in Ps. 68:19. The contribution of the author of Ephesians consisted in his identification of the ascended Christ as the Spirit who descended to distribute gifts to his church. Such an interpretation offers the best explanation of the passage in light of the evidence linking Moses-traditions of a heavenly ascent at Sinai with Pentecost and Psalm 68.

Table of Contents

Introduction	i
(1) The Purpose and Scope of this Study	i
(2) The Authorship of Ephesians and the Present Study	iv
Ch. 1: The <i>Descensus ad Inferos</i> and Eph. 4:7-11	1
(1) The Doctrine of the <i>Descensus</i>	1
(2) A Brief History of the Interpretation of Eph. 4:7-11.....	4
(a) The interpretation of the descent in Eph. 4:7-11 as a <i>descensus ad inferos</i>	5
(b) The interpretation of the descent in Eph. 4:7-11 as the incarnation.....	21
(c) The interpretation of the descent in Eph. 4:7-11 as the descent of the Spirit	35
(d) Conclusions on the history of interpretation of the passage.....	46
(3) Textual Problems in Eph. 4:9 and Their Influence on the Interpretation of 4:7-11	48
(a) The omission of <i>πρῶτον</i> following <i>κατέβη</i> in Eph. 4:9	49
(b) The inclusion of <i>μέρη</i> before <i>τῆς γῆς</i> in Eph. 4:9.....	59
Ch. 2: To Where Did He Descend? The Meaning of τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς	65
(1) The Syntax and Significance of the Genitive Phrase <i>τῆς γῆς</i> in Eph. 4:9	65
(2) Descent Imagery in the NT and Other Early Sources	78
(a) NT descent imagery.....	79
(b) Jonah and his descent in rabbinic literature and other sources	84
(c) Conclusions regarding the descent imagery in the NT and other sources.....	90
Ch. 3: The Association of Moses with Psalm 68:19 as Background to Ephesians 4	92
(1) Moses' Ascent to Heaven in Ps. 68:19: The Tradition and its Relationship to Eph. 4:8.....	93
(a) The Targum to the Psalms.....	95
(b) An approach to the tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19.....	108
(2) Ps. 68 and Moses' Ascent to Heaven in Rabbinic Literature	110
(3) Psalm 68:19 in Early Non-Rabbinic Sources.....	135
(a) A comparison of Ps. 68:19 as found in the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, Eph. 4:8, and the Targum to the Psalms.....	136
(b) Ps. 68:19 in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.....	147
(c) Ps. 68:19 and the Book of Jubilees	155

(d) Ps. 68:19 in the writings of Justin Martyr	157
(e) Ps. 68:18-19 in the writings of Irenaeus	163
(f) Ps. 68:19 in the writings of Tertullian.....	165
(g) Conclusions regarding the use of Ps. 68:19 in early non- rabbinic sources	168
(4) Accounts of Moses' Ascent to Heaven in Other Early Sources Not Related to Psalm 68.....	170
Ch. 4: Eph. 4:7-11 and the Giving of the Spirit.....	195
(1) Psalm 68, the Early Jewish Synagogue Liturgy, and Pentecost	197
(2) The Book of Jubilees, Ascension, and Pentecost.....	209
(3) Psalm 68, Acts 2:33, and the Giving of the Spirit	219
(4) Conclusions on the Relationship Between Eph. 4:7-11 and the Giving of the Spirit	234
Ch. 5: The Descent of Christ as the Descent of the Spirit in Eph. 4:7-11	235
(1) Background.....	235
(2) The Contextual Argument for a Subsequent Descent in Eph. 4:9-10	237
(3) Implications of Identifying the Ascended Christ as the Spirit who Descended to the Church at Pentecost	251
(4) Summary and Final Conclusions	266
Bibliography	275

Introduction

The Purpose and Scope of this Study

The present study began a number of years ago as an attempt to investigate the problems associated with the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:7-11. Through an examination of the evidence for the differing views, one interpretation has emerged as the present writer's preferred choice, and this is the position that is put forward and defended in the study which follows. This interpretation itself is not new; it was originally proposed at the end of the last century by H. Frhr. von Soden and was endorsed not long afterwards by the British scholar T. K. Abbott. To their credit as exegetical scholars, both of these men argued for their interpretation primarily on the basis of the logic and argument-flow within the passage itself. Since their time, however, much new information has surfaced regarding ascent and descent imagery and traditions associated with Moses and the giving of the Torah at Sinai. It is the opinion of the present writer that these Moses-traditions, particularly in terms of their association with Psalm 68, provide crucial clues to a proper understanding of the nature and time of Christ's descent with respect to the ascent mentioned in the psalm quotation (Eph. 4:8). If the Moses-traditions appearing in the (later) rabbinic interpretations of Psalm 68 can be shown to lie behind the use of that psalm in Eph. 4:8, it would strongly suggest that the author of Ephesians envisioned a subsequent descent of Christ to distribute to his church the spiritual gifts described in 4:11ff., since Moses, following his ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah, descended to deliver it to the Israelites encamped below. Such a

sequence, which places the descent after the ascent, would provide the answer to two questions often overlooked by interpreters of the passage: (a) why did the author of Ephesians find it necessary to infer a descent from the ascent mentioned in the psalm, and (b) why did the author need to stress the identity of "the one who descended" with "the one who ascended" as he does in Eph. 4:9-10? The Moses-traditions associated with Psalm 68 in later rabbinic writings, if known to the author of Ephesians, would have naturally led him to assume a subsequent descent involving the distribution of the gifts. But it was still necessary for the author to affirm the identity of the Christ who ascended victoriously according to the psalm with the Christ who descended to his church as the Spirit to distribute his gifts, for such an identification would not be immediately obvious to the readers.

More than once the rabbinic interpretation of Ps. 68:19 has been cited as proof for a reconstruction of the meaning of Eph. 4:8-10 without adequate attempts to establish with a reasonable degree of certainty the date of the traditions in question. Such temptation must be resisted, however, and thus a lengthy section of the present study (chapter 3) is devoted to the examination of early rabbinic and non-rabbinic interpretations of Psalm 68:19 in order to determine what may or may not be said with certainty about the use of such Moses-traditions by the author of Ephesians.

Another area of particular interest with regard to the use of Ps. 68:19 by the author of Ephesians, also related to the Moses-traditions associated with Psalm 68, concerns the connection of the psalm with the feast of Pentecost as a celebration of the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Such connections, if they can be shown to exist early enough to have influenced the composition of Ephesians, would provide additional evidence associating the psalm with the giving of spiritual gifts to the early church. This in turn would

indicate a link with Christ's gift to the church of the gifts (or gifted individuals) mentioned in Eph. 4:11ff. Chapter 4 of the present study investigates several lines of evidence which point to a relationship between Eph. 4:7-11 and the giving of the Spirit.

The contextual argument for a subsequent descent of Christ in the passage, which formed the primary basis for the arguments of von Soden and Abbott, will be developed at length in chapter 5. Consideration is also given to the theological implications of identifying the ascended Christ as the Spirit who returned to distribute gifts to his church.

In addition, there has never been a comprehensive attempt (as far as we can determine) to trace the history of interpretation of Eph. 4:7-11. Thus the first chapter of the present study attempts to provide the basic framework for such an investigation, by placing the present discussion within a historical tradition, and at the same time by demonstrating how the various current interpretations of the passage came into existence. The primary purpose of this study, however, is to articulate and defend a particular interpretation as adequately as possible, with consideration of other interpretive possibilities as necessary. The present writer harbours no illusions that the material presented here will result in a definitive solution to the problems of the passage. Nor is the present study intended to provide a comprehensive treatment of all the interpretive problems in Eph. 4:7-11; some details which are not directly relevant to the basic interpretation are not discussed at all. But it is hoped that the issues discussed here will provide a sound basis upon which future discussions of the problems of the passage may proceed.

The Authorship of Ephesians and the Present Study

Anyone who approaches the study of the Epistle to the Ephesians soon comes to realize that one of the major introductory problems which must be addressed is that of authorship, and we must pause to consider the situation briefly before proceeding with our study. Although extremely well-attested in the early church, Pauline authorship of the letter has not gone unchallenged in the last two centuries. Questions were raised as early as 1519 by Erasmus, who found the style of Ephesians especially awkward because it differed greatly from that of the other Pauline epistles. This led him to doubt that the epistle was genuinely Pauline, but he remained convinced of its authenticity despite these doubts due to the spiritual content of the letter.¹ It was not until 1792 that the British Unitarian E. Evanson actually denied Pauline authorship of Ephesians; only two years before (in 1790) W. Paley had affirmed the unanimity of scholarship regarding the authenticity of Ephesians. Paley firmly rejected the idea that either Ephesians or Colossians could be a forgery, one based upon the other. The relationship between Ephesians and Colossians continued to be a problem, however; in 1824 L. Usteri questioned the authenticity of Ephesians not on the basis of the imagery and style of the letter itself but because of the similarities it bore to Colossians. In the first half of the 19th century one of the most influential scholars to raise doubts concerning Pauline authorship of Ephesians was W. M. L. deWette, who objected to the traditional ascription of authorship on the basis of the close literary connection to Colossians and the style of Ephesians itself, which he described as rich in vocabulary but cumbersome due to the accumulation of relative clauses,

¹Erasmus' objections are mentioned by A. van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 39 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), p. 10.

participles, prepositional phrases, and genitives. Similar criticisms would continue to be made by F. C. Baur and others of the Tübingen school until the end of the 19th century.

In 1872 H. J. Holtzmann presented a complex theory of the interrelationship between Ephesians and Colossians which was to become widely influential.² According to Holtzmann Ephesians was not authentic, but an imitation of Colossians, which in turn was a mixture of authentic Pauline and interpolated material. The author of Ephesians, who had produced an imitation of Colossians, later interpolated material from his own composition (Ephesians) back into Colossians. Thus both epistles as we now have them comprise a mixture of secondary material and authentic Pauline material. Although Holtzmann's analysis of the relationship between the two letters was widely respected at the time, it failed to win a large number of adherents for his theory. Later successors found it necessary to modify the theory to account for a greater degree of independence in Ephesians than Holtzmann himself had recognized.

The questions raised against the authenticity of Ephesians in the 19th century did not go unanswered, however. British and German scholars such as B. Weiss, F. J. A. Hort, and later T. K. Abbott, T. Zahn, and A. von Harnack continued to defend the authenticity of the epistle, responding to the arguments against Pauline authorship put forward by deWette, Baur, Holtzmann, and others. The next major turn in the debate was to come in 1933 with the publication of the American scholar E. J. Goodspeed's theory, which attempted to offer a reconstruction capable of explaining how Ephesians (if not genuinely Pauline) came to enjoy such early and widespread

²See H. J. Holtzmann, *Kritik der Epheser- und Kolosserbriefe* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1872).

acceptance.³ Goodspeed proposed that around 80-90 CE, long after the death of Paul, an Asian Christian put together a collection of Pauline epistles and wrote Ephesians as an introduction and summary intended to win acceptance for the nearly-forgotten work of the apostle he so admired. As he later developed the theory Goodspeed went so far as to identify the author and collector as Onesimus, bishop of Ephesus in the time of Ignatius (110-17 CE). Goodspeed's theory was refined further by one of his former students, J. Knox, who attempted to explain the obvious flaw in Goodspeed's hypothesis, namely, that no known list of the Pauline corpus places Ephesians at the beginning (where one would expect it if it were indeed composed as an introduction to all of the Pauline epistles).⁴ The resulting theory gained worldwide recognition when it was taken up (with modifications) by the British scholar C. L. Mitton, first in one of a series of articles on unsolved NT problems in the *Expository Times* (1948) and then with the publication of *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (1951).⁵ Naturally Goodspeed's theory (as modified and expanded by Knox and Mitton) has not met with universal acceptance. It has been challenged on a number of points, especially with regard to the purpose it proposes for Ephesians (an introduction to the Pauline epistles) and the position of the letter at the beginning of the original Pauline corpus. Knox's contributions to the theory in this regard have been questioned upon close examination by C. H. Buck, Jr in a 1949 study.⁶

³E. J. Goodspeed, *The Meaning of Ephesians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933).

⁴J. Knox, *Philemon Among the Letters of Paul* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935).

⁵C. L. Mitton, "Unsolved New Testament Problems: Goodspeed's Theory Regarding the Origin of Ephesians", *Expository Times* 59 (1948), pp. 323-27, and *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951).

⁶C. H. Buck, Jr, "The Early Order of the Pauline Corpus", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 68 (1949), pp. 351-57.

The primary assumption upon which the entire theory rests, however, is the non-authenticity of Ephesians. Two recent scholars who have continued to argue for the Pauline authorship of Ephesians are J. N. Sanders and D. Guthrie, both of whom point out the strength of the external evidence in favour of authenticity.⁷ This is so strong as to warrant, in Sanders' opinion, a proof of non-authenticity amounting to demonstration. Guthrie, in particular, is not willing to accept Mitton's plea for cumulative consideration of the evidence against authenticity, and examines in some detail the case for pseudepigraphy (which he finds unconvincing). Additional evidence in support of authenticity comes from two scholars who have conducted detailed investigations into the interrelationship of Ephesians and Colossians, E. Percy (1946) and A. van Roon (1974). While acknowledging the many difficulties associated with the position, both have concluded that, on the whole, the probabilities still favour Pauline authorship of Ephesians.⁸

As we have seen, the debate over the authorship of Ephesians is a continuing one, a controversy that NT scholarship in general will probably not be able to resolve to the satisfaction of all concerned given the present state of our knowledge. At this point it would be helpful to survey the range of scholarship which has divided over this question from the time the issue of authorship was first raised with regard to Ephesians at the end of the eighteenth century until the present day.

⁷J. N. Sanders, *Studies in Ephesians*, ed. F. L. Cross (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1956), pp. 9-20, and D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, vol. 2: *The Pauline Epistles* (London: Tyndale Press, 1961), pp. 110-28. Guthrie responds in detail to many of Mitton's arguments.

⁸E. Percy, *Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheserbriefe* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1946), and A. van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 39 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974).

The chart which follows is a list of scholars who have endorsed or rejected Pauline authorship of Ephesians during the last two centuries, arranged in chronological order with those holding opposing views in juxtaposition. Dates given in parentheses are those of the commentary, NT introduction, study, or essay in which the writer's position on the authorship of Ephesians is stated. This chart is by no means exhaustive. It serves to illustrate, however, the diversity of scholarly opinion regarding the authorship of Ephesians over the past two centuries.

AGAINST PAULINE AUTHORSHIP	UNCERTAIN	FOR PAULINE AUTHORSHIP
E. Evanson (1792)		W. Paley (1790)
L. Usteri (1824)		J. G. Eichhorn (1812)
W. M. L. deWette (1826, 43)		E. Mayerhoff (1838) ⁹
F. C. Baur (1845)		
F. Schleiermacher (1845) ¹⁰		
A. Schwegler (1846) ¹¹		B. Weiss (1855)
S. Davidson (1868)		
S. Hoekstra (1868)		
E. Renan (1869)		
F. Hitzig (1870)		
H. Ewald (1870)		
A. Hilgenfeld (1870, 75)		
H. J. Holtzmann (1872)		
W. Hönig (1872)		
O. Pfeiderer (1873, 90)		J. J. Koster (1877)
W. Seufert (1881)		
Hermann von Soden (1887)		
W. Brückner (1890, 1922)		
A. Klöpffer (1891)		G. Salmon (1892)
C. Weizsäcker (1892)		F. J. A. Hort (1895)

⁹Mayerhoff accepted Ephesians as Pauline but rejected the authenticity of Colossians.

¹⁰Schleiermacher held that Ephesians was written by Tychicus (with Paul's consent) after the pattern of Colossians.

¹¹Schwegler was a follower of F. C. Baur who dated both Ephesians and 1 Peter in the second century, although he thought 1 Peter to be the earlier of the two.

	A. Jülicher (1899)	T. K. Abbott (1897)
E. von Dobschütz (1904)		E. Haupt (1902)
W. Soltau (1905)		J. A. Robinson (1904)
		B. F. Westcott (1906)
		T. Zahn (1906)
W. Wrede (1907)		A. von Harnack (1910)
Hans von Soden (1911)		
P. Wendland (1912)		
W. Bousset (1913)		
E. Norden (1913, 23)		
J. Weiss (1917)		
J. Moffatt (1918)		
R. Reitzenstein (1921)		
M. Goguel (1926, 35) ¹²		
M. Dibelius (1927)		J. de Zwaan (1927)
H. Weinel (1928)		J. Schmid (1928)
		C. H. Dodd (1929)
		W. Lock (1929)
		R. Asting (1930)
		E. F. Scott (1930)
	H. Schlier (1930, 57) ¹³	
E. Käsemann (1933)		O. Roller (1933)
E. J. Goodspeed (1933, 56)		
W. Ochel (1934)		
J. Knox (1935)		C. A. A. Scott (1935)
		P. Benoit (1937, 59)
W. L. Knox (1939)		
P. Schubert (1939)		
		F. C. Synge (1941) ¹⁴
		L. Mowry (1944)
		W. Michaelis (1946)
		E. Percy (1946)

¹²M. Goguel at first completely rejected the Pauline authorship of Ephesians. Later he revised his position and considered portions of the epistle to be Pauline, with later interpolations bearing the influence of a Gnostic heavenly redeemer myth. In the genuine portions of Ephesians there was no evidence of gnosticism. Goguel's later position is articulated in "Esquisse d'une solution nouvelle du problème de l'épître aux Éphésiens", *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 111 (1935), pp. 254-85; 112 (1936), pp. 73-99.

¹³Schlier had expressed doubts about the authenticity of Ephesians in his 1930 work *Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief*, *Beiträge zur historischen Theologie* 6 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930). However, in later editions of his commentary *Der Brief an die Epheser* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, original ed. 1957; 3rd-6th ed. 1962-68) Schlier defended the view that, in spite of the use of gnostic language and emphasis on ecclesiology, the epistle was written by Paul. Finally, near the end of his life, Schlier's doubts concerning Pauline authorship were reiterated orally to R. Schnackenburg, as noted in *Der Brief an die Epheser*, *Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* 10 (Zürich: Benziger Verlag; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), p. 21, n. 16.

¹⁴Synge, like Mayerhoff, held that Ephesians is Pauline, but Colossians is not. See his brief commentary, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: SPCK, 1941).

AGAINST PAULINE AUTHORSHIP	UNCERTAIN	FOR PAULINE AUTHORSHIP
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C. L. Mitton (1948, 51)

R. Heard (1950)

R. Bultmann (1951, 55)

C. Maurer (1952)

H. F. D. Sparks (1952)

F. W. Beare (1953)

C. Masson (1953)

D. E. Nineham (1956)

E. Schweizer (1956)

S. G. F. Brandon (1957)

J. A. Allan (1959)

J. L. Price (1961)

H. Conzelmann (1962)

G. Johnston (1962)

R. Kasser (1962)

W. Marxsen (1963)

W. G. Kümmel (1965)¹⁹

A. Q. Morton (1965)

P. Pokorný (1965)

C. H. Buck, Jr (1949)

J. Dupont (1949)

P. N. Harrison (1950)¹⁵

N. A. Dahl (1951)

A. H. McNeile (1953)¹⁶

C. S. C. Williams (1953)

H. Chadwick (1960)

T. W. Manson (1956)

J. N. Sanders (1956)

A. M. Hunter (1957)

G. Schille (1957)

H. J. Cadbury (1958)¹⁷

A. Wikenhauser (1958)

M. Barth (1959, 74)

D. Guthrie (1961)

F. F. Bruce (1962, 84)¹⁸

R. M. Grant (1963)

J. I. Cook (1965)

A. Feuillet (1965)

J. Murphy-O'Connor (1965)²⁰

A. Robert (1965)

E. Gaugler (1966)²¹

¹⁵Harrison believed Ephesians was written by a devoted Paulinist after the apostle's death, although he accepted most of Colossians (except for 1:15-25 and 2:4, 8-23) as genuine. See "Onesimus and Philemon", *Anglican Theological Review* 32 (1950), pp. 268-94.

¹⁶Both A. H. McNeile and C. S. C. Williams thought the lack of conclusive evidence for or against Pauline authorship should cause one to refrain from a final decision. See A. H. McNeile, *An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. rev. by C. S. C. Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 165-75.

¹⁷Cadbury acknowledges that the evidence for or against Pauline authorship is inconclusive, but seems to prefer to regard the epistle as genuine Pauline. See "The Dilemma of Ephesians", *New Testament Studies* 5 (1958-59), pp. 91-102.

¹⁸Bruce has maintained his opinion in favour of Pauline authorship in his most recent work, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), pp. 237-40.

¹⁹*Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 14th ed. (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1965).

²⁰J. Murphy-O'Connor holds that an amanuensis who was a former Essene wrote Ephesians under the direct supervision of Paul. See "Who Wrote Ephesians?", *Bible Today* 18 (1965), pp. 1201-9.

²¹Gaugler in *Der Epheserbrief*, *Auslegung neutestamentlicher Schriften* 6 (Zürich: EVZ, 1966) was convinced by the work of E. Percy, *Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheserbriefe* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1946), that the question of authenticity needed to be re-examined. He thought Percy had by his study increased the probability of authenticity although he had

G. H. P. Thompson (1967)

J. C. Kirby (1968)

J. L. Houlden (1970)

J. Gnilka (1971)

R. P. Martin (1971)²²

J. Ernst (1974)

N. Perrin (1974)

H. Koester (1982)

F. Mußner (1982)

R. Schnackenburg (1982)

A. F. L. Klijn (1967)

A. van Roon (1974)

J. A. T. Robinson (1976)

It is the opinion of the present writer that Ephesians does indeed represent the work of the Apostle Paul. Objections which have been raised against its authenticity, while presenting legitimate difficulties, do not appear sufficient (in our judgement) to overturn the early and widespread external evidence which favours Pauline authorship. Thus the present work is written with the assumption that Paul did in fact write the Epistle to the Ephesians. An attempt has been made, however, to examine the evidence in a non-prejudicial fashion with regard to authorship, and to point out in the notes places where one's assumptions about authorship may affect the interpretation of the data. Indeed, the present writer has made a conscious effort to avoid direct reference to Paul in most instances and to refer instead to "the author of Ephesians" so as not to distract the reader from the issues at hand. It could even be argued that rejection of Pauline authorship would have made the defence of the thesis presented here an easier task, since one would not have to take into account whether the

not proven it. But Percy's work did convince Gaugler that one need not be an imprecise researcher simply because one argues for authenticity.

²²R. P. Martin, "Ephesians", in *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, vol. 11: *2 Corinthians—Philemon* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1971), pp. 125-77, holds that the teaching of the epistle is Pauline, but that composition and style were entrusted by Paul to a colleague and amanuensis. Martin believes this colleague of Paul who composed Ephesians to be Luke.

imagery and concepts involved could have come from the same mind that produced the other Pauline epistles. As it stands, however, the present writer is convinced that nothing in the thesis set forth in the following chapters is inconsistent with Pauline authorship of Ephesians. In confirmation of this we may observe that two of the earliest adherents of the interpretation of Eph. 4:7-11 put forward here, H. von Soden and T. K. Abbott, held differing views on the authorship of the letter; Abbott endorsed Pauline authorship while von Soden rejected it. With this in mind we may proceed to the examination of the issues at hand without prejudice.

Chapter One

The Descensus ad Inferos and Eph. 4:7-11

The Doctrine of the Descensus

As early as the middle of the 15th century of the present era, R. Pecock, bishop of St Asaph (1444) and later of Chichester (1450), rejected the doctrine of the Descent to Hell, and denied apostolic authorship of the 'Apostles' Creed'.¹ Whether or not the doctrine of the *descensus* can be found in the Epistle to the Ephesians is the subject of the present study. But before turning to the exegesis of Eph. 4:7-11 and the examination of related background issues, a brief survey of the history of the doctrine of the *descensus* should prove interesting.

The belief that Christ spent the *triduum* (the interval between his death on the cross and his resurrection) in the underworld was common in Christian teaching from the earliest times. It may have been in the background of a number of New Testament passages, as A. T. Hanson recently sought to prove.² The doctrine did not appear in credal formulations until 359 CE, when it was mentioned in the 'Fourth Formula of Sirmium' (the only scriptural reference given is Job 38:17): the Lord "died, and descended to the underworld [*εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια κατελθόντα*], and regulated things there, Whom the gatekeepers of hell saw and shuddered".³ But the tradition of a descent of Christ to the underworld between his death and resur-

¹J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, 1972), p. 5.

²A. T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SPCK, 1980), pp. 122-56.

³J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, p. 378.

rection is far older. It finds frequent mention among the post-apostolic fathers: Ignatius (died ca. 110 CE) apparently alludes to the doctrine (Πρὸς Μαγνησιεῖς 9.3),⁴ and so does Polycarp (died ca. 156 CE) in Πρὸς Φιλιππησίους 1.2.⁵ Irenaeus (died ca. 202 CE) makes repeated mention of the *descensus* (*Adversus haereses* 4.27.2, 5.31.1, and 5.33.1). Among the earliest to elaborate the doctrine is Tertullian (died ca. 220 CE), who states in *De anima* 55.2:

Nor did he ascend into the heights of heaven before descending into the lower regions of the earth ["in inferiora terrarum"], that he might there make the patriarchs and prophets partakers of himself.⁶

A reference to the *descensus* occurs seven or eight times in the *Homilies of Aphraates* (ca. 337-345 CE), twice in the 3rd century *Acts of Thomas*,⁷ at

⁴Ignatius' actual statement reads, "and therefore, he whom they [the prophets] rightly awaited, when he came, raised them from the dead" [καὶ διὰ τοῦτο, ὃν δικαίως ἀνέμενον, παρῶν ἤγειρεν αὐτοὺς ἐκ νεκρῶν]. The Greek text of Ignatius' Epistle to the Magnesians is from the Βιβλιοθηκὴ Ἑλληνῶν Πατέρων καὶ Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συγγραφεῶν, vol. 2: Κλημῆς ὁ Ῥωμῆς—Διδαχὴ τῶν Δώδεκα Ἀποστόλων—Βαρναβᾶ Ἐπιστολῆ—ἡ πρὸς Διογνητὸν Ἐπιστολῆ—Ἰγνατίου (Athens: Apostolic Diaconate of the Church of Greece, 1955), p. 270. While this could imply belief in a *descensus ad inferos*, it may be no more than an allusion to Matt. 27:52.

⁵The phrase in Polycarp is, "to our Lord Jesus Christ, who on behalf of our sins suffered to the point of death, 'whom God raised from the dead, having loosed the pains of Hades'". The Greek text, from the Βιβλιοθηκὴ Ἑλληνῶν Πατέρων καὶ Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συγγραφεῶν, vol. 3: Πολυκαρπὸς Σμυρνής—Ἐρμας—Παπίας—Κοδρατὸς—Ἀριστείδης—Ἰουστίνος (Athens: Apostolic Diaconate of the Church of Greece, 1955), p. 15, reads as follows: εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, ὃς ὑπέμεινε ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἕως θανάτου καταντῆσαι, «ὃν ἤγειρεν ὁ θεὸς λύσας τὰς ᾠδύνας τοῦ ᾄδου». The phrase λύσας τὰς ᾠδύνας τοῦ ᾄδου is quoted from Acts 2:24, in a form also found in a few manuscripts of the so-called "Western" text (e.g., D [05, codex Bezae or Cantabrigiensis], most of the Itala manuscripts, the Vulgate, and the Peshitta). The great majority of NT manuscripts read τοῦ θανάτου for τοῦ ᾄδου. Polycarp quotes the text without elaboration, but it seems likely that anyone who followed the reading of codex D [05] et al. in Acts 2:24 would have held to some sort of doctrine of a *descensus*, because the text itself virtually requires it. Since Polycarp does not comment on the reading, it probably did not originate with him, but represents an even earlier variant reading.

⁶Translation by the present writer from the text of *De anima* 55 in *Corpus Christianorum, series latina*, vol. 2: *Tertulliani Opera* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954), p. 862. For discussion of this text, and whether Tertullian is alluding to the OT text of Ps. 68:19 or Eph. 4:8 (the NT quotation of Ps. 68:19) see below, ch. 3, pp. 165-68.

⁷*Acts of Thomas* 10 addresses Christ as "ambassador sent from the height who didst

least once in Ephraim the Syrian's (died ca. 373 CE) *On our Lord*, and in the Edessene document contained in the *Doctrine of Addai* which was quoted by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 1.13.20, ἔσταυρώθη, καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὸν ᾅδην).⁸

From these early references to the doctrine of the *descensus* it was only a few short steps to more elaborate formulations. Christ was active during the three days between his death and resurrection preaching salvation to the souls in Hades, or alternatively, performing a triumphant act of liberation on their behalf and defeating Satan in the process. Hippolytus (died ca. 235 CE) added the idea that John the Baptist was Jesus' forerunner in the underworld just as he was on earth,⁹ while Hermas proposed that the apostles and teachers who themselves had died carried on the Lord's ministry in the underworld and baptized their converts.¹⁰ Inter-

descend even to Hell, who having opened the doors didst bring up thence those who for many ages had been shut up in the treasury of darkness, and show them the way that leads up to the height..." [E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. W. Schneemelcher, trans. and ed. R. McL. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), vol. 2, p. 448]. This passage is understood to refer to the *descensus* by W. Foerster [*Die Gnosis*, vol. 1: *Zeugnisse der Kirchenväter* (Zürich and Stuttgart: Artemis, 1969), p. 347] although it should be noted that J. A. MacCullagh suggests that in this passage 'Hell' may not constitute a reference to the underworld, but refers rather to the earth itself [*The Harrowing of Hell: A Comparative Study of an Early Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), p. 305].

⁸Eusebius' *Hist. eccl.* 1.13.20 is quoted from the Βιβλιοθηκη Ἑλληνων Πατερων και Ἐκκλησιαστικων Συγγραφεων, vol. 19: Τίτος Βοστρων—Θεοδωρος—Ἡρακλειας—Ἀλεξανδρος Λυκοπολεως—Ἐυσεβιος Καισαρειας (Athens: Apostolic Diaconate of the Church of Greece, 1959), p. 222. Many of the Eastern sources are discussed by R. H. Connolly in "The Early Syriac Creed", *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 7 (1906), pp. 202-223, and included in W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents* (London, n.p., 1864; reprint ed., Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1967). The statement quoted by Eusebius from the *Doctrine of Addai* is also found (in English translation) in Cureton, p. 5.

⁹*De Christo et anti-Christo* 45, where after quoting GJohn 1:29 ("Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"), Hippolytus adds, "οὗτος προέφθασε καὶ τοῖς ἐν ᾅδην προεναγγελίσασθαι, ἀναιρεθεὶς ὑπὸ Ἡρώδου" [Βιβλιοθηκη Ἑλληνων Πατερων και Ἐκκλησιαστικων Συγγραφεων, vol. 6: Ἰππολυτος (Athens: Apostolic Diaconate of the Church of Greece, 1956), p. 212].

¹⁰*Similitudes* 9.16.6 of the *Shepherd of Hermas*; the passage in question reads: "...these apostles and teachers who preached the name of the Son of God, after they had fallen asleep in the power and faith of the Son of God, preached also to them that had fallen asleep before them, and themselves gave unto them the seal of the preaching. Therefore they went down

pretations involving preaching and/or baptism were usually inferred from 1 Peter 3:19-22, while those involving a triumphant liberation of captives were based on Eph. 4:7-10. But it seemed scarcely credible that the Old Testament saints, who had foreseen Christ's coming, should need to be enlightened concerning his person, and gradually, as it came to be believed that an offer to the unconverted dead of a second opportunity for repentance in the nether world was inappropriate, the view of the *descensus* which emphasized the deliverance of the saints and the defeat of Satan gained prominence in the West. By the time of Augustine (died 430 CE) the view that Christ had liberated from Hades any persons other than those who had foreseen his coming and kept his precepts by anticipation was branded heretical.¹¹

A Brief History of the Interpretation of Eph. 4:7-11

The doctrine of the *descensus ad inferos*, as we have seen, was well established in the early church. When we turn to the interpretation of Eph. 4:7-11 the picture is less clear.¹² Early ecclesiastical writers who affirmed their belief in the doctrine of a *descensus* did not always trouble themselves to offer a scriptural reference in support of their view, especially in cases where they assumed it to be commonly held. As mentioned previously, the

with them into the water and came up again. But these went down alive [and again came up alive]; whereas the others that had fallen asleep before them went down dead and came up alive" [J. B. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers* (London, Macmillan, 1891; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956), p. 232].

¹¹Augustine, *De haeresibus* 79, in *Corpus Christianorum, series latina*, vol. 46: *Aurelii Augustini Opera* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), p. 336.

¹²A brief but helpful survey of the history of interpretation of the passage in question is found in E. Haupt, *Die Gefangenschaftsbriefe*, *Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1899), pp. 141-50.

first credal formulation to refer explicitly to the doctrine of the *descensus*, the Fourth Formula of Sirmium (359 CE), gave only a single scriptural reference in support of the doctrine. That reference—to Job 38:17—was far less clear than references to either of the two NT passages commonly associated with the *descensus* would have been. Such tendencies make it difficult to say with certainty what a given writer would have believed about Eph. 4:7-11 (or any other specific biblical passage concerned with a possible *descensus*).

The interpretation of the descent in Eph. 4:7-11 as a descensus ad inferos

Eph. 4:9-10 as Christ's descent to the underworld in the early and medieval church. Nevertheless, in spite of the difficulties associated with any attempt to determine the view of a given Father on the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:7-11, it appears that a number of early commentators understood the passage in question to contain a reference to Christ's descent to the underworld. Tertullian's statement in *De anima* 55.2, mentioned above, almost certainly reflects such an understanding of Eph. 4:9-10 because of the reference to Christ ascending "into the heights of heaven" following a descent "into the lower regions of the earth".¹³ The purpose of Christ's descent, according to Tertullian, was "to make the patriarchs and prophets partakers of himself". This suggests that Tertullian may have interpreted the phrase ἤχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλώσιαν in the quotation from Ps. 68:19 (Eph. 4:8) as a reference to Old Testament saints redeemed by Christ from Hades and led up from there by Christ upon his victorious ascent. Likewise (at

¹³See the text of the quotation from *De anima* 55.2 above, p. 2.

about the same time as Tertullian) Irenaeus interpreted Eph. 4:9-10 to refer to a *descensus ad inferos* which Christ made on behalf of his disciples.¹⁴ In the fourth century Ambrosiaster in his comments on Eph. 4:9 stated that Christ, triumphing over the devil, "descended into the heart of the earth" ("descendit in cor terrae"), that is, to the underworld, before his triumphal ascent above all the heavens.¹⁵ Victorinus was another early commentator who held to a *descensus* in Eph. 4:7-11.¹⁶ During the late fourth century Chrysostom interpreted the descent in Eph. 4:9-10 as a descent of Christ to Hades, citing in this connection Gen. 44:29 (εἰς ἄδου) and Ps. 142:7 (εἰς λάκκον). The 'captives' led captive, according to Chrysostom, were the devil (τὸν διάβολον), death (τὸν θάνατον), the curse (τὴν ἀράν), and sin (τὴν ἁμαρτίαν).¹⁷ Pelagius, at the beginning of the fifth century, held that Christ descended to hell with his spirit ("qui descendit cum anima in infernum"), but ascended to heaven with both body and spirit.¹⁸ Jerome, writing about the same time, apparently saw in the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10 a reference both to the incarnation and to a descent to the underworld. He assumed that the descent was prior to the ascent ("propterea ascendit, quia

¹⁴*Adversus haereses* 4.22.1. The context interprets Christ's finding the disciples asleep in Gethsemane two times as symbolic of his two comings, where in the first instance he did not awaken the disciples, but the second time he made them stand up. Thus at his first coming Christ did not awaken the dead who are asleep in the lower parts of the earth, although he did descend there to look upon them. After this Irenaeus quotes Eph. 4:9 and says that Christ's descent was on behalf of his disciples.

¹⁵*In Epistolam B. Pauli ad Ephesios*, ch. 4, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*, vol. 17 (Paris: n.p., 1845), col. 387. The works written by Ambrosiaster and attributed to St Ambrose are thought to have been written during the reign of Pope Damasus (366-84 CE).

¹⁶M. Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, Anchor Bible, vol. 34A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), p. 433, n. 45.

¹⁷*In Epistolam ad Ephesios Homilia XI*, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, vol. 62 (Paris: Garnier, 1862), cols. 81-82.

¹⁸A. Souter, *Pelagius' Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St Paul: Text and Apparatus Criticus*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: University Press, 1926), p. 364.

ante descenderat"), and cited GJohn 3:13, which suggests a possible allusion to the incarnation. Jerome went on to state, however, that the locus of Christ's descent was the underworld ("inferiora autem terrae, infernus accipitur ad quem Dominus noster Salvatorque descendit...", and "Quod autem infernus in inferiori parte terrae sit, et Psalmista testatur..."). Psalms 103:17 and 54:16 were then quoted as proof of this point.¹⁹ Theodoret, writing in the mid-fifth century, was aware that while Eph. 4:8 spoke of 'giving' gifts (ἔδωκε δόματα), the text of Ps. 68:19 read differently (ἔλαβε δόματα). He explained that Christ 'received' the faith of men and 'gave' gifts in return. The descent itself he interpreted as a reference to Christ's death (Κατώτερα γὰρ μέρη τῆς γῆς τὸν θάνατον ἐκάλεσεν).²⁰ Oecumenius, in the sixth century, quoted Gen. 42:38 and Ps. 27:1 in his interpretation of the descent in Eph. 4:9-10 to prove that Christ's descent was to Hades, that is, the underworld (λέγει δὲ τὸν ᾄδην). He added that the Nestorians made the heretical and blasphemous assertion that the one who descended and the one who ascended was the same (Ὁ αὐτὸς, φησὶν, ἐστὶν ὁ καταβάς καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς). What the Nestorians were actually asserting, as Oecumenius goes on to explain, is that Christ "descended into the flesh as God, but ascended (ἀναβαίνει) as a man, while he descended into Hades as a man, but arose (ἀνίσταται) as God".²¹

By the later medieval period the views of the earlier Fathers had become more or less accepted. Theophylact, in his eleventh century com-

¹⁹*Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Ephesios*, book 2, ch. 4, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*, vol. 26 (Paris: n.p., 1845), cols. 498-99.

²⁰*Interpretatio Epistolae ad Ephesios*, ch. 4, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, vol. 82 (Paris: Garnier, 1864), cols. 533-35.

²¹*Pauli Apostoli ad Ephesios Epistola*, ch. 6, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, vol. 118 (Paris: Garnier, 1864), cols. 1215-20.

mentary on Ephesians, affirmed like others before him that Christ descended to Hades (εἰς τὸν ᾄδην), and cited Gen. 24:38 and Ps. 27:1 as scriptural support.²² Thomas Aquinas' understanding of Eph. 4:7-11 is typical of the period, insofar as he repeats the opinions of his predecessors, but he appears to have held to multiple meanings for the descent itself. The captives which were led captive (according to the quotation from Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:8) were those saints who had died before Christ's coming and were being held like prisoners by the devil in limbo. These persons Christ liberated and brought with himself to heaven. Yet Aquinas did not stop with this interpretation of the captives; he added that the captives led captive by Christ did not refer only to those already dead, but also to the living, who were held under the bondage of sin until liberated by Christ. To these who were rescued alive from the power of the devil Christ had also given the (spiritual) gifts referred to in the quotation from Ps. 68:19. With regard to the ascent and descent mentioned in Eph. 4:9-10, Aquinas appears to have understood the ὅτι which introduces the reference to the descent in 4:9 (ὅτι καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς) as causal rather than exegetical or explanatory; thus he saw the reason for the ascent of Christ in his (prior) descent: had he not descended first, Christ could not have ascended. This suggests the possibility of understanding Christ's descent in terms of his incarnation rather than a descent to the underworld. In fact, Aquinas saw both meanings present in the passage. He first understood the phrase τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς as a reference to the parts of the earth itself which were inhabited by men, lower than the heavens and the atmosphere. Phil.

²²*Theophylacti Commentarius in Epistolam ad Ephesios*, ch. 4, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, vol. 124 (Paris: Garnier, 1864), cols. 1083-84. Ps. 27:1 was also quoted in support of a *descensus ad inferos* by Oecumenius (see above).

2:7 is quoted to show that Christ humbled himself at the incarnation by becoming like the rest of humanity. But Aquinas went on to give a second interpretation of τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς which understood the phrase to refer to parts lower than the earth itself, namely, hell. This he saw to agree with the phrase in the quotation from Ps. 68:19 which speaks of leading captivity captive, which he had previously understood to refer to Christ's liberation of those who were held as prisoners of the devil. Thus it appears that while Aquinas was aware of an interpretation of the descent in Eph. 4:9-10 which referred it to Christ's incarnation, he preferred to understand it as a reference to a *descensus ad inferos* (or more properly, *ad infernos*). Aquinas went on to assert the identity in 4:10 of "the one who descended" (ὁ καταβάς) with "the one who ascended" (ὁ ἀναβάς), seeing this as an affirmation of the unity of person in the two natures of Christ, the divine and the human.²³

Eph. 4:9-10 as Christ's descent to the underworld from the Reformation to the present. The views of the Reformers on the interpretation of Eph. 4:9-10 are not always entirely clear. M. Luther, for example, appears to have made no recorded comments on verses 7-9 of the passage in question. His comments on 4:10 concern only the exaltation of Christ to fill all things, and give no clue to his interpretation of the *descensus*.²⁴ From Luther's translation of Eph. 4:9 ("Daß er aber aufgefahren ist, was ist das andres, als daß er auch hinuntergefahren ist in die untersten Örter der

²³St Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, trans. M. L. Lamb, Aquinas Scripture Series, vol. 2 (Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1966), pp. 159-61.

²⁴M. Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Epistel-Auslegung*, ed. E. Ellwein, vol. 3: *Die Briefe an die Epheser, Philipper und Kolosser* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1973), pp. 40-59.

Erde?")²⁵ we may suppose that he held to the traditional view that Christ descended to the underworld during the period between his death and resurrection, but this is not absolutely certain.

Another of the early Reformers, H. Zwingli, wrote no commentary on Ephesians, but his marginal annotations on Greek manuscripts of the Pauline epistles he had copied by hand himself have survived. These copies of the Pauline epistles in Greek were made from Erasmus' 1516 edition (known as the *Novum Instrumentum*) and included Erasmus' own annotations and marginal glosses. They were probably done by Zwingli between 1516 and 1519. Apart from Erasmus, Zwingli used other sources for his marginal annotations. For the letter to the Ephesians these were the works of Ambrosiaster, Chrysostom, and Jerome.²⁶ Over the word κατώτερα in Eph. 4:9 appears the gloss "infimas" (the superlative of *inferus*). Following this is another gloss attributed to Jerome (the abbreviation used is "Hiero" [= Hieronymus]): "inferiora terre intelligit inferos" ("the lower parts of the earth' is understood by the term 'underworld'").²⁷ Both of these notes appear to have been picked up from Erasmus, but Zwingli gives no indication of a dissenting opinion. Thus it seems highly probable that Zwingli himself understood the descent in Eph. 4:9-10 to refer to Christ's descent to the underworld, that is, the traditional interpretation of the passage.

Over two centuries later, J. A. Bengel in his *Gnomon Novi Tes-*

²⁵*Lutherbibel erklärt: Die Heilige Schrift in der Übersetzung Martin Luthers mit Erläuterungen für die bibellesende Gemeinde* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1974), p. 389.

²⁶H. Zwingli, *Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke*, ed. E. Egli, G. Finsler, W. Köhler, O. Farner, F. Blanke, and L. von Muralt, vol. 12: *Randglossen Zwinglis zu biblischen Schriften*, Corpus Reformatorum, vol. 99, part 1 (Leipzig: Heinsius, 1941; reprint ed., Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1982), pp. 1-2, 7.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 81.

tamenti (1742) also understood the passage in Eph. 4:9-10 to refer to a *descensus ad inferos*.²⁸ H. A. W. Meyer, in the first edition of his commentary on Ephesians (1843), understood the descent mentioned in Eph. 4:9 to refer not to a descent to the underworld as such (since the subsequent ascent was from the earth itself), but to Christ's 'descent' to death and the grave ("Durch die Widerlegung der Erklärung von der Höllenfahrt fallen auch die Beziehungen auf *den Tod und das Begräbniss Christi*").²⁹ Later, in the 4th edition of his commentary on Ephesians (1862), Meyer appears to have changed his opinion; in this later edition he now favoured a descent to the underworld as the most probable interpretation of Eph. 4:9-10. The object of the author, according to Meyer, was to present Christ as the one who fills the entire universe, having previously passed through the whole world. He descended from heaven into the utmost depths of Hades, and from there to the utmost heights of heaven. This realm through which Christ passed had to extend not merely to earth, but to the underworld, because the author of Ephesians had the two utmost limits of the universe in view, as the *terminus a quo* and *ad quem* of Christ's triumphal progress. The expression εἰς τὰ κατώτερα τῆς γῆς could only be accounted for when it points the reader to a region lower than the earth, that is, Hades.

Meyer also considered the objection that Christ did not ascend from Hades to heaven, but from earth, to be insignificant because Christ at the point of his ascension from earth had already returned, arisen, and ascended from Hades, thus making Hades the deepest *terminus a quo* of

²⁸J. A. Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (Tübingen: Schramm, 1742), p. 779. Bengel states that the phrase ἵχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλώσιαν in Eph. 4:8 presupposes a descent into the "lower parts of the earth" ("in inferiores terrae partes").

²⁹H. A. W. Meyer, *Kritisch-exegetisches Handbuch über den Brief an die Epheser* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1843), pp. 161-62 [emphasis his].

his ascension, as it had been the *terminus ad quem* of his descent.³⁰

More recent interpreters writing at the turn of the century, such as B. F. Westcott³¹ and J. A. Robinson,³² continued to hold (more or less) to the traditional view of Eph. 4:7-11, i.e., that the passage referred to some sort of descent between Christ's death and resurrection, either to Hades or more simply to Sheol, the grave. E. Bröse, in an 1898 article, argued for a *descensus ad inferos* on the basis of the phrase τὰ κατώτερα τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9, which must refer to places "under the earth" rather than on the earth itself because of the contrast with the phrase ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, which specifies the locus of Christ's ascent as "above all the heavens". In this connection Bröse compared τὰ κατώτερα τῆς γῆς with καταχθονίων in Phil. 2:10, which clearly reflects a 'three-storeyed' cosmology. He also insisted that Paul never uses καταβαίνω to refer to the incarnation as John does, and pointed out that ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα in Eph. 4:10 must include Hades.³³ Certainly Bröse's observation about Paul's use of καταβαίνω is well taken; this is a major obstacle for the view that sees the descent in Eph. 4:9-10 as a reference to the incarnation.³⁴ The assumption that πληρώω in 4:10 must refer to 'filling' in the sense of 'occupying', however, is open to question. Eph. 1:20-23 may suggest a more non-spatial sense for πληρώω, namely, the 'filling' of the church by Christ, a meaning that is also sup-

³⁰H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Ephesians*, trans. from the 4th German ed. by M. J. Evans, rev. and ed. by W. P. Dickson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), pp. 450-51.

³¹B. F. Westcott, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: Macmillan, 1906; reprint ed., Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1978).

³²J. A. Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1904; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1979), p. 180.

³³E. Bröse, "Der descensus ad inferos Eph. 4,8-10", *Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift* 9 (1898), pp. 447-55.

³⁴This view is discussed below, pp. 21-35.

ported by the use of πληρώω in Eph. 5:18 where it is the Spirit who is to do the 'filling'.³⁵

In the present century the interpretation of Eph. 4:9-10 as some form of a *descensus ad inferos* has been endorsed by a number of scholars. W. Bousset endorsed such a view in his *Kyrios Christos*, originally published in 1913 as an attempt to explain the early Christian κύριος-cult in terms of an adaptation to the worship of hellenistic deities.³⁶ Another scholar who has argued for the traditional concept of a *descensus ad inferos* in Eph. 4:9-10 is J.-M. Vosté in his 1921 commentary on Ephesians published in Latin. Vosté's discussion of the problems in 4:7-11 is fairly complete, beginning with the OT context of Ps. 68:19 (quoted in Eph. 4:8). Although the psalm was originally an ascent-psalm of Yahweh, Paul made some changes in the form of the citation and applied the psalm to Christ. The addition of the word πρῶτον in the Greek text of Eph. 4:9 (*primum* in the Vulgate text) is considered dubious, although Vosté agrees with the sense of the addition (which necessitates a descent of Christ prior to the ascent mentioned in the psalm). In his discussion of the nature of the descent itself, Vosté mentions the three major interpretive possibilities: (a) a descent from heaven at the incarnation; (b) a descent to the underworld ("ad inferos, in sheôl"); or (c) a descent for the distribution of the gifts and for the indwelling of the Spirit in the souls of the just. The latter view is attributed to Abbott, following von Soden, although it is rejected without lengthy consideration as being

³⁵See below, ch. 5, p. 250, n. 27, for bibliography related to the problems of the πλήρωμα terminology in Eph. 1:20-23, most of which are beyond the scope of the present work.

³⁶W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginning of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. J. E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), pp. 30-31. The 1st German ed. appeared in 1913; the 4th German ed. was published in Göttingen in 1935 by Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht.

contrary to Pauline logic, which would necessitate a prior descent. As far as the two remaining possibilities are concerned, Vosté sees the determining factor as the identification of the "inferiores partes terrae" (in Greek, τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς). He discusses the possible interpretations of the genitive τῆς γῆς and concludes that a partitive genitive, indicating the locus of the descent as Sheol or the underworld ("inferos"), is preferable. This is supported by the analogy of scripture (Ps. 62 [63]:10 and Ps. 138 [139]:15 are mentioned), by doctrinal and literary analogies with Rom. 10:7, Acts 2:27, 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6, and by the logic of the context, which mentions the locus of Christ's ascent as "super omnes coelos" (ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν).³⁷

H. Odeberg in his *The View of the Universe in the Epistle to the Ephesians* (1934) also argues for a traditional understanding of the *descensus ad inferos*, although his analysis proceeds along lines that are more philosophical than linguistic or grammatical. He notes that an acceptance of Christ's descent into the underworld is not bound up with any idea of the liberation of imprisoned or condemned spirits.³⁸ The main argument Odeberg offers in favour of such a descent is that Christ must be victorious over all the evil cosmic powers of the universe, and this implies he must pursue them to the farthest and deepest recesses of their activity:

He [Christ] must, hence, go beyond the surface-world, in which fallen mankind dwells, to the depths of Darkness, the utmost sphere of the authority of evil.³⁹

It should be noted, however, that Odeberg appears to have overlooked the significant fact that the author of Ephesians does not locate the evil powers

³⁷J.-M. Vosté, *Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1921), pp. 182-84.

³⁸H. Odeberg, *The View of the Universe in the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1934), pp. 17-18.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 19.

in the underworld, but in the air, where they are subject to defeat upon Christ's victorious ascent (cf. Eph. 1:21, 2:2, 3:10, and 6:12). Therefore, in order to overcome the powers, a *descensus ad inferos* would not be required. Another scholar who has supported the traditional view of a *descensus* in Eph. 4:9-10 is P. Benoit, in his 1937 article on the Pauline perspective demonstrated by the epistle.⁴⁰

In his 1952 commentary on Ephesians E. F. Ströter also understands the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10 to be a descent to the underworld. During this time Christ, according to Ströter, preached to the imprisoned spirits, as described at greater length in 1 Peter 3:18-21. Ströter differs from many interpreters, however, in that he thought this descent was not made during the *triduum* but after Christ's resurrection on the third day. At that time (and not before) Christ was given the keys of Hades and death and had unhindered access into and out of the underworld. He went there not as a dead person, himself bound by death, but as the one who had been dead and was now alive for ever and ever, holding the key to the realm of shadows.⁴¹

F. W. Beare, in his exegesis of Ephesians in *The Interpreter's Bible* (1953), acknowledges the associations of Psalm 68 with Pentecost in the early church. However, he still manages to assert (with surprising dogmatism) that the phrase εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 "cannot mean simply the earth as lower than the heavens. It is certainly a reference—the earliest in Christian literature—to the descent of Christ into Hades."⁴² Beare gives no evidence to support his contention in spite of the

⁴⁰P. Benoit, "L'horizon paulinien de l'épître aux Éphésiens", *Revue Biblique* 46 (1937), p. 348.

⁴¹E. F. Ströter, *Die Herrlichkeit des Leibes Christi: Der Epheserbrief*, 2nd ed. (Gümligen/Bern: Verlag Siloah, 1952), pp. 99-100.

⁴²F. W. Beare, "The Epistle to the Ephesians", in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 10 (New

certainty with which it is asserted. Another influential advocate of this traditional interpretation of Eph. 4:9 has been F. Büchsel, whose article on κατώτερος in the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* has become well known.⁴³ Büchsel mentions that καταβαίνειν may be a technical term for descent to the underworld, although he wisely acknowledges that this does not prove determinative for its use in Eph. 4:7-10. Neither is the use of the genitive phrase τῆς γῆς conclusive, although a partitive genitive following μέρη would be simpler as an explanation for the use of the genitive here. Büchsel believes the strongest argument in favour of a descent of Christ to the place of the dead is the antithesis to the descent found in Eph. 4:10: the one who descended "into the lower parts of the earth" (εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς) in 4:9 is described as "the one who ascended above all the heavens" (ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν). For Büchsel, as for E. Bröse, these phrases denote the outer limits of Christ's journey.⁴⁴ Since the locus of his ascent, however, is at God's right hand in the height of heaven, the logical antithesis would not be the earth itself, but under the earth, i. e., the sphere of the underworld, the place of the dead. J. Schneider, in his article on μέρος in the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, acknowledges his debt to Büchsel; on account of Büchsel's article on κατώτερος he modified his own view of the descent in Eph. 4:9ff.⁴⁵ Schneider stated in this article on μέρος that he had been persuaded by Büchsel's arguments that the locus of Christ's descent was the realm of the dead. In

York: Abingdon, 1953), p. 689.

⁴³F. Büchsel, s.v. "κατώτερος", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, trans. and ed. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), vol. 3, pp. 641-42.

⁴⁴See the discussion of Bröse's view above, p. 12.

⁴⁵J. Schneider, s.v. "μέρος", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, trans. and ed. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), vol. 4, pp. 597-98.

a previous article Schneider had endorsed the view that Christ's descent in 4:9-10 referred to his incarnation.⁴⁶

Yet another recent advocate of the *descensus ad inferos* in Eph. 4:7-10 is A. T. Hanson, who has examined the scriptural background of the doctrine of the *descensus* in chapter 5 of *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture* (1980).⁴⁷ Hanson has surveyed a considerable number of other interpreters with regard to their views on the *descensus* in Eph. 4:9-10, citing with approval the arguments of Bröse and Büchsel and rejecting those of Schlier⁴⁸ and Caird.⁴⁹ Hanson concludes that the author of Ephesians held that Christ made the *descensus ad inferos*, and this lies behind 4:9-10. Finding in the quotation he cites from Ps. 68:19 a reference to Christ's victorious ascent, and holding to a doctrine of the *descensus* as well, the author of Ephesians wrote verses 9-10 in order to introduce a reference to the *descensus* into the context. What Hanson does not adequately explain, however, is why the author of Ephesians would have felt compelled to introduce such a reference to the *descensus* into the context of Eph. 4:7-10, assuming for the moment that he did hold to such a belief.⁵⁰

Still another interpreter whose view of Eph. 4:9-10 appears to have been influenced by Büchsel is J. D. G. Dunn. In his *Christology in the Making* (1980), Dunn essentially follows Büchsel's arguments: (1) the phrase τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς is most naturally read as a synonym for

⁴⁶S.v. "καταβαίνω", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, trans. and ed. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), vol. 1, p. 523.

⁴⁷A. T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SPCK, 1980), pp. 135-150.

⁴⁸H. Schlier's view is discussed on pp. 23 and 24 below.

⁴⁹See below, pp. 40-43, for a description of G. B. Caird's view.

⁵⁰A. T. Hanson's arguments in favour of a *descensus ad inferos* in Eph. 4:9-10 are critiqued at much greater length in ch. 2 of the present work. See below, pp. 85-90.

Hades, as indicated by references like Ps. 63:9 [LXX 62:10]; (2) a genitive following μέρη would most likely be partitive, not appositive; and (3) the logical antithesis of "above all the heavens" in Eph. 4:10 is "underneath the earth".⁵¹ Thus Dunn sees Eph. 4:9-10 as a variation of the common NT association of Christ's death with his resurrection.

Eph. 4:9-10 as Christ's descent into death: a variation on the 'traditional' interpretation. There is a further variation of the 'traditional' view (that the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10 was a *descensus ad inferos*) which deserves brief attention. It is becoming increasingly common among recent interpreters to relate the locus of the descent to Sheol, the place of the dead, without attempting to specify what Christ did there (if anything) or whom he encountered while there (if anyone). With this interpretation the *descensus* in Eph. 4:9-10 simply becomes a way of referring to Jesus' physical death, without introducing speculation about any activities he may have conducted in the underworld during the *triduum*. G. H. P. Thompson, for example, in his 1967 commentary *The Letters of Paul to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon*, appears to favour this understanding of Christ's descent in Eph. 4:9-10. He suggests that the "slight alterations" Paul has made to the quotation from Ps. 68:19 may indicate he is following a "Jewish paraphrase", by which Thompson probably means the Aramaic Targum to the Psalms.⁵² Since the commentary is on the text of the New English Bible, Thompson discusses briefly the possibility that the

⁵¹J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980), pp. 186-87.

⁵²G. H. P. Thompson, *The Letters of Paul to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon*, Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), pp. 67-68. It was the editorial policy of the series to avoid technical references to extra-biblical literature (General Editor's Preface, p. v).

descent of 4:9-10 refers to the incarnation (the NEB renders τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς as an appositive genitive with the phrase "he descended to the lowest level, down to the very earth"). But Thompson concludes that the alternative translation (in an NEB footnote) "descended to the regions beneath the earth" is to be preferred. This, says Thompson, is a way of describing physical death, and thus stresses that Jesus became involved in the full range of human experience—even death itself—not as an outside observer, but as an insider.

This is essentially the same position taken by N. Hugedé in his 1973 commentary, *L'Épître aux Éphésiens*. He attributes the inference of a descent in the midrashic exegesis (Eph. 4:9-10) of the quotation from Ps. 68:19 (Eph. 4:8) to Paul's preference for strong antitheses. Hugedé mentions the possibility that the genitive in the phrase εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς may be an appositive referring to the earth itself as opposed to heaven ("Aux cieux s'oppose la terre, qui sont les deux aspects de la carrière du Christ"). Thus the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10 could refer to his incarnation, and this would correspond perfectly to the author's intention, which was to establish a relationship between the psalm quotation and the redemptive career of Christ considered in its two antithetical aspects, earth and heaven. However, although Hugedé finds much to favour such an interpretation, he ultimately prefers (after briefly examining the evidence for understanding τῆς γῆς as partitive genitive) to understand τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς as a reference to the regions below the earth itself ("les parties inférieures de la terre"). In the formula κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς he sees an allusion to Christ's death on the cross ("la fin tragique du Christ") and his sojourn among the dead ("son séjour parmi les morts"). Hugedé makes it clear that he does not consider this a reference to the

descensus ad inferos in the traditional sense, however, because he specifically dismisses the idea that Christ between his death and his resurrection paid a visit "in spirit" to the dead in Hades. Such a belief, expressed by certain of the Fathers, was too dependent upon Greek mythology and today has been abandoned.⁵³

Another recent interpreter whose view of the descent probably belongs in this category is F. Rienecker, whose 1961 commentary on Ephesians is part of the Wuppertaler Studienbibel. Rienecker's actual view is very difficult to determine; he quotes Luther's translation of Eph. 4:9 with approval (which would seem to imply an understanding of the descent in terms of the 'traditional' view, as Luther had done) but he then states that this descent of Christ to the lowest parts of the earth is connected to the reality and completeness of his incarnation. In what appears to be an attempt to relate the passage to the experience of modern men, Rienecker states how Christ descended to the uttermost depths of human experience as well as to the deepest part of the earth, that is, the last, deepest depth of all:

In den letzten Tiefen hat Christus gekämpft, und da hat Er gesiegt. In den letzten Tiefen ist Er gewesen bis zur Gottverlassenheit, damit aus Ihm heraus die Neuschöpfung einer Menschheit kommen könnte, die sich darstellt in der Gemeinde. In diesen letzten Tiefen ist die Sünde gesühnt, in diesen tiefsten Tiefen ist der Fall überwunden, es ist der Schlange der Kopf zertreten, der Tod überwunden und der Gewalthaber des Todes, der Teufel, besiegt. Und der, der hinuntergefahren ist in diese letzten Tiefen, ist siegreich zurückgekehrt.⁵⁴

Here Rienecker is dealing not so much with the original meaning of the

⁵³N. Hugedé, *L'Épître aux Éphésiens* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1973), pp. 152-54. Hugedé's rejection of the 'traditional' concept of the *descensus ad inferos* is stated in n. 49, p. 153, where he adds that such ideas were probably transferred to Eph. 4:9-10 from existing interpretations of 1 Peter 3:19-20 and 4:6.

⁵⁴F. Rienecker, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Epheser*, Wuppertaler Studienbibel 8 (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1961), p. 143.

text of Eph. 4:9-10 as with its theological significance, especially in terms of the human condition.

Still another recent writer who appears to prefer an interpretation which relates the descent to the death of Christ is F. Mußner in *Der Brief an die Epheser* (1982), although he acknowledges the difficulty of resolving the precise meaning of the phrase εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9.⁵⁵ Against the view that the descent is a reference to Christ's incarnation, he points out that the author of Ephesians could simply have written "he descended to the earth" rather than introducing the reference to the "lower regions" of the earth. Since in the letter to the Ephesians the demonic and satanic 'powers' are located in the realm of the air (2:2, 6:12), it is more probable that the author meant by the phrase "the lower parts of the earth" a reference to Sheol, the place of the dead. Mußner admits that nowhere else in Ephesians is there a reference to Sheol; if the phrase in 4:9 describes the realm of the dead it is the only place in the letter to do so. Nevertheless, this is most probably what was intended, or else behind 4:9 must lie a reference to the more traditional idea of a descent to the underworld (*ad inferos*). In the final analysis, says Mußner, the question cannot be resolved with certainty.

The interpretation of the descent in Eph. 4:7-11 as the incarnation

Within the last century two other significant interpretations have gained popularity, however, and each of these has seriously challenged the traditional view (with its variations). The more widely held of these alter-

⁵⁵F. Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar zum Neuen Testament, vol. 10 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1982), p. 123.

native views understands the descent in Eph. 4:9-10 as a reference to the incarnation. Such an understanding of the descent motif in Ephesians 4 is not new; in substance it dates back at least as far as Theodore of Mopsuestia (died 428 CE).⁵⁶ In the later medieval period P. Abelard, in the twelfth century, appears to have held such a view. The descent of Christ, according to Abelard, referred to his humiliation when he entered human existence at the incarnation; the "lower parts of the earth" ("inferiores partes terre") described the humble and poorer region of the earth itself to which Christ came.⁵⁷ Even Aquinas, who ultimately preferred to interpret Eph. 4:9-10 as a *descensus ad inferos*, demonstrated a knowledge of the view that the descent referred to Christ's incarnation.⁵⁸ During the period of the Reformation a somewhat similar view which saw in the descent a reference to the crucifixion as Christ's supreme humiliation was held by J. Calvin, apparently following Chrysostom.⁵⁹ More recently such a view was endorsed by J. Macpherson, who in his *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (1892) held that the descent of Eph. 4:9-10 referred to the

⁵⁶Theodore of Mopsuestia, "Ad Ephesios", *In Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii*, ed. H. B. Swete (Cambridge: University Press, 1880), vol. 1, pp. 112-96.

⁵⁷A. Landgraf, *Commentarius Cantabrigiensis in Epistolas Paule e Schola Petri Abaelardi: 2. in Epistolam ad Corinthios, Iam et IIam ad Galatas et ad Ephesios*, Publications in Medieval Studies, vol. 2 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1939), pp. 415-16.

⁵⁸St Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, pp. 160-61. For a fuller discussion of Aquinas' views, see above, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁹J. Calvin, *Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios*, Corpus Reformatorum, Calvini Opera, vol. 15 (Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1895), cols. 141-240. How Calvin derived this understanding of the *descensus* from Chrysostom is not clear, since Chrysostom clearly understood the *descensus* in Eph. 4:9-10 to refer to a descent of Christ to Hades (see above, p. 6). Furthermore, G. B. Caird, in "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", *Studia Evangelica* 2, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), pp. 535-45, states that Calvin understood the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10 to refer to the incarnation (p. 536). Presumably Calvin himself saw the descent as referring to the crucifixion, but as the lowest, most humiliating aspect of the incarnation, and this may have given rise to the apparently differing formulations of Calvin's view.

incarnation, including Christ's earthly sufferings and his death on the cross.⁶⁰

In general, those who hold this view must understand the genitive τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 as an appositive genitive. In this case the genitive would further specify the preceding phrase which it modifies: the expression τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς would be equivalent to "the lower regions, namely, the earth". Such an understanding of the genitive phrase τῆς γῆς has become increasingly popular among interpreters and grammarians in the twentieth century.⁶¹

H. Schlier, in *Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrieft* (1930), sees Eph. 4:9-10 as a reference to the descent and ascent of the redeemer (this view would be developed more fully in his later commentary).⁶² W. L. Knox, in *St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles* (1939), understands 4:9-10 as a reference both to the incarnation and to the ascension.⁶³ Following Schlier, E. Percy takes the phrase κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς to refer only to the earth itself as the lower regions, in comparison with heaven. But rather than a reference to a heavenly redeemer myth involving a descent and ascent, Percy sees in Eph. 4:9-10 (as Knox does) a reference to the incarnation.⁶⁴

H. Bietenhard acknowledges that Paul in Eph. 4:8 quoted the same

⁶⁰J. Macpherson, *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1892), pp. 302-3.

⁶¹For a survey of modern scholars who understand τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 as an appositive genitive, see ch. 2, pp. 73-76.

⁶²H. Schlier, *Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrieft*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 6 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930). The view is repeated and expanded in his commentary, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1957), which is discussed more fully below.

⁶³W. L. Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles* (Cambridge: University Press, 1939), pp. 194ff.

⁶⁴E. Percy, *Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheserbrieft* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1946), p. 274.

psalm which the rabbis used to refer to Moses' ascension to heaven, but Paul interpreted it as a reference to Jesus Christ. Yet 4:9 does not speak of a descent to Hades, for such an idea would be superfluous in this context. So the phrase κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς describes not the underworld, but the earth, which in the cosmos is 'under' heaven.⁶⁵ Bietenhard does not explain why a reference to the incarnation in this context would be any less superfluous than a reference to a descent to the underworld.

M. Dibelius mentions von Soden's view,⁶⁶ observing that the "descent" is related to the "giving of gifts". But he rejects von Soden's interpretation because he considers such a meaning for καταβαίνειν remote, and adds that ἔδωκεν δόματα proves nothing because it appears in the quotation. Quoting Theodore of Mopsuestia, Dibelius takes the view that Eph. 4:9-10 refers to the incarnation, although he believes the addition of πρῶτον in 4:9 to be a later scribal gloss.⁶⁷

H. Schlier in his commentary on Ephesians, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (1957), understands the passage in light of the Gnostic 'Redeemed Redeemer' mythology ("der Urmensch-Erlösermythus"), comparing καταβῆναι to the Johannine usage (GJohn 6:62, 20:17, et al.). The phrase τῆς γῆς is therefore understood as an appositive genitive, confirmed by the observation that elsewhere in Ephesians the evil 'powers' are not in Hades or Sheol but in 'heaven'. Schlier understands the descent itself in 4:9 to refer to the incarnation. The insertion of πρῶτον (the major textual variant in 4:9) is rejected because it is somehow indicative of the '*descensus ad inferos*'

⁶⁵H. Bietenhard, *Die himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Spätjudentum* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1951), p. 237.

⁶⁶H. von Soden's view is discussed below, pp. 35-36.

⁶⁷M. Dibelius, *An die Kolosser, Epheser, an Philemon*, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 12 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1953), p. 80.

view. It is not clear how this connection is made since the inclusion of *πρῶτον* in Eph. 4:9 would be perfectly compatible with Schlier's own view.⁶⁸

F. W. Grosheide, in his 1960 commentary on Ephesians, also interprets the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10 as a reference to the incarnation. The use of the verb *ἀναβαίνειν* in the quotation from Ps. 68:19 suggests also *καταβαίνειν*, a related descent similar to the descent and ascent mentioned in GJohn 3:13; this is introduced by the author of Ephesians in 4:9. The phrase *εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς* in 4:9 does not describe the parts lower than the earth itself, but the earth, as the region lower than heaven. Grosheide mentions several alternative explanations for the passage, including the traditional view that Christ descended to hell, a reference to Christ's incarnation, or merely a reference to his death and burial. Because verse 10 speaks of an ascension to heaven, however, Grosheide thinks the descent most likely refers to Christ's descent to earth at the incarnation. He understands *τῆς γῆς* as a genitive of apposition, citing additional examples of this usage in 2 Cor. 5:5, Rom. 4:11, and Rom. 8:23.⁶⁹

Basing his view on the application by Targum Psalms of Ps. 68:19 to Moses, J. Cambier in a recent article (1963) argues that Paul made an analogous application of the Psalm to Christ: he descended to earth (the incarnation) and then ascended to heaven (the resurrection and ascension) to affirm his universal sovereignty. Cambier further asserts that '*monter au ciel*' in Paul never describes what we call the ascension, but refers to Christ's glorification. It is even less probable, in Cambier's opinion, that

⁶⁸H. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1957), p. 192.

⁶⁹F. W. Grosheide, *De Brief van Paulus aan de Efeziërs*, Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1960), pp. 65-66.

the descent in Eph. 4:9 involves a descent of the Holy Spirit or a descent to hell or at the parousia.⁷⁰ Actually Cambier's own reconstruction of the argument would seem to favour a subsequent descent (at Pentecost), but he does not appear to be aware of this. Neither does he discuss the textual problem with the insertion or deletion of *πρῶτον* in 4:9, nor the fact that his own view relegates the midrash consisting of 4:9-10 to a mere parenthesis in the argument.

F. Foulkes in his 1963 commentary understands the descent of Eph. 4:9 to refer either to the incarnation or to the death of Christ. He does not state a clear preference for one view over the other, although it appears from the discussion following that Foulkes is inclined to interpret the descent as a reference to the incarnation. The passage stresses the universality of Christ's presence (there is no place in existence, in earth or heaven, where his presence is not known or felt) and the identity of the one who ascended with the one "who came down and lived among men, sharing their sorrows, trials, and temptations".⁷¹ Foulkes also rejects the notion of a subsequent descent at Pentecost on the grounds that the giving of gifts to men is associated in the text with the ascent, not the descent.⁷²

In 1963 M. Zerwick's commentary *Der Brief an die Epheser* was published, in which he also takes the position that the locus of Christ's descent

⁷⁰J. Cambier, "La signification christologique d'Éph. IV.7-10", *New Testament Studies* 9 (1963), pp. 262-75. Cambier does not indicate whether some other scholar proposed the view he mentions on p. 275, that the descent in Eph. 4:9 refers to the descent of Christ at the parousia; the present writer has been unable to locate any other reference to such a position. Cambier's own view is reiterated in his exposition of Ephesians published three years later, *Vie Chrétienne en Église: L'Épître aux Éphésiens lue aux chrétiens d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Desclée, 1966), pp. 127-29.

⁷¹F. Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (London: Tyndale Press, 1963), pp. 116-17.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 117.

was the earth itself, with the descent referring to the incarnation. Zerwick observes that in Paul's quotation from Ps. 68:19 the very point the apostle wishes to make is missing, since the psalm speaks not of giving gifts to men, but of accepting gifts from men. Paul, says Zerwick, is following a rabbinic interpretation of the psalm, which applied the verse in question to Moses who ascended Mt Sinai to receive the law and bring it down to men as a gift. No mention is made of the source of this rabbinic interpretation of Ps. 68:19 or its presence in Tg Psalms, nor does the author comment on the difficulties in dating the rabbinic sources. In the midrashic explanation which follows the quotation (verses 9-10), Zerwick understands Paul to be attempting to prove that the only one who can have ascended to heaven is Jesus Christ, the one who first descended from heaven. Although Zerwick does not cite any text in support of this view, his language is suggestive of GJohn 3:13, and it is clear that he subscribes to a prior descent at the incarnation.⁷³

G. Johnston, in his 1967 commentary in the New Century Bible, calls Ps. 68:19 a lection for Pentecost (without citing any proof); the alteration from 'receiving' to 'giving' in Eph. 4:8 is described as "deliberate". Johnston mentions briefly B. Lindars' view that the psalm was deliberately modified in the interest of doctrine on the model of the Qumrân prophetic commentaries on OT texts. As far as the descent itself is concerned, Johnston understands it as a descent to the earth itself, not the underworld, because he interprets Ephesians in light of a gnostic heresy.⁷⁴ Thus (al-

⁷³M. Zerwick, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, trans. Kevin Smyth (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), pp. 106-7.

⁷⁴G. Johnston, *Ephesians, Philippians Colossians and Philemon*, New Century Bible (London: Thomas Nelson, 1967), pp. 18-19.

though not explicitly stated) it is clear that he understands the descent of Christ in 4:9-10 as a reference to the incarnation.

J. Ernst in *Pleroma und Pleroma Christi* (1970) notes the difficulty of establishing the connection of all the elements of Eph. 4:8-13. He also observes that the relation of ἀναβάς to the ascension and κατέβη to the incarnation is disputed, as is whether τὰ κατώτερα κ.τ.λ. means the earth as the realm of humanity, or whether a descent to the underworld is in view. Ernst does not offer any detailed critique of the various positions, nor any significant defense of his own view. He only states in passing that a reference to the incarnation is more probable than any other interpretation.⁷⁵ The possibility of a subsequent descent is not raised, despite the appearance of G. B. Caird's article arguing for such an interpretation some six years earlier.⁷⁶

R. N. Longenecker believes that Eph. 4:8-10 probably incorporates a traditional understanding among early Christians, since both the citation of Ps. 68:19 and the parenthetical comment which follows it are given as though commonly assumed. What Longenecker calls "a statement of the obvious" is made in order to bridge the gap in the argument from the "gift of Christ" in 4:7 to a discussion of Christ's gifts in 4:11-16. Thus the references to Christ's descent and ascent reflect an earlier tradition rather than being original with Paul. Probably the original motif had to do only with the humiliation of Christ's incarnation, servitude, temptation, and death, themes which occur in a number of NT passages like Phil. 2:6-11, John 1:1-

⁷⁵J. Ernst, *Pleroma und Pleroma Christi: Geschichte und Deutung eines Begriffs der paulinischen Antilegomena* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1970), p. 136.

⁷⁶This article by G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", *Studia Evangelica* 2, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), pp. 535-435, will be discussed in more detail below; see pp. 40-43.

18, 3:13, 6:62, Heb. 2:5-18, and 5:1-10. Soon it appears to have been extended to include a *descensus ad inferos* as it was held in the second century (if not already present in 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6).⁷⁷ Although Longenecker does not explicitly state his view concerning the interpretation of Eph. 4:8-10, it is probable that he would relate the descent in 4:9-10 to Christ's incarnation, and possibly to his death also.

J. Gnilka, in his 1971 commentary, acknowledges that Psalm 68 and Exodus 19 are the Jewish synagogue lessons for Pentecost, and that Christians, reflecting upon this tradition, could have set the work of the ascended Christ and the 'ascended' Moses in parallel. However, this does not mean that one can already assume the existence, at the time Ephesians was written, of a Christian Pentecost.⁷⁸ Does the descent, then, refer to the incarnation or to the sending of the Holy Spirit (i.e., at Pentecost)? Gnilka thinks that in light of Eph. 4:10, which establishes the full identity between the one who ascended and the one who descended, only a reference to the incarnation is possible.⁷⁹

Like Gnilka, H.-J. Klauck in a 1973 article sees the identification between the one who ascended and the one who descended in Eph. 4:10 as suggesting a reference to the incarnation. Klauck argues that the genitive

⁷⁷R. N. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*, Studies in Biblical Theology, 2nd ser., 17 (London: SCM, 1970), p. 60.

⁷⁸J. Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 1971), p. 208. Gnilka means by a 'Christian' Pentecost a celebration of Pentecost parallel to the Jewish celebration in which the descent of the Spirit (or of Christ in the person of the Spirit) is celebrated. This is almost certainly an allusion to G. B. Caird's article, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", *Studia Evangelica* 2, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), pp. 535-45, which will be discussed in more detail below; see pp. 40-43.

⁷⁹Gnilka points out in n. 8 (p. 208) that the identity here affirmed between the one who ascended and the one who descended is something *other* than the identification of the *works* of the Lord (κύριος) and the Spirit (πνεῦμα) found in 2 Cor. 3:17 (*contra* Caird).

τῆς γῆς in 4:9 should be understood as appositional or epexegetic, not as comparative or partitive, and that κατώτερος in the phrase τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς, although by form a comparative, could in later Greek be used as a superlative or even a positive. This would allow us to understand the statement in 4:9 (paraphrased) to mean, "Er stieg herab zur Erde, die (vom Himmel aus gesehen) tief unten liegt".⁸⁰ Klauck also sees in the cosmology of Ephesians further evidence that the earth is the destination of Christ upon his descent, rather than the underworld: the 'storeys' described by the author of Ephesians are not underworld, earth, and heaven, but earth, an intermediate zone ("Zwischenbereiche"), and heaven. It is in this 'intermediate zone' between earth and heaven that the cosmic powers are located according to the author of Ephesians (cf. Eph. 1:21; 2:2; 3:10; and 6:12). These powers were overcome by Christ at his ascent to heaven from earth, not during a supposed descent to the underworld. Thus, according to Klauck, the descent in Eph. 4:9-10 is best understood as a reference to the incarnation.

R. Schnackenburg, in a 1973 essay on the relationships between Christ, the Spirit, and the congregation in Eph. 4:1-16, states that a subsequent descent (by the Spirit at Pentecost) is ruled out for two main reasons: first, verses 9 and 10 do not easily lend themselves to such an interpretation, since even if 4:9 allows it, 4:10 would rule it out because the latter verse emphasizes the ascent again (with the final ἵνα clause) rather than the descent. Second, the portrayal of the procession of the Spirit at Pentecost as a descending of Christ would be unique in the NT. A total identification of Christ with the Spirit (which Schnackenburg thinks this

⁸⁰H.-J. Klauck, "Das Amt in der Kirche nach Eph 4, 1-16", *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 36 (1973), pp. 81-110. His paraphrase of Eph. 4:9 is found on p. 94.

view would necessitate) would be foreign both to Paul (including 2 Cor. 3:17) and John (John 14:16-20 and 20:22).⁸¹ Schnackenburg then concludes that there are two remaining explanations possible for 4:9: a descent to the underworld or the incarnation. He favours the second alternative, as follows: the author of Ephesians interpreted ἀναβῆς from the quotation in 4:9 and applied it to Christ using Jewish methods.⁸² This would be easily understood if the author were opposing a Jewish exegetical tradition which referred Ps. 68:19 to Moses.⁸³ But why introduce a reference to the descent? Schnackenburg explains that it is probably because the writer wishes to show Christ, who has ascended on high, in his exalted place (cf. Eph. 1:20-23). The phrase τὰ κατώτερα κ.τ.λ. is best explained from christological concepts like those of Chrysostom on Phil. 2:6-11. But this need not involve a descent to the underworld. If the purpose of the descent-ascent as given in Eph. 4:10 is that "all be filled", we should expect to find a reference to a 'power' in the underworld. But according to the cosmology of Ephesians, the powers are located not in the underworld but in the air.⁸⁴ This leads Schnackenburg to conclude that an allusion to (the Christian celebration of) Pentecost in the passage is unlikely. The quotation from Ps. 68:19 may be suitable to Pentecost, but this does not seem likely because the Spirit is not

⁸¹R. Schnackenburg, "Christus, Geist und Gemeinde (Eph. 4:1-16)" in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. B. Lindars and S. Smalley (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), pp. 279-96. References to Eph. 4:9-10 are found on pp. 287ff.

⁸²Probably Schnackenburg is referring to a form of midrash here, although in the article cited he does not explicitly state what method of Jewish exegesis he has in mind.

⁸³Jewish traditions associating Moses with Ps. 68:19 as background to Eph. 4:7-11 will be examined thoroughly in chapter 3 of the present work. In his later commentary (discussed below) Schnackenburg rejects the idea that the author's emphasis in 4:9-10 is directed against Moses.

⁸⁴Although Schnackenburg does not cite a specific reference, this is probably an allusion to Eph. 2:2 rather than 6:12.

directly mentioned in Eph. 4:9-10.

M. Barth, in his commentary on Ephesians in the Anchor Bible (1974), thinks (like Schnackenburg) that Eph. 4:8-10 places more emphasis on the ascent than on the descent.⁸⁵ The descent itself is not a *descensus ad inferos* for a number of reasons: (1) the LXX uses terminology to describe Sheol which differs from that of Eph. 4:9;⁸⁶ (2) other references to the spiritual 'powers' in Eph. 2:2, 6:12, and (possibly) 3:15 do not locate them "under the earth"; (3) in Ephesians the victory of Christ was achieved in his exaltation (cf. 1:19-21), not in a descent to the underworld;⁸⁷ (4) a descent to hell would be a second descent following Christ's descent to earth, but the text does not imply a 'two-stage' descent;⁸⁸ (5) parallels to Eph. 4:8-10, such as GJohn 3:13 and 17:5 do not suggest a reference to hell; and (6) a reference to the conquest of the underworld would be alien to the context of 4:9. Thus Barth concludes that the descent of Christ mentioned in Eph. 4:9 refers to his incarnation and most probably to his crucifixion.⁸⁹ Elsewhere Barth suggests that the author of Ephesians was acquainted with Targum Psalms or other antecedents of the tradition later found in the Talmud and

⁸⁵M. Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, Anchor Bible, vol. 34A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), pp. 432-34.

⁸⁶Examples cited are Gen. 44:29, Pss. 62 (63):10 and 138 (139):15, and Ezek. 32:18, 24.

⁸⁷This is a valid point, but the question remains, why the author felt it necessary to introduce reference to a descent at all. The victorious ascent was sufficiently affirmed in the quotation from Ps. 68:19.

⁸⁸However, neither does the text of Eph. 4:8-10 specifically mention a descent to earth at the incarnation (which would be the first 'stage' of a 'two-stage' descent). Ephesians contains no other explicit reference to the incarnation or to the pre-incarnate Christ, although Barth (and others) who argue for a reference to the incarnation by rejecting a 'two-stage' descent appear to assume that the author of Ephesians shared a concept of the pre-incarnate Christ similar to the Johannine concept of the pre-incarnate Λόγος found in GJohn 1:1-18. Whether Ephesians was written by Paul or not, it is far from clear that such a concept of a pre-incarnate Christ is reflected here.

⁸⁹M. Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, p. 434.

rabbinic literature, and in his exposition of Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:9-10 engaged in a correction of the contemporary exegesis of the psalm. What the author did may be called a midrash.⁹⁰

J. Ernst, in his commentary *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an Philemon, an die Kolosser, an die Epheser* (1974), also understands the descent in Eph. 4:9-10 to refer to the incarnation. Ernst mentions the later Jewish interpretation of Ps. 68:19 as a reference to Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Law and give it to men.⁹¹ The author of Ephesians has altered this tradition by replacing Moses with Christ and interpreting the distribution of the gifts as the installation of the offices mentioned in 4:11ff. Before this, however (in a midrashic exegesis from the first part of Ps. 68:19), what Ernst labels as "a cosmic exaltation-Christology" ("eine kosmische Erhöhungschristologie") is developed, which interrupts the immediate context ("die zwar den unmittelbaren Zusammenhang unterbricht").⁹² It is from the ascension that the necessity of a previous descent is inferred. Ernst goes on to state that although the Moses-typology still has a formal effect on this passage, the primary emphasis is on the christological dogma: the ascension takes precedence over the incarnation. The concept of Christ's pre-existence is assumed throughout by the author of Ephesians. Ernst also mentions the chiasmic arrangement of the ascent and

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 476. Barth notes here that "even if a person other than Paul wrote Ephesians, it is probable that he not only had rabbinic schooling but also was so concerned with some of its tenets and influence that he placed a correction before his Gentile-born readers".

⁹¹J. Ernst, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an Philemon, an die Kolosser, an die Epheser*, Regensburger Neues Testament (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1974), p. 351. In connection with this Moses-typology Midr. Teh. 68.11, Tg Ps. 68:19, and Aboth de Rabbi Nathan 2 are mentioned.

⁹²Ibid., pp. 351-52. By interpreting verses 9-10 as an 'interruption' in the context, Ernst is able to see the reference to the descent in 4:9f. as a virtual parenthesis in the author's argument.

descent according to the formula AB—BA, although he thinks it is questionable whether the order of ascent—descent represented here can be traced back exclusively to the Moses-typology. More in the forefront is the imagery of the cosmic triumphal procession. Ernst is unwilling to rule out completely the possibility that the mythical concept of the ascent of the 'Redeemed Redeemer' ("Urmensch-Erlöser") underlies the passage, but in the final analysis he acknowledges that the theological content of these verses remains without analogy.

R. Schnackenburg again addresses the problems of Eph. 4:7-11 in his recent commentary *Der Brief an die Epheser* (1982). While his overall position regarding the descent as a reference to the incarnation has remained unchanged, Schnackenburg has refined his view in a number of ways. He acknowledges that the Jewish interpretation of Ps. 68:19 as a reference to Moses and the Decalogue may well be pre-Christian, although an intentional departure from the Jewish tradition is not recognizable. The author's emphasis in Ephesians is not directed against Moses nor against God (as the original subject of ἀνέβη), but is to be understood only positively in terms of Christ. Schnackenburg also maintains that the perspective in Ephesians of a descent (at the incarnation) which precedes the ascent of Christ at his exaltation is identical with that of the Gospel of John, although he admits that there is no direct connection between Ephesians and the text of the Fourth Gospel. It is rather the common theological concept of the way of the Redeemer ("vom Weg des Erlösers") which underlies both writings and which is also expressed in somewhat different terminology in Phil. 2:6-11. As in his 1973 essay Schnackenburg sees in the latter passage

similarities to the ascent and descent of Eph. 4:7-11.⁹³

Another recent commentary on Ephesians by A. Lindemann (1985) also presents a similar view of the *descensus* in Eph. 4:7-11. Lindemann understands verses 9-10 to constitute an interpretation of the first line of the quotation from Ps. 68:19 in verse 8. The author of Ephesians has assumed without question that the psalm applies to Christ; he gives no explanation for the introduction of such a christological meaning into the context of Eph. 4:7-11. In other words, says Lindemann, what the author expounds in 4:9-10 he did not get from the text of Psalm 68; it is rather assumed and afterwards connected with the OT quotation. The author of Ephesians thus inferred from the statement of the ascent in 4:8a a prior descent of Christ to the "lower parts of the earth" ("den «unteren Teilen der Erde»"). This phrase refers to the earth itself, which seen from heaven is 'lower' or 'below'. In any case, the author of Ephesians was not thinking of a journey of Christ to hell (cf. 1 Pet. 3:19-20; 4:6) but rather meant (with respect to the descent and ascent of Christ) to refer to the incarnation. Lindemann mentions in this connection GJohn 3:13 and Phil. 2:6-11.⁹⁴

The interpretation of the descent in Eph. 4:7-11 as the descent of the Spirit

The other recent alternative proposed for the meaning of the *descensus* in Eph. 4:9-10 has found fewer adherents. This view, put forward by H. von Soden shortly before the end of the last century and endorsed

⁹³R. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 10 (Zürich: Benziger Verlag; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), pp. 180-82.

⁹⁴A. Lindemann, *Der Epheserbrief*, Zürcher Bibelkommentare (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1985), p. 77.

soon afterwards by T. K. Abbott, sees the descent as subsequent to the ascent mentioned in Eph. 4:8. The descent thus represents the return (i.e., descent) of the previously exalted Christ (in the person of the Spirit; according to some, at Pentecost) to bestow gifts (or gifted individuals) upon his church.

H. von Soden stresses the connection between Eph. 4:7 and 4:11 through the concept of the gifts bestowed by the ascended Christ. He concludes that the concept of the ascent mentioned in the quotation from Ps. 68:19 would have had no meaning whatsoever for the author of Ephesians if it were not connected with a corresponding descent. This connection is indicated in the text of Ephesians by the *καί* which precedes *κατέβη* in 4:9. According to von Soden the word order of the text strongly suggests that *καί κατέβη* denotes an event that follows the ascent, rather than preceding it. Furthermore, the identification of *ὁ καταβάς* in 4:10 with *ὁ ἀναβάς* would be superfluous if the descent had preceded the ascent. And this one who descended, *ὁ καταβάς*, is clearly the one who is the subject of the verb *ἔδωκεν* in 4:11, as shown by the resumption of *αὐτός* from 4:10 as the subject of the verb in 4:11. Thus for von Soden the descent introduced in Eph. 4:9-10 refers to the return of the ascended Christ to bestow upon his followers the gifts mentioned in 4:11ff. The reference to Christ's purpose in 4:10, *ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα*, does not necessitate a visit to Hades to 'fill' the underworld, because the phrase refers rather to Christ's filling of the church, as previously mentioned in 1:23. Finally, the ascent takes place from the earth itself, not from Hades, as would be the case if a *descensus ad inferos* were in view.⁹⁵

⁹⁵H. von Soden, ed., *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 3: *Die Briefe an die Kolosser, Epheser, Philemon; die Pastoralbriefe*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg and Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1893), pp. 135-36.

T. K. Abbott in his commentary on Ephesians (1897) argues for a similar interpretation of the passage. He rejects a descent to the underworld or simply to the grave for the following reasons: (1) τὰ κατώτερα is comparative in form, while a superlative would have been expected if the author had intended to say that Christ descended to a depth below which there was nothing deeper; (2) the OT passages which are adduced to explain the phrase τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 are poetic figures, and would have been understood as such by the author of Ephesians, who would not have used them to indicate a material locus for the place of departed spirits; and (3) the antithesis in Ephesians is between earth and heaven: since the ascent is from earth to heaven, the descent (by analogy) would be from heaven to earth.⁹⁶ Understanding the descent as a descent from heaven to earth would suggest either a reference to the incarnation or Abbott's own view, a subsequent descent of Christ to distribute the gifts mentioned in 4:11ff. According to Abbott, the latter view is preferable because (1) a reference to the incarnation would be superfluous in the present context, involving the assumption of the heavenly pre-existence of Christ; (2) a reference to the incarnation would not explain the emphasis on the identity of the one who ascended with the one who descended in 4:10, since this would be obvious if the descent occurred at the incarnation; (3) the descent is immediately followed in 4:11 by the reference to the gifts, suggesting that the descent was contemporaneous with the giving; and (4) the phrase καὶ κατέβη in 4:9 suggests a descent subsequent to ἀνέβη.⁹⁷ One of the

⁹⁶T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), p. 115.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 115-16. Abbott notes that the final observation concerning καὶ κατέβη was also made by von Soden.

most significant points raised by Abbott is the necessity for the author to infer a reference to the descent at all, unless he wished to relate it somehow to his overall theme of unity (4:1-6) and the distribution of the gifts which are intended to promote that unity (4:11-16). It is also worth noting that the arguments put forward by both von Soden and Abbott are primarily contextual ones which concern the logic of the passage and the coherency of the author's argument.

In the years which followed, the view of von Soden and Abbott won relatively few adherents. E. Graham, in his commentary on Ephesians in *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture including the Apocrypha* (1928), notes that the context favours a descent subsequent to the ascent, and refers to the gifts bestowed upon the church by the ascended Christ descending as the Spirit at Pentecost. Graham points out that in this case the phrase "the lower parts of the earth" equals simply 'this world below'; verse 10 indicates that it is the ascended Christ himself who, in spite of the heights to which he has ascended, still condescends to dwell in his church.⁹⁸ Another who expresses apparent agreement with the concept of a subsequent descent in Eph. 4:9-10, although his own view is not clearly articulated, is U. Simon in *Heaven in the Christian Tradition* (1958).⁹⁹

J. J. Meuzelaar, in *Der Leib des Messias* (1961), endorses a subsequent descent in Eph. 4:9-10 in which the ascended Christ returns to his church as the indwelling Spirit who distributes the gifts mentioned in 4:11ff. The modifications to the text of Ps. 68:19 as quoted in Eph. 4:8 may be

⁹⁸E. Graham, "The Epistle to the Ephesians", in *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture including the Apocrypha*, ed. C. Gore, H. L. Goudge, and A. Guillaume (New York: Macmillan, 1928), vol. 1, p. 547.

⁹⁹U. Simon, *Heaven in the Christian Tradition* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), p. 185, n. 3.

traced back to an ancient Jewish tradition associating Moses and his ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah with the words of the psalm; the 'gifts' were the tablets of the Law which Moses received on behalf of Israel. Meuzelaar notes that the author of Ephesians does not refer in 4:10 to "a filling of the universe" ("eine Erfüllung des Weltalls"), but to "a filling" ("eine Erfüllung") of the church, which is the point of the quotation from Ps. 68:19. The descent in 4:9-10 is not a reference to the incarnation, since the author of Ephesians makes no reference to the pre-existence of the Messiah. Nor is there any indication in the context of a reference to the death of the Messiah, which would indicate a descent to the grave or to the underworld. What the author emphasizes is the necessity of a descent by which the ascended one can give gifts to men.¹⁰⁰

According to E. D. Roels, *God's Mission* (1962), Eph. 4:8-10 deals with the exaltation and ascension of Christ, which he understands to be the same as the exaltation mentioned in 1:19-22. But the author's purpose in introducing a reference to the ascension in 4:8 is different from that of 1:19-22, and for that reason the author returns to the theme of the exaltation also. The emphasis in Ephesians 4 is not on the ascension itself, but on the giving of gifts (4:7, 8, 11) by the ascended one. Roels sees the descent as subsequent to the ascent, mentioning that this view has been defended by von Soden and Abbott.¹⁰¹ He understands the descent as a reference to Christ's distribution of the gifts as exalted ruler, fulfiller of prophecy, and the one who fills all things. The question the author asks in 4:9 thus con-

¹⁰⁰J. J. Meuzelaar, *Der Leib des Messias: Eine exegetische Studie über den Gedanken vom Leib Christi in den Paulusbriefen* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1961; reprint ed., Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1979), pp. 134-37.

¹⁰¹E. D. Roels, *God's Mission: The Epistle to the Ephesians in Mission Perspective* (Franker: T. Wever, 1962), pp. 161-63.

cerns the value of the fact that Christ ascended: of what value is his ascent, unless he also descended to the earth to provide gifts of leadership and grace for the church? Verses 9 and 10 should not, therefore, be seen as an interlude in the development of the author's thought, or as an incursion into his discourse, but should rather be seen as an essential part of its proper development. Roels observes that a subsequent descent is also suggested by the order in which the ascent and descent are mentioned in Ephesians 4, including the presence of the *καί* before *κατέβη* in 4:9.¹⁰² Such an interpretation would be more in harmony with the general cosmology of Ephesians as well, which appears to involve a 'two-storeyed' universe. On the other hand, a reference to a *descensus ad infernum* is completely foreign to the context in Ephesians 4; mention of it here would add little, if anything, to the significance of the ascension.¹⁰³

More recently, new arguments have been put forward in favour of a subsequent descent which go beyond the immediate context and involve the traditional interpretation of Psalm 68 in the first century CE and its connection with Pentecost and the giving of the Torah. A major contributor to the discussion in this regard has been G. B. Caird, who argues in an article published in *Studia Evangelica* 2 (1964) that neither the incarnation nor a descent to Hades could be inferred from Ps. 68:19 as quoted in Eph. 4:8. No satisfactory solution for the descent could be reached unless it could explain why the author of Ephesians believed that in the psalm, the descent could logically be inferred from the ascent, and why the author wanted to emphasize the identity of *ὁ καταβάς* with *ὁ ἀναβάς*.¹⁰⁴ If the descent mentioned in

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 163, n. 18.

¹⁰³*Descensus ad infernum* is Roels' term (p. 162).

¹⁰⁴G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", *Studia Evangelica* 2, ed. F. L.

Eph. 4:9-10 were subsequent to the ascent of 4:8, however, it would have been necessary for the author to infer it from the psalm in order to explain the giving of the gifts (4:11ff.). The Spirit at Pentecost is thus to be identified with the Christ who had previously ascended. This was possible for Paul because he did not always draw distinctions between the Spirit and the indwelling Christ. In this regard Caird mentions Rom. 8:9-10, 2 Cor. 3:17, and 1 Cor. 15:45, as well as the implication of Eph. 2:17, which refers to "a coming of Christ which has taken place since the crucifixion", an assumed interpretation in which Christ (or perhaps, Christ in the person of the Spirit) comes and proclaims peace to Gentiles who were far away as well as to Jews who were near.¹⁰⁵ The evidence in favour of a subsequent descent is drawn from two areas: (1) grammatical evidence and (2) what Caird calls 'liturgical' evidence. As far as the grammatical evidence is concerned, Caird identifies τῆς γῆς as a genitive of apposition, a fairly frequent usage in Ephesians.¹⁰⁶ The locus of the descent is therefore not the underworld,

Cross (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), pp. 535-45.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 537. Eph. 2:17 has long been recognized as difficult by commentators and is subject to a number of interpretations regarding when this 'coming' of Christ took place and how he made this proclamation of peace. A number of differing interpretations of the verse are given by M. Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation and Commentary on Chapters 1-3*, Anchor Bible 34 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), pp. 294-95. Barth concludes, "It is fruitless to try and pin down the specific moment of the peace proclamation to one event or period of Jesus Christ's ministry before, during, or after his death. A too precise dating and placing of the proclamation might amount to a limitation of its time and place, which would contradict the universal character of the peace made..." (p. 295). It must still be acknowledged that the interpretation suggested by Caird might have some validity if he is right about the subsequent nature of the descent in Eph. 4:9-10, although in 2:17 it seems more probable that the author of Ephesians is thinking of nothing more than a 'coming' of Christ in the person of his apostles who carried the gospel to the Gentiles and made this proclamation of peace on his behalf.

¹⁰⁶Caird in "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11" (p. 539) cites Winer's *Grammar of New Testament Greek* which lists Eph. 4:9 as an example of a genitive of apposition. Other examples in Ephesians which Caird mentions are 2:14 (φραγμοῦ), 2:15 (ἐντωλών), 2:20 (ἀποστόλων), and 4 instances in 6:14-17. The grammatical issues are discussed in ch. 2 of the present study, pp. 65-78; the appositive genitive in particular is discussed on pp. 71-77.

but the earth itself. Caird's 'liturgical' evidence consists of an attempt to associate Psalm 68 with Pentecost. The psalm was one of the appointed readings for Pentecost, which around the time Ephesians was written had come to be celebrated as the feast of the giving of the Torah at Moses' ascent of Sinai. Caird also mentions a possible connection between Targum Ps. 68 and Eph. 4:8, both of which contain a variation in the text of Ps. 68:19 not found in either the Masoretic text or the Septuagint.¹⁰⁷ Caird acknowledges that the Targum is a late work, but argues that it preserves an ancient tradition of exegesis which predated Ephesians. Finally, Caird argues that Psalm 68 was no longer a Jewish pentecostal psalm recording Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai, but a Christian pentecostal psalm (as interpreted by the author of Ephesians) recording the victorious ascent of Christ and his subsequent descent at Pentecost.¹⁰⁸ Most of this evidence is restated (albeit more briefly) by Caird in *Paul's Letters from Prison* (1976); there is added emphasis, however, on the unity of the theme of Christ's gifts to his church as introduced in Eph. 4:7 and continued in 4:11. Caird insists that the intervening material must be treated as an exposition, not an interruption, of this theme. He also emphasizes the difficulty in explaining the necessity of inferring a descent from Ps. 68:19 if the descent is a descent to Hades or a reference to the incarnation. If such were the case it would also be difficult to see why the author of Ephesians felt it necessary to affirm the identity of the one who ascended with the one who descended, as he does in 4:10. Caird concludes that the author has made use of a Jewish midrash on Ps.

¹⁰⁷G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", pp. 539-41. A full discussion of the variations in the text of Ps. 68:19 between the Masoretic text, the LXX, the NT text of Eph. 4:8, and Tg Ps. 68:19 may be found in ch. 3 of the present work; see pp. 136-47.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 541.

68:19 by reapplying it to Christ, in a similar fashion to Paul's use of midrash in 1 Cor. 10:4; a different midrash on another verse of Psalm 68 lies behind the account of Pentecost in Acts 2.¹⁰⁹

C. H. Porter, in his essay "The Descent of Christ: An Exegetical Study of Ephesians 4:7-11" (1966), also holds that Eph. 4:9-10 refers to a subsequent descent of Christ as the giver of gifts to his church. He argues, like Caird, that any valid exegesis of the passage must explain why the author believed that a descent could be inferred from the ascent of the psalm quotation, and why (in 4:10) the author insisted on the identity of the one who descended with the one who ascended. Porter considers a descent to Hades unlikely in Ephesians because in the epistle Christ's victory over the demonic powers is connected with his ascent; also there is no threefold division of the cosmos in Ephesians. A reference to the incarnation is considered equally unlikely because GJohn 3:13, a passage often cited in support of such a view, presumes the heavenly origin of the Son of man, while in Ephesians the identity of the ascended Christ becomes the basis for establishing the identity of the other figure, the one who descended (4:9-10).¹¹⁰ Porter mentions the reading of Ps. 68:19 found in Tg Psalms; he regards this as the preservation of an ancient traditional interpretation known to the author of Ephesians. The connection of Psalm 68 with Pentecost as a celebration of the giving of the Torah at Mt Sinai is also noted, although Porter introduces no new evidence to support this association.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, New Clarendon Bible (Oxford: University Press, 1976), pp. 73-75.

¹¹⁰C. H. Porter, "The Descent of Christ: An Exegetical Study of Ephesians 4:7-11", in *One Faith: Its Biblical, Historical, and Ecumenical Dimensions*, ed. R. L. Simpson (Enid, OK: Phillips University Press, 1966), pp. 45-55.

¹¹¹Cf. C. H. Porter, p. 54, n. 26, with G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", pp. 539-41.

J. C. Kirby, in *Ephesians, Baptism, and Pentecost* (1968), also appears to endorse the idea of a subsequent descent in Eph. 4:9-10. He notes that the reason for the quotation of Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:8 is that the ascension of Christ and the gift of the Spirit were in the author's mind; the author of Ephesians took over the rabbinic association of Psalm 68 with Pentecost while replacing Moses by Christ polemically. Kirby finds "strong support" for Abbott's position in Caird's 1964 article and cites a number of "reminiscences" of Psalm 68 throughout the entire Epistle to the Ephesians.¹¹²

In his 1970 commentary *Paul's Letters from Prison* J. L. Houlden cites with approval the interpretation of Eph. 4:9-10 as a subsequent descent of Christ. He too mentions Caird's 1964 article, noting that Caird has "convincingly argued that associations with that festival [i.e., Pentecost] were carried over into Christian use".¹¹³ Houlden notes the similarity of such a presentation of Christ's ascension and the bestowal of the gifts of the Spirit to that found in Luke-Acts; the author of the latter is in fact the only other NT writer to portray the ascension and the gift of the Spirit as separate from the resurrection. In the unquestioned Pauline epistles such distinctions are not made, at least in terms of successive temporal events.

Another adherent of this interpretation is R. P. Martin, who states

¹¹²J. C. Kirby, *Ephesians, Baptism and Pentecost* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1968), pp. 145-46; Caird's article and the allusions to Psalm 68 in Ephesians are mentioned on p. 187, n. 51. The allusions are Ps. 68:16 with Eph. 2:22 and 3:17; Ps. 68:9 with Eph. 1:18; Ps. 68:10 with Eph. 2:7; Ps. 68:4, 32 with Eph. 5:19; and Ps. 68:28, 35 with Eph. 3:16 and 6:10. These are from W. Lock, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen, 1929), pp. 11ff. Lock's theory that Psalm 68 underlies all of Ephesians is discussed at length by P. D. Overfield, "The Ascension, Pleroma and Ecclesia Concepts in Ephesians" (Ph.D. thesis, University of St. Andrews, 1976), pp. 99-103. While acknowledging that no individual parallel listed by Lock is convincing, Overfield is inclined to agree that some general similarities between Psalm 68 and Ephesians do exist.

¹¹³J. L. Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, Pelican New Testament Commentaries (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), pp. 310-11. The bracketed note is supplied by the present writer.

his preference for a subsequent descent in his article on Ephesians in *The Broadman Bible Commentary* (1971). He relates the descent mentioned in Eph. 4:9-10 to the impartation of the Spirit following the enthronement of Christ, which brings with it all the gifts of Christ to the church to prepare it for life and witness. Martin finds confirmation of this interpretation in the translation of 4:11 with its emphatic pronoun αὐτός: "And it was he [Gk. *autos*, as an emphatic pronoun—the One who fulfilled the prediction of Psalm 68] who gave."¹¹⁴

One of the most recent advocates of a subsequent descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10 has been A. T. Lincoln, first in his study of the heavenly dimension in Paul's thought, *Paradise Now and Not Yet* (1981), and again in a 1982 article on OT quotations in Ephesians.¹¹⁵ To Caird's arguments in favour of this interpretation Lincoln has added the following: (1) it may be possible to establish the association of Psalm 68 with Pentecost in pre-Christian Jewish tradition by references to the Book of Jubilees, the annual covenant renewal ceremony of the Qumran community, and the early Jewish synagogue liturgy; (2) the ἵνα-clause which concludes Eph. 4:10 is to be connected only to the immediately preceding statement about Christ's ascent, so that a descent to Hades is not required in order for Christ to "fill all things" (as the parallel with 1:22-23 makes clear); (3) the cosmology encountered elsewhere in Ephesians is 'two-storeyed' (heaven and earth) rather than 'three-storeyed' (heaven, earth, and underworld), and this fits

¹¹⁴R. P. Martin, "Ephesians", in *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, vol. 11: *2 Corinthians—Philemon* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1971), pp. 155-56. Bracketed material is that of Martin in the original source.

¹¹⁵A. T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to his Eschatology*, SNTS Monograph Series 43 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 155-63; "The Use of the OT in Ephesians", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982), pp. 16-57.

better with an understanding of the phrase κατώτερα [μέρη] τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 as an appositive genitive rather than a comparative or partitive genitive; (4) Philo in *Quaes. Gen.* 4.29 makes the descent of Moses from Mt Sinai following his ascent the basis for his argument concerning the necessity of a subsequent descent in conjunction with the ascent of a mystical experience. This last point is particularly important because of the traditional association of Moses with Ps. 68:19 found in Tg Ps. 68:19 (which bears other similarities to Eph. 4:8) and the classical rabbinic literature.¹¹⁶

*Conclusions on the history of interpretation
of the passage*

The doctrine of the *descensus ad inferos*, as we have seen, was well established in the early church. Recent commentators, however, have not reached a consensus as to whether the doctrine of the *descensus* lies behind Eph. 4:7-11 or not. Most modern interpretations have been in agreement with regard to the meaning of verses 7-8. Verse 7 introduces the section 4:7-16, which consists primarily of the well-known enumeration of the charismatic gifts (or more accurately, gifted individuals) intended to facilitate the growth of the church to maturity. The giving of gifts is substantiated by the quotation in verse 8 of Ps. 68:19 LXX (68:18 English versions). Virtually all interpreters would agree that verse 8 is here intended to refer to the victorious ascent of Christ following his death and resurrection (a topic previously mentioned in Eph. 1:20-23). This event was accompanied (or followed) by the

¹¹⁶The Moses-traditions associated with Ps. 68:19, as well as the relationship between Tg Ps. 68:19 and Eph. 4:8, are discussed at considerable length in ch.3 below. The arguments put forward by Lincoln may be found in *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, pp. 157-61; they are reiterated in "The Use of the OT in Ephesians", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982), pp. 18-25.

distribution to the church of the gifts described in 4:11ff.

It is the meaning of verses 9-10, comprising a midrash on the quotation from Psalm 68, which has created the major exegetical difficulty in the entire section.¹¹⁷ Two questions, if we can answer them, will point to a resolution of the problem: (1) to where did Christ descend?, and (2) when did this descent take place in relation to the ascent mentioned in verse 8? As we have seen, almost all recent interpreters have held with respect to the first question that the descent was either from earth to the grave (i.e., Sheol, the place of the dead)¹¹⁸ or from heaven to earth (i.e., the incarnation or a descent subsequent to the ascent of verse 8 to distribute the gifts mentioned in 4:11ff.). With respect to the second question, most would agree that the descent inferred by the writer in the midrash found in 4:9-10 preceded the ascent of verse 8. The remainder of the present study, however, will consist of an attempt to establish (following von Soden and Abbott at the end of the last century and more recently Caird and Lincoln) that the descent intro-

¹¹⁷In assigning the label 'midrash' to the Pauline exegesis of Ps. 68:19 found in Eph. 4:8, it is recognized that as a method of rabbinic exegesis the term midrash itself has been subject to a variety of definitions. In general the term is used in the present work to refer to an interpretive method which takes as its point of departure the biblical text itself and seeks to explain the hidden meanings contained therein by following agreed upon hermeneutical rules in order to arrive at a relevant contemporary application for the audience. One of the most thorough modern attempts to define midrash as a literary genre is found in R. Bloch, "Note méthodologique pour l'étude de la littérature rabbinique", *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 43 (1955), pp. 194-227. P. Benoit, "Corps, tête et plérôme dans les Épîtres de la captivité", *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956), p. 41, identifies the passage under discussion, Eph. 4:9-10, as midrash ("une exégèse midrashique"), as does R. N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 124-26. A. T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, p. 156, identifies the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 found in Eph. 4:9-10 as midrash peshet.

¹¹⁸As we have already seen, the modern view that Christ descended from the earth to Sheol is more or less equivalent to the ancient interpretation that involved a *descensus ad inferos*, except that no activity (such as preaching to imprisoned spirits) is posited of Christ during the *triduum*. The descent of Christ into the grave simply affirms the reality of his death, and is juxtaposed as such to his resurrection and victorious ascent. A similar affirmation of the death and the resurrection of Christ is found in 1 Cor. 15:3-8, although in this context the ascent as a separate event is not emphasized.

duced in Eph. 4:9-10 is actually subsequent to the ascent and represents the return to earth of the ascended Christ as the Spirit to distribute gifts to his church (4:11ff.).

Several of the points raised by Caird and Lincoln, such as the problem of the genitive τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9, the relationship between Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19, the tradition of Moses' ascent to heaven, and the associations of the imagery behind Eph. 4:7-11 with the feast of Pentecost, will be discussed at length in later chapters of the present work. Before proceeding to discuss these issues, however, we must attempt to solve the textual problems in Eph. 4:9 and consider their influence on the interpretation of 4:7-11.

*Textual Problems in Eph. 4:9 and Their Influence on the
Interpretation of 4:7-11*

Before we turn to an examination of syntactical factors affecting the interpretation of the descent in Eph. 4:9-10, it is necessary to consider a pair of textual variants which have played a significant role in the history of interpretation of the passage. The first (and more important of the two) is the omission or inclusion of πρῶτον following κατέβη in 4:9. The second, in the final clause of the same verse, is the inclusion of μέρη before the genitive τῆς γῆς. The inclusion of πρῶτον after κατέβη would significantly alter the interpretive options with regard to the descent mentioned in the verse, because it would necessitate a descent prior to the ascent. This would effectively eliminate any possibility of a subsequent descent as proposed by von Soden, Abbott, Caird, and Lincoln.¹¹⁹ The second textual problem is also significant because if μέρη is included as part of the original text, it affects

¹¹⁹For discussion of this view, see the preceding section, pp. 35-46.

the interpretation of the genitive phrase τῆς γῆς which follows and which (together with κατώτερα) specifies the locus of the descent.¹²⁰ We shall examine both of these problems in turn, attempting to assess the probability that the words in question belong in the original text of Eph. 4:9.

The omission of πρῶτον following κατέβη in Eph. 4:9

In attempting to determine whether πρῶτον should be regarded as part of the original text of Ephesians we shall examine several aspects of the problem. First, we shall survey the manuscript evidence to determine how extensive the support for the omission or inclusion of πρῶτον is. Next, we shall attempt to evaluate the manuscript evidence in two areas: (1) the date and quality of the manuscripts supporting both positions, and (2) the geographical distribution of the readings with and without the word in question. Finally, we shall examine the transcriptional factors surrounding the inclusion or omission of πρῶτον, attempting to assess the probability that the text was lengthened or shortened in the course of its transmission.

The evidence from the manuscript tradition. The longer reading, κατέβη πρῶτον εἰς τὰ κατώτερα κ.τ.λ., is supported by the Alexandrian uncial B (03 [Vaticanus], 4th century), as well as the corrected texts of both ℵ (01 [Sinaiticus], 4th century)¹²¹ and C (04 [Ephraemi Rescriptus], 5th cen-

¹²⁰E.g., J. D. G. Dunn states that a genitive following μέρη would be partitive rather than appositive in *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980), pp. 186-87. For discussion of the grammatical and syntactical issues surrounding the genitive phrase τῆς γῆς in 4:9, see ch. 2, pp. 65-78.

¹²¹The insertion of πρῶτον was done by the second corrector of ℵ according to the 26th ed. of *Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. E. Nestle and K. Aland (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979), ad loc. The corrections are of a later date than the manuscript itself.

ture).¹²² The Byzantine uncials K (018 in the epistles, 9th century) and L (020 in the epistles, 9th century) and the Alexandrian uncials P (025 in the epistles, also 9th century) and ψ (044, 8th/9th century) also include *πρῶτον*.

A number of minuscule manuscripts support the inclusion of *πρῶτον* after *κατέβη*, notably 104 (11th century) and 326 (12th century) of the Alexandrian text type and 88 (12th century) and 181 (also 12th century) of the Western text. The majority of Byzantine minuscules also include *πρῶτον*, as do a number of minuscules representing a mixed text (330, 436, 451, 614, 629, 630, 1877, 1962, 1984, 1985, 2127, 2492, and 2495).

The Byzantine lectionaries are unanimous in their support of the longer reading, and the equivalent of *πρῶτον* also found its way into a significant number of the early versions, including the Harclean Syriac and the Peshitta, all but one of the Sahidic Coptic manuscripts, and about half of the individual manuscripts of the Itala (Old Latin). The Latin Vulgate, which is more Alexandrian than Western in text type, supports the inclusion of *πρῶτον* in most of its manuscripts. A few of the Church Fathers also demonstrate knowledge of the longer reading: Eusebius of Caesarea (339 CE), Ambrosiaster (366-84 CE), Theodoret (ca. 466 CE), Cassiodorus (ca. 580 CE), and John of Damascus (ca. 749 CE).¹²³

Despite this widespread evidence, there are significant early manuscripts of the Alexandrian and Western text types which omit *πρῶτον*. The

¹²²The third corrector of C, according to *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 26th ed. Again, the corrections are later.

¹²³The dates given in parentheses represent, in most cases, the date of death (often approximate). In the case of Ambrosiaster, the dates given are those of Pope Damasus, during whose time the works are thought to have been written. Note that Eusebius and Theodoret also quote a shorter form of the text which supports the omission of *πρῶτον*; in their case the addition might well be an interpretive gloss they themselves supplied, which was not present in the text of Ephesians they employed; this cannot be determined with any degree of certainty, however.

earliest and most important of these is \wp^{46} (ca. 200 CE), which is characterized as a somewhat free rendition of the Greek text by K. and B. Aland.¹²⁴ The uncorrected versions of the Alexandrian uncials \aleph (01, 4th century) and C (04, 5th century) also support the omission, as do A (02, 5th century), I (016, fifth century),¹²⁵ and 082 (6th century). The omission of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ is supported by the Western uncials D (06 [Claramontanus], 6th century), F (010 [Augiensis], 9th century), and G (012 [Boernerianus], 9th century). The shorter reading is also found in several minuscules of Alexandrian text type, 6 (13th century), 33 (9th century), 81 (1044 CE), 1241 (in a supplement to the 12th century manuscript), and 1739 (10th century), as well as 1881, a 14th century manuscript of mixed text type. Among the early versions supporting the omission of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ are the Ethiopic and Bohairic Coptic, along with one manuscript of the Sahidic Coptic and several manuscripts of the Vulgate. About half of the individual manuscripts of the Itala (Old Latin) also lack the equivalent of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$. A large number of the Church Fathers quote a shorter form of the text without $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$: Theodotus (a 2nd century Gnostic quoted by Clement), Irenaeus (ca. 202 CE; the Latin translation is dated from the 3rd or 4th century), Clement of Alexandria (prior to 215 CE), Tertullian (ca. 220 CE), Origen (254 CE; the shorter reading is found in both Greek and Latin manuscripts), Eusebius (339 CE), Victorinus of Rome (362 CE), Hilary (367 CE), Lucifer (370 CE), Ambrose (397 CE), Chrysostom (407 CE), Pelagius (ca. 423-29 CE), Jerome (420 CE), Augustine (430 CE), Cyril of Alexandria (444 CE), Euthalius (4th

¹²⁴K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, trans. E. F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p.99. The only other papyrus known to be extant for Ephesians is \wp^{49} , which covers only Eph. 4:16-29 and 4:31-5:13.

¹²⁵For I (016) this is an apparent reading.

century), Theodoret (ca. 466 CE), Pseudo-Jerome (5th century), and Pseudo-Oecumenius (between 6th and 10th century). The preceding manuscript evidence for both variant readings is displayed in chart form in Chart 1 on the following page.

To evaluate the evidence from the manuscript tradition we shall examine briefly the date and quality of the manuscripts supporting each reading, as well as the geographical distribution of the variant readings themselves. In the latter instance one assumes that the variant reading which achieves wide and early distribution throughout the major geographical regions has a higher probability of being the original than a variant which is localized or limited to a single region, or which achieves widespread distribution at a date considerably later than another variant.

Another factor which is sometimes considered is the genealogical solidarity of a reading. This is regarded as good when evidence within a given text type is solidly in favour of a single reading, and poor when the evidence is divided more or less equally between two or more readings. Genealogical solidarity will not be considered in this particular instance because it is indecisive. The Byzantine tradition is almost always allied in favour of a single reading (in part due to the character of the Byzantine text itself), and in the present case, both the Alexandrian and Western text types divide over the inclusion or omission of *πρῶτον*; this has the effect of neutralizing the evidence as far as genealogical solidarity is concerned.

Date and quality of the manuscripts. Of all the manuscripts considered, \mathfrak{P}^{46} (the only extant papyrus for this section of Ephesians) is the earliest and most important, and it supports the omission of *πρῶτον*. In addition to \mathfrak{P}^{46} , K. Aland categorizes four of the uncial and minuscule

manuscripts which favour the omission as category I manuscripts (manuscripts of a very special quality which should always be considered in the determination of a textual reading): \aleph , A, 33, and 1739.¹²⁶ The omission of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ is also supported by five category II manuscripts (manuscripts of a special quality, but distinguished from category I manuscripts by the presence of outside influences, particularly from the Byzantine text), C, D, I, 81, and 1881, and five category III manuscripts (manuscripts of a distinctive character with an independent text, usually important for establishing the original text), 082, F, G, 6, and 1241. Of the uncial manuscripts one (\aleph) is 4th century, three (A, C, and I) are 5th century, and two (082 and D) are 6th century.

In comparison to this, the longer reading is supported by only one category I manuscript, B, whose textual quality is considered inferior in the Pauline corpus.¹²⁷ Only one category II manuscript, 2127, supports the inclusion of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$. Sixteen category III manuscripts favour the inclusion (P, Ψ , 88, 104, 181, 326, 330, 436, 451, 614, 629, 630, 1877, 1962, 2492, and 2495). The Byzantine uncials K and L are classified by Aland as category V (manuscripts having a purely or predominantly Byzantine text, of much less value in establishing the original text), along with the majority of Byzantine minuscules, all of which support the inclusion of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$.

In view of the early date and importance of \wp ⁴⁶, as well as the number of additional category I (four) and category II (five) manuscripts allied with it, the shorter reading which omits $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ seems clearly to be

¹²⁶K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*. Descriptions of the five categories employed to classify the manuscripts are found on pp. 105-106; the uncial manuscripts are classified according to these categories on pp. 106-25, and the minuscules on pp. 128-35.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 14.

preferred as more likely to be the original based on the date and quality of the manuscript evidence.

Geographical distribution of the variant readings. At first glance, a survey of the geographical distribution of the variants might seem to favour the longer reading, because it is well represented in all three of the major text types in comparison to the shorter reading, which lacks substantial Byzantine support. Both the Byzantine and Western support for the inclusion of *πρῶτον* is somewhat later in date, however. The corresponding Western manuscripts which support the shorter reading are relatively earlier, with D (06) dating from the 6th century, and one of the Itala manuscripts, d (75 in the Beuron Catalogue) dating from the 5th or 6th century. To compare with this the longer reading has no uncial or minuscule support in the Western tradition before the 12th century (88 and 181); only one Itala manuscript (z, 65 in the Beuron Catalogue) is as early as the 8th century.

Likewise, although the Alexandrian tradition is divided between the two readings, there is earlier Alexandrian support (P⁴⁶, ca. 200 CE) and much better support in the 4th and 5th centuries (K, A, C, I) for the shorter reading. Thus, with regard to the evidence from the geographical distribution of the variants, the longer reading does not really have the advantage that it might at first appear to have. It is true that the shorter reading is not as widely represented, appearing only in the Alexandrian and Western text types, but the shorter reading makes its appearance in both these text types relatively earlier than the longer reading. On the other hand, the reading which includes *πρῶτον* is represented in all three major text types, but this is somewhat qualified by its relatively late appearance in the

Western text type.

Conclusions based on the manuscript evidence. On the whole, the manuscript evidence appears to favour the omission of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ in Eph. 4:9. The earlier date of the shorter reading, indicated by \wp^{46} , is a major factor in favour of the omission. When the quality of the manuscripts which support the shorter reading is also considered, we may conclude that the evidence from the manuscripts themselves suggests that the omission of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ from the original text of Eph. 4:9 is much more probable.

Transcriptional factors concerning the omission or inclusion of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$. A consideration of transcriptional probabilities appears to confirm and strengthen conclusions based on the manuscript evidence itself. One of the established 'canons' of textual criticism is that of *brevior lectio* (or more fully stated, *brevior lectio praeferenda est*), i.e., preference is to be given to the shorter reading.¹²⁸ In and of itself this would favour the omission of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$. Beyond this, however, it is difficult to imagine how, if the longer

¹²⁸This rule of thumb for the evaluation of variants dates back at least to J. J. Griesbach (1745-1812), who listed it as the first of fifteen canons of textual criticism. Griesbach stated his first canon as follows: "The shorter reading (unless it lacks entirely the authority of the ancient and weighty witnesses) is to be preferred to the more verbose, for scribes were much more prone to add than to omit. They scarcely ever deliberately omitted anything, but they added many things; certainly they omitted some things by accident, but likewise not a few things have been added to the text by scribes through errors of the eye, ear, memory, imagination, and judgement. Particularly the shorter reading is to be preferred, even though according to the authority of the witnesses it may appear to be inferior to the other,—(a) if at the same time it is more difficult, more obscure, ambiguous, elliptical, hebraizing, or solecistic; (b) if the same thing is expressed with different phrases in various manuscripts; (c) if the order of words varies; (d) at the beginning of pericopes; (e) if the longer reading savours of a gloss or interpretation, or agrees with the wording of parallel passages, or seems to have come from lectionaries". Griesbach is cited by B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Corruption, Transmission, and Restoration*, 2nd ed. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 120. Metzger himself holds that the rule of *brevior lectio* is quite sound when applied by responsible NT textual critics, as he argues in "Trends in the Textual Criticism of the Iliad and the Mahabharata", in *Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism*, New Testament Tools and Studies 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), p. 151.

reading with *πρῶτον* represents the original, the word came to be omitted from the text by a copyist. The normal transcriptional factors resulting in accidental omission (e.g., homoioteleuton and homoioarcton) do not appear to apply in this case, since there are no words in the immediate context with similar endings or beginnings. Neither can the omission of *πρῶτον* be explained by an error of hearing such as itacism (if copying were being done from dictation, or if a solitary copyist were pronouncing the text aloud to himself).

It is possible that *πρῶτον* was accidentally incorporated into the text of Eph. 4:9, however. If the word were originally added to the margin of a manuscript as an interpretive gloss intended to explain the meaning of the passage by clarifying the time of the descent, it may have been assimilated accidentally into the text of Ephesians by a later copyist who mistook it for a correction. We know that such accidental inclusions did occasionally occur; since the margins of ancient manuscripts were used for glosses as well as corrections it fell to the judgement of the scribe to discern between the two, and the simplest resolution was to incorporate the marginal note into the text being copied.¹²⁹ A scribe who found the word *πρῶτον* as a marginal comment in the manuscript he was copying would probably have felt little reluctance to incorporate it into the text itself as long as it agreed with his own understanding of the time and nature of the descent men-

¹²⁹B. M. Metzger, in *The Text of the New Testament: Its Corruption, Transmission, and Restoration*, pp. 194-95, cites a number of instances where such an accidental inclusion of marginal glosses into the text itself probably occurred. This may explain how GJohn 5:7, originally a marginal comment explaining the moving of the water in the pool of Bethesda, came to be assimilated into the text of 5:3b-4; another example would be found in Rom. 8:1. Lectionary formulas sometimes were incorporated in similar fashion (e.g., Matt. 25:31 and Luke 7:31). J. A. Bengel (cited by Metzger, p. 194) even mentions the almost incredible example of a scribe who included the words *ἐν πολλοῖς τῶν ἀντιγράφων οὕτως εἴρηται* directly in the text of 2 Cor. 8:4!

tioned in Eph. 4:9-10.

In addition to the possibility of an accidental inclusion of *πρῶτον* by a copyist, there remains the possibility of a deliberate alteration of the text by someone wishing to promote or deny a particular interpretation of the passage on theological grounds. When considering this possibility it is important to note, however, that a deliberate omission of *πρῶτον* by a copyist wishing to affirm a descent of Christ subsequent to his ascent results only in an inconclusive reading. Indeed, a number of the earlier Fathers, although they are known to hold to a prior descent (e.g., Irenaeus and Tertullian), nevertheless seem quite content to maintain the shorter reading; they show no tendency to expand the text to support their interpretation. On the other hand, it is quite easy to see how *πρῶτον* came to be added to the text as an explanatory supplement. This would be especially true if the doctrine of a descent of Christ to the underworld (which in Eph. 4:9 would necessarily take place prior to his ascent) had already gained relatively wide acceptance. If, as J. N. D. Kelly suggests, the incorporation of such a doctrine of the *descensus* into early credal formulations represented an attempt to refute Docetism, then the desire to refute such heresy would provide even further impetus to the tendency to include *πρῶτον* in the text of Eph. 4:9.¹³⁰

With regard to the transcriptional probabilities, therefore, it appears much easier to explain how *πρῶτον* came to be added to the text either accidentally or deliberately than to explain its accidental or deliberate omission. This concurs with the manuscript evidence in suggesting that the shorter

¹³⁰J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, p. 382. This is, in fact, how Tertullian appears to use the doctrine of Christ's descent to the underworld; for him, it demonstrates the participation of Christ in the full extent of human experience and thus implies his true humanity (*De anima* 55.2).

reading which omits $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ should be regarded as original.

Conclusions on the omission of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ in Eph. 4:9. We have examined both the evidence from the manuscript tradition behind Eph. 4:9 itself and the transcriptional probabilities related to the inclusion or omission of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ in terms of scribal tendencies. Both these lines of evidence agree in strongly suggesting that the reading which lacks $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ is the original. It thus appears overwhelmingly probable that the original text of Eph. 4:9 did not contain $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$. This is in agreement with the judgement of C. von Tischendorf, who in his eighth edition omits $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ from the text, relegating it to a place in the apparatus.¹³¹ B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort also reject the longer reading in their 1881 edition.¹³² H. von Soden likewise considers the longer reading to be dubious, enclosing it in brackets in his 1913 edition of the NT text.¹³³ The shorter reading is currently endorsed by both the United Bible Societies' 3rd edition of *The Greek New Testament* and the 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland text, *Novum Testamentum Graece*.

We may therefore proceed with the exegesis of the passage without bias concerning the time of the descent with respect to the ascent. Nevertheless (as G. B. Caird has observed), the very existence of this textual variant has undoubtedly influenced many interpreters, even though they may have accepted the shorter reading as representing the original text.¹³⁴

¹³¹C. von Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece, editio octava critica maior* (Lipsiae: Giesecke & Devrient, 1872; reprint ed., Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1965), p. 683.

¹³²B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1881; reprint ed., New York: Macmillan, 1946), p. 433.

¹³³H. Frhr. von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte*, vol. 2: *Text mit Apparat* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1913), p. 766.

¹³⁴G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", p. 538.

The inclusion of μέρη before τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9

A second textual problem in Eph. 4:9 also warrants our attention. A number of manuscripts, some of them significant witnesses to the original text of Ephesians, omit μέρη after κατώτερα. Because (as mentioned earlier) this may affect the interpretation of the genitive phrase τῆς γῆς which together with κατώτερα specifies the locus of Christ's descent, the decision to include or omit μέρη may have an effect on the exegesis of the entire passage. Again, as with the previous problem, we shall examine the evidence from the manuscript tradition as well as transcriptional factors which may have affected the transmission of the text.

The evidence from the manuscript tradition. The shorter reading, which omits μέρη, is supported by \mathfrak{P}^{46} (ca. 200 CE), an important early witness of the Alexandrian text type. In addition the omission of μέρη occurs in several Western uncials: (the original hand of) D (06 [Claromontanus], 6th century), F (010 [Augiensis], 9th century), and G (012 [Boernerianus], 9th century). There is no minuscule support for the omission, but among the early versions all but a single manuscript of the Itala (Old Latin) omit μέρη. A few Church Fathers also appear to quote a version of the text which reflects the omission of μέρη; they are Irenaeus (ca. 202 CE, in the Latin manuscripts; the Latin translation of Irenaeus' works dates from the 3rd or 4th century), Tertullian (ca. 220 CE), and Ambrosiaster (366-84 CE).¹³⁵ There is no support of any kind for the shorter reading from the Byzantine text type.

On the other hand, most of the remaining textual witnesses extant

¹³⁵Again, dates given in parentheses represent the approximate date of death. For Ambrosiaster, the dates given are those of Pope Damasus during whose reign the works are thought to have been written.

for Ephesians support the longer reading which includes μέρη. Among these the following are significant: the Alexandrian uncials ⑆ (01 [Sinaiticus], 4th century), A (02, 5th century), B (03 [Vaticanus], 4th century), C (04 [Ephraemi Rescriptus], 5th century), I (016, 5th century), P (025 in the epistles, 9th century), and Ψ (044, 8th/9th century). Also supporting the inclusion of μέρη are the Byzantine uncials K (018 in the epistles, 9th century) and L (020 in the epistles, also 9th century), and the corrected Western text of D (06 [Claromontanus], 6th century).¹³⁶ A large number of minuscule manuscripts also support the longer reading: the Alexandrian minuscules 33 (9th century), 81 (1044 CE), 104 (11th century), 1175 (11th century), and 1739 (10th century); all of the Byzantine minuscule manuscripts (without exception); and a number of minuscule manuscripts of mixed text type, including 365 (13th century), 630 (14th century), 1881 (14th century), 2464 (10th century), and 2495 (14th century). Among the early versions, all manuscripts of the Vulgate support the inclusion of μέρη, as does a single manuscript of the Itala (Old Latin), f (78 in the Beuron Catalogue). The manuscript evidence described above for both variants is displayed in chart form in Chart 2 on the following page.

Date and quality of the manuscripts. Once again we shall consider first the evidence for the omission of μέρη. This reading is supported by ⑆⁴⁶, the earliest and most important of the witnesses, which is classified by K. Aland as a category I manuscript.¹³⁷ One category II manuscript, D, and

¹³⁶The insertion of μέρη was done by the second corrector of D according to *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 26th ed., and is of a later date than the manuscript itself.

¹³⁷K. and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 99. For a description of the categories used in classifying the manuscripts, see *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 105-106, and p. 53 of the present work.

CHART 2: The inclusion of μέρη in Eph. 4:9

Reading 1. The following witnesses include μέρη:			
<i>Alexandrian</i>	<i>Byzantine</i>	<i>Western</i>	<i>Mixed or Other</i>
Ⲛ Ⲁ Ⲑ Ⲓ Ⲓ Ⲓ Ⲓ Ⲓ	K L		D ²
33 81 104 1175 1739	[Byzantine Minuscules]		365 630 1881 2464 2495
Vulgate		itala f	

Reading 2. The following witnesses omit μέρη:			
<i>Alexandrian</i>	<i>Byzantine</i>	<i>Western</i>	<i>Mixed or Other</i>
Ⲛ ⁴⁶			
		D* F G	
		itala (all mss except f)	
		Irenaeus lat Tertullian Ambrosiaster	

two category III manuscripts, F and G, also support the shorter reading.

In comparison to this, the inclusion of μέρη is supported by five category I manuscripts (N, A, B, 33, and 1739). Six category II manuscripts also support the longer reading (C, I, 81, 1175, 1881, and 2464), as do six category III manuscripts (P, Ψ, 104, 365, 630, and 2495). All category V manuscripts, including the Byzantine uncials K and L and the Byzantine minuscules, support the inclusion of μέρη. Thus it appears that the weight of the manuscript evidence favours the inclusion of μέρη. Although \mathfrak{P}^{46} is an early and important witness (perhaps the single most important witness) to the original text of Ephesians, it alone of the most important (category I) manuscripts supports the omission of μέρη. In addition, the shorter reading lacks significant secondary support (only one category II manuscript, D, favours it) and has no minuscule support at all.

Geographical distribution of the variant readings. A superficial glance at the geographical distribution of the variant readings would seem to favour the longer reading, since it is present in all three of the major text types, while the shorter reading is not. The shorter reading appears only in the Western and Alexandrian text types, and support in the latter consists of a single witness. The support for the omission of μέρη based on geographical distribution is better than it may at first appear, however. The Alexandrian witness which favours it is very early (\mathfrak{P}^{46} , ca. 200 CE), indicating the shorter reading was present at an early date in the Alexandrian tradition. In the Western text the shorter reading is well supported from a relatively early period, since although the earliest Itala manuscript dates from the fourth or fifth century (k, or 1 in the Beuron Catalogue), it represents a text whose Greek *Vorlage* is thought by some to be traceable to the

second century.¹³⁸

Nevertheless, it must still be said that evidence from the geographical distribution of the variants still favours the longer reading. The inclusion of μέρη is well represented in two of the major text types (Alexandrian and Byzantine) at a reasonably early date, and the agreement of so many major witnesses within each of these text types points to the existence of the reading itself at a time prior to the earliest surviving witness in each text type.¹³⁹ The shorter reading, on the other hand, is basically limited to the Western text type, with \mathfrak{P}^{46} as the only exception.

Conclusions based on the manuscript evidence. On the whole, the manuscript evidence favours the inclusion of μέρη. The early date for the shorter reading is not enough to outweigh the preponderance of evidence in favour of the inclusion of μέρη. The widespread geographical distribution of the longer reading appears to confirm this. On the basis of the manuscript evidence it appears that while the shorter reading represents an ancient and significant tradition, it was primarily limited to the Western text and is not representative of the original text of Eph. 4:9.

Transcriptional factors and the inclusion of μέρη. Transcriptional factors in this case would appear to favour the shorter reading which omits μέρη in Eph. 4:9. If the word were present in the original text but omitted in the process of transmission, the omission would almost certainly be acci-

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 183.

¹³⁹This is implied by the extent to which the reading has established itself in the Alexandrian and Byzantine text types. The assumption is that some time (one or two centuries, perhaps) would be necessary for a reading to have become so widespread and well-established within a given text type. Thus while the earliest Alexandrian manuscripts which contains the longer reading date from the 4th century (\aleph and B), the reading was probably present in the Alexandrian text some time in the second or third century.

dental, since there is no significant theological point to be made by either the inclusion or the omission of μέρη. The normal causes of accidental omission such as homoioteleuton or homoioarcton (in the case of a copyist working individually from an exemplar) or itacism (if copying were being done from dictation, or if a solitary copyist were pronouncing the text aloud to himself) do not seem to be present here. There are no words or syllables in the immediate context which resemble μέρη sufficiently to result in an instance of accidental confusion of either a visual or an auditory nature. It is perhaps possible to suggest an unintentional harmonization with Ps. 62:9 LXX or Ps. 138:15 LXX, where in both cases the phrase τὰ κατώτατα τῆς γῆς occurs. This possibility must be judged remote, however, because neither passage in the LXX has any further connection with the context of Ephesians 4 beyond this individual phrase, and in addition there is no manuscript evidence for a corresponding change from κατώτερα to κατώτατα in Eph. 4:9 which would point to harmonization with the LXX at this point.

On the other hand, it is perhaps easier to see how a copyist who encountered a version of the text which read εἰς τὰ κατώτερα τῆς γῆς would be inclined to add μέρη as an explanatory gloss to clarify the wording in order to reflect his own understanding of the passage. This is in keeping with the standard guideline in textual criticism that the shorter reading more often than not represents the original (the rule of *brevior lectio*).¹⁴⁰ This may have taken place in the form of an accidental inclusion of a marginal gloss by a copyist who mistook it for a correction.

Thus, with regard to the transcriptional probabilities, the shorter reading which omits μέρη is more difficult to explain and could probably

¹⁴⁰For explanation and discussion of this rule or 'canon' of textual criticism, see n. 128 above.

have given rise to the reading which includes μέρη without much difficulty. On the basis of transcriptional factors the omission of μέρη is to be preferred.

Conclusions on the inclusion of μέρη in Eph. 4:9. Although the transcriptional factors involved favour the shorter reading, in the judgement of the present writer, the preponderance of the manuscript evidence (which favours the inclusion of μέρη in the text of Eph. 4:9) outweighs transcriptional probabilities in this instance. The shorter reading is evidently ancient, as indicated by \mathfrak{P}^{46} , yet aside from this important witness it is confined to manuscripts of the Western text type. This suggests that it represents an accidental omission which, although early, did not find its way into manuscripts of the other major text types (with the sole exception of \mathfrak{P}^{46}). Therefore, we shall proceed in our investigation of the grammatical and syntactical possibilities for the genitive phrase τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 upon the assumption that μέρη is to be regarded as part of the original text.

Chapter Two

To Where Did He Descend?

The Meaning of τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς

The Syntax and Significance of the Genitive Phrase τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9

To answer the question "To where did Christ descend?" in Eph. 4:7-11 it will be necessary to investigate the syntactical force of the phrase τῆς γῆς in 4:9. The prepositional phrase εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς evidently specifies the locus of Christ's descent, which would answer the question as posed above, but the syntax of the final genitive phrase τῆς γῆς is subject to a number of possible interpretations, all of which would have a significant effect upon our understanding of the nature, time, and place of Christ's descent in Eph. 4:9-10.

According to N. Turner, there are three possibilities for the syntactical relationship expressed by τῆς γῆς: (1) a partitive genitive ("the lowest parts of the earth itself"), (2) a comparative genitive ("the regions below the earth"), or (3) an appositive genitive ("the lower regions, namely, the earth").¹ Although recent interpreters have tended to favour one or the other of the last two options, support can still be found for a partitive genitive as the simplest explanation for a genitive following μέρη.² We shall

¹J. H. Moulton, W. F. Howard, and N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3: *Syntax*, by N. Turner (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), p. 215. Paraphrases of the phrase τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς have been supplied by the present writer.

²F. Büchsel, s.v. "κατώτερος", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, trans. and ed. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), vol. 3, p. 641. J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980), pp. 186-87, also argues that a genitive

examine all three possibilities in turn in an attempt to determine the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Tῆς γῆς as partitive genitive. In classical Greek the partitive genitive designated a given category or whole, a part or fraction of which is designated by the noun it restricts. The partitive genitive normally stood before or after the noun denoting the part: τῶν Θρακῶν πελτασταί (Thucydides 7.27), οἱ ἄποροι τῶν πολιτῶν (Demosthenes 18.104). Rarely a partitive genitive would even stand between the restricted noun and its article: οἱ τῶν ἀδίκων ἀφικνούμενοι (Plato, *Gorgias* 525c). While the restricted noun normally indicated a part or portion of the whole, as in μέρος τι τῶν βαρβάρων (Thucydides 1.1), in some instances all could be included so that there was no partition: τὸ πᾶν πλῆθος τῶν ὀπλιτῶν (Thucydides 8.93). The idea of division was not always clearly stated, and in some instances the governing noun which denoted the part could be omitted entirely: Ἀρχίας τῶν Ἡρακλειδῶν (Thucydides 6.3).³ Some grammarians would also place in the category of partitive genitive the use of the genitive to denote the district or country in which a city or locality is found, e.g., τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἐς Οἰνώνην (Thucydides 2.18) and τῆς Ἰταλίας Λοκροί (Thucydides 3.86).⁴

In the Koiné period the partitive use of the pure genitive was being replaced by the use of the prepositions ἐκ and, less frequently, ἀπό or ἐν.⁵

following μέρη would most likely be partitive.

³H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, rev. G. M. Messing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956; orig. pub. as *A Greek Grammar for Colleges*, 1920), pp. 315-16.

⁴J. Humbert, *Syntaxe Grecque*, 3rd ed. (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1960), p. 270.

⁵F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. by R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 90. Essentially the same observation is made by L. Radermacher, *Neutestamentliche Grammatik*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1925), p. 139, and A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 502.

Partitive genitives were frequently used following verbs in a sense that overlapped with that of an accusative direct object.⁶ Although some of these could, in fact, be more appropriately labelled direct objects (e.g., Acts 9:7, ἀκούοντες μὲν τῆς φωνῆς), there are some more obviously partitive uses after nouns (referred to by J. Humbert as "adnominal" genitives).⁷ These occur after words denoting a part or fraction of a whole, such as εἷς, τίς, ἕκαστος, οἱ λοιποί, etc., or after words referring to a group or subdivision (e.g., Rom. 15:26, τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων, "the poor among the saints").⁸ Into this category the phrase τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 would obviously fall if, as we concluded in the previous chapter, μέρη is to be regarded as part of the original text.⁹ Indeed, F. Büchsel concedes that a partitive genitive here is "essentially simpler, for a gen. with μέρη most naturally denotes the whole to which the parts belong, esp. if this whole has not yet been named".¹⁰ Büchsel himself apparently considers τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 a partitive genitive, since his comment in a corresponding footnote appears to rule out a comparative genitive as unlikely.¹¹ There remains some ambiguity concerning Büchsel's view, however, because in the most recent

⁶C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), p. 36.

⁷J. Humbert, *Syntaxe Grecque*, p. 271.

⁸C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, p. 43.

⁹Even if one were to conclude that μέρη should not be included as part of the original text of Eph. 4:9, it might still be possible to consider τῆς γῆς a partitive genitive, since in classical Greek the governing noun with the partitive genitive was occasionally omitted. Note the example Ἀρχίας τῶν Ἡρακλειδῶν (Thucydides 6.3) mentioned in the discussion of the partitive genitive in classical Greek above.

¹⁰F. Büchsel, s.v. "κατώτερος", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 3, p. 641.

¹¹*Ibid.*, n. 10, p. 641. Büchsel in this note argues against the earlier view that the form κατώτερος itself is comparative rather than superlative in degree. A comparative idea might be associated with the genitive τῆς γῆς rather than κατώτερα, but Büchsel dismisses this as "unlikely".

edition of Blass and Debrunner's *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (1961) it is stated that Büchsel considered the genitive τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 to be comparative. Both partitive and appositive genitive are rejected without further explanation.¹² In any event, Büchsel's statement in *TDNT* 3 that a partitive genitive following μέρη would be the simplest way of understanding τῆς γῆς is probably correct. There is (as we discussed in chapter one) some uncertainty over the authenticity of μέρη because a number of manuscripts of the Western text, along with \mathfrak{P}^{46} , omit it and read simply εἰς τὰ κατώτερα τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9.¹³ The shorter reading, in general, would be preferred as the reading most likely to give rise to the other variants. But we concluded on the basis of strong manuscript evidence that μέρη should probably be regarded as a genuine part of the original text, and this would suggest that a partitive genitive is still a possibility for τῆς γῆς here.

With regard to the meaning of the phrase, a view that takes τῆς γῆς as strictly partitive (i.e., "the lowest parts of the earth itself") would probably imply that the locus of the descent is the grave, 'Sheol', which would be viewed as the lowest part of the lower 'storey' in a 'two-storeyed' cosmology. This would certainly be more in keeping with the cosmology of Ephesians than a strictly comparative sense, which would seem to imply the existence of a third and lower 'storey' below the earth itself. Aside from this, however, it is difficult to see much difference in nuance between a partitive and comparative use of the genitive τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9; the difference appears

¹²F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. by R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 92. This is a translation and revision of the 9th-10th German edition.

¹³The authenticity of μέρη as part of the original text of Eph. 4:9 is discussed in ch. 1, pp. 59-64.

to be more one of terminology than of sense.

Tῆς γῆς as comparative genitive. The genitive case used to express comparison was common in classical Greek, and occurs in the NT in similar constructions.¹⁴ In such a construction κατώτερος in Eph. 4:9 would be understood as a comparative adjective followed by μέρη and a genitive, τῆς γῆς, which specifies the thing with which the comparison is being made. The force of the entire construction would then be "the regions lower than the earth". F. Blass and A. Debrunner's Greek grammar (the current standard for NT scholarship) portrays such a meaning as representative of F. Büchsel's view; although Blass and Debrunner do not explicitly label τῆς γῆς a comparative genitive, it is clear from the translation offered ("the regions under the earth") and from their rejection of the other options (partitive and appositive) that they understand the phrase as comparative.¹⁵

Also at issue in this discussion is a related but separate point, the nature of the comparison expressed by κατώτερος. Strictly speaking the adjective κατώτερος is comparative in degree. But degrees of comparison with adjectives were not always rigidly maintained in Koiné Greek. A. T. Robertson, for example, states that no clear distinction can be made in the NT between the comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives, and that τὰ κατώτερα μέρη in Eph. 4:9 is an example of a comparative form used in a superlative sense.¹⁶ Likewise, J. H. Moulton argues that the true super-

¹⁴F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 99; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, pp. 666-67.

¹⁵F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 92; compare F. Büchsel, s.v. "κατώτερος", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 3, p. 641, n. 10, (discussed in n. 11 above) which appears to contradict Blass and Debrunner's description of Büchsel's position.

¹⁶A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical*

lative form was disappearing in the Koiné papyri and was being replaced by the comparative.¹⁷ On this point F. Blass and A. Debrunner agree, stating that a simplification of degrees of comparison in the vernacular led to the virtual disappearance of the superlative (which, when retained in the NT, has mostly relative force) and its replacement by the comparative form.¹⁸ Such substitution of forms (comparative for superlative) has also been observed in the secular papyri by E. Mayser.¹⁹ On the other hand, however, L. Radermacher has argued that the comparative form κατώτερος in Eph. 4:9 was used as a positive rather than a superlative in degree.²⁰ Thus it appears legitimate from a purely grammatical standpoint to consider the comparative form κατώτερα in Eph. 4:9 positive, comparative, or superlative in force, depending upon how one understands the context.

A view that takes the genitive τῆς γῆς as comparative (i.e., "the regions lower than the earth itself") would suggest a locus for the descent in the underworld, with this as the third and lowest 'storey' of a 'three-

Research, p. 668.

¹⁷J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 1: *Prolegomena*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), p. 78.

¹⁸F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 32.

¹⁹E. Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit*, vol. 2: *Satzlehre*, part 1 (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1934; reprint ed., 1970), pp. 49-51.

²⁰L. Radermacher, *Neutestamentliche Grammatik*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1925), pp. 69-70, 225. Κατώτερος is mentioned on pp. 69-70, but the only specific reference to Eph. 4:9 occurs on p. 225 in a list of additions and corrections. These were not done by Radermacher himself; the note including Eph. 4:9 was added by R. Hoffmann. No discussion of the context is offered, but only the remark that κατώτερος is to be understood as positive in degree (rather than comparative, as the form would indicate). Radermacher is cited by H.-J. Klauck, "Das Amt in der Kirche nach Eph 4, 1-16", *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 36 (1973), p. 94, n. 68, in support of the possibility that κατώτερος may be understood as positive in degree. Radermacher is also cited by M. Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, Anchor Bible, vol. 34A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), p. 434, as supporting the meaning "the earth down here" for the phrase τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9, but see n. 36 below.

storeyed' cosmology. This would appear to be more consistent with the traditional interpretation of Eph. 4:9-10 (involving a *descensus ad inferos*) than the other interpretive options put forward for the genitive τῆς γῆς, although none of the ancient authorities who held such a view articulated the force of the genitive phrase in 4:9 in precisely this way. As we have already pointed out, such a three-storeyed cosmology is less in keeping with the cosmology of Ephesians, which elsewhere reflects only two storeys, the earth below and the heavens above.

Tῆς γῆς as appositive genitive. The genitive used in the sense of an appositive, that is, of an explicit word in the genitive case used to explain a more general word, is found in classical Greek primarily in poetic literature. G. B. Winer believed it to be infrequent in Greek and confined mostly to geographical expressions corresponding to *urbs Romae* or *fluvius Euphratis* in Latin.²¹ H. W. Smyth cites a few poetic examples of this sort, such as Ἰλίου πόλις (Homer, *Iliad*, 5.642), but also some non-geographical expressions like ἀελλαι παντοίων ἀνέμων (Homer, *Odyssey*, 5.292). In addition there are some examples of the construction in prose, e.g., ὑδὸς μέγα χρῆμα, "a great affair of a boar" (Herodotus, 1.36) and τὸ ὄρος τῆς Ἰστώνης, "Mount Istone" (Thucydides, 4.46).²² In the Koiné period E. Mayser cites as an example of an appositive genitive an official letter containing topographical directions which include the phrase κατὰ πόλιν Μέμφεως.²³

In the NT the use of the appositive genitive conforms to classical

²¹G. B. Winer, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms als sichere Grundlage der neutestamentlichen Exegese*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 1830), pp. 301-302.

²²H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, p. 317.

²³E. Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit*, vol. 2: *Satzlehre*, p. 117.

usage: one clear example of a geographical reference with πόλις is found in 2 Peter 2:6, πόλεις Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρας. F. Blass and A. Debrunner list as a non-geographical use of an appositive genitive the phrase τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος in 2 Cor. 5:5.²⁴ N. Turner describes the appositive genitive (which he parenthetically labels both *genitivus materiae* and *genitivus epexegeticus*) as conforming in the NT to both classical and Koiné usage, but incidentally Hebraic.²⁵ J. H. Moulton himself held that the appositive genitive was a well-known idiom in Homer (cf. the examples above) and needed no appeal to Semitic usage for justification; rather, the vernacular has merely preserved the poetic idiom.²⁶ C. F. D. Moule regards the appositive genitive as a specialized use of the more general category he refers to as the defining genitive. Moule cites as an example Rom. 4:11, σημεῖον ἔλαβεν περιτομῆς, which he regards as "exactly equivalent to the English idiom 'the city of Manchester' (= 'the city Manchester')".²⁷ M. Zerwick defines the appositive genitive as a construction "in which the substantive added in the genitive is in reality an apposition denoting the same person or thing as the substantive to which the genitive is attached", and lists a number of (what he considers to be) NT examples, among them τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9.²⁸

A view of Eph. 4:9-10 that understands τῆς γῆς as an appositive

²⁴F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 92.

²⁵J. H. Moulton, W. F. Howard, and N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3: *Syntax*, by N. Turner, p. 214. It would probably be more accurate to regard the genitive of material as a separate but related usage. M. Zerwick also refers to the appositive genitive (*genitivus appositivus*) as *genitivus epexegeticus* or «epexegetic» genitive (see below, n. 28).

²⁶J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 1: *Prolegomena*, 3rd ed., pp. 73-74.

²⁷C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, p. 38.

²⁸M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), pp. 16-17.

genitive (i.e., "the lower regions, namely, the earth") would require as the locus of the descent the earth itself. As with a partitive genitive, this would imply a 'two-storeyed' cosmology and would thus be consistent with the cosmology found elsewhere in Ephesians. Specification of the earth itself as the locus of the descent would be compatible with two different interpretations of Eph. 4:7-11: (1) one which refers the descent of Christ in 4:9-10 to the incarnation, or (2) one which considers the descent to describe the subsequent descent of Christ as the Spirit (at Pentecost and afterwards) to distribute the spiritual gifts described in Eph. 4:11-16. A large number of modern interpreters have endorsed one or the other of these views, as we have seen in our brief look at the history of interpretation of the passage in chapter one. Many of these interpreters have also commented on the use of the genitive τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9, and we shall now examine briefly some of the more significant observations that have been made.

G. B. Winer, in his *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms als sichere Grundlage der neutestamentlichen Exegese* (original ed. 1822), was among the first of the modern grammarians and interpreters to place τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 in the category of appositive genitive. He compared it to Isa. 37:14 [38:14] LXX, εἰς τὸ ὕψος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, and Acts 2:19, ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω...ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κάτω, which reflects a 'two-storeyed' cosmology similar to that in Ephesians. Winer (who interpreted the descent in Eph. 4:9 as a reference to the incarnation) believed that the earth, described in Eph. 4:9 as a lower region, was being contrasted to ὕψος (i.e., heaven) in the quotation in 4:8.²⁹ This is similar to H. von Soden's understanding of the genitive phrase τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9: although he understood the descent to

²⁹G. B. Winer, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms...*, 3rd ed., p. 301.

be subsequent to the ascent introduced by the quotation in 4:8, von Soden identified τὰ κατώτερα μέρη in 4:9 with the lower regions of the universe, to which τῆς γῆς as genitive stood in apposition.³⁰

Like von Soden, T. K. Abbott in his 1897 commentary on Ephesians held that the descent in Eph. 4:9 was subsequent to the ascent of 4:8 and referred to the descent of Christ to his church. Abbott, although he acknowledged that the genitive phrase in question could be either partitive or appositive, believed an appositive genitive to be the most probable in the context, describing the earth itself as the 'lower regions'. Since the ascent mentioned in 4:8 was from earth to heaven, the descent would most probably be from heaven to earth.³¹

One of the most thorough studies of the interpretive possibilities for Eph. 4:9-10 is found in E. Haupt's *Die Gefangenschaftsbriefe* (1902). In his opinion the descent referred to Christ's descent from heaven to earth at the incarnation. If the author had intended to refer to a descent to the underworld as the lowest 'storey' of a three-storeyed cosmology, a superlative form (κατώτατος) would have been more logical. Haupt acknowledged that (as we have already seen) a comparative form could have superlative meaning, but argued against such a possibility in Eph. 4:9 because the author would surely have recalled the OT use of the superlative κατώτατος (Pss. 62:9 and 138:15 LXX). This would leave an appositive genitive, by which the earth itself is viewed as the 'lower regions' of the universe under

³⁰H. von Soden, ed., *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 3: *Die Briefe an die Kolosser, Epheser, Philemon; die Pastoralbriefe* (Freiburg and Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1893), p. 136.

³¹T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), pp. 114-15.

heaven, as the most probable use of the genitive τῆς γῆς.³²

The majority of recent interpreters have continued to understand τῆς γῆς as an appositive genitive. H. Schlier, in his 1957 commentary on Ephesians, states that τῆς γῆς must be understood as an appositive genitive because this agrees with the location of the evil 'powers' in Ephesians in the heavens rather than under the earth.³³ F. W. Grosheide in his commentary also understands τῆς γῆς as a genitive of apposition, citing additional examples of this usage in 2 Cor. 5:5, Rom. 4:11, and Rom. 8:23.³⁴ M. Zerwick in his discussion of the "epexegetic" genitive considers τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 to be an appositive which refers not to Christ's descent to the underworld, but to "His coming into the world itself, called τὰ κατώτερα μέρη with respect to heaven".³⁵ In his 1974 commentary M. Barth concludes that the phrase "the lower parts of the earth" is probably equivalent to "the low region of the earth" or "the earth down here", and although he does not specifically use the term "appositive genitive" in connection with the view, it is clear that Barth understands the phrase as such.³⁶ Also arguing for

³²E. Haupt, *Die Gefangenschaftsbriefe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1902), p. 139. Haupt classified interpretations of Eph. 4:9-10 into four major categories, because he distinguished between the view that saw the descent as Christ's descent into the grave at death and the view that held to a descent of Christ to the underworld (*ad inferos*) during the *triduum*. It seems more reasonable, however, to see the view that Christ simply descended into the grave as a development of the traditional view that held to a descent to the underworld, and this is the arrangement followed in the present study.

³³H. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1958), p. 192.

³⁴F. W. Grosheide, *De Brief van Paulus aan de Efeziërs*, Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1960), p. 65.

³⁵M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples*, p. 17.

³⁶M. Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, Anchor Bible, vol. 34A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), p. 434. Barth refers in n. 49 to L. Radermacher's *Neutestamentliche Grammatik*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1925), pp. 69-70 and 225. While Radermacher discusses the interchangeability of comparative and superlative forms of adjectives in the NT, he does not discuss the appositive genitive at all. The only specific reference to Eph. 4:9 is found on p. 225, and this is an addendum by R. Hoffmann. Radermacher does not discuss the genitive phrase τῆς γῆς or his own interpretation of the

the interpretation of τῆς γῆς as an appositive genitive is A. T. Lincoln, who in a 1982 article cites the frequency of appositive genitives elsewhere in Ephesians in support of the view. Further examples of this use of the genitive in Ephesians mentioned by Lincoln are 2:14, 2:15, 2:20, 6:14, 6:16, and 6:17.³⁷ Finally, F. F. Bruce in his 1984 commentary describes the genitive τῆς γῆς as "epexegetic after τὰ κατώτερα", following the terminology of M. Zerwick. It is clear from the context that Bruce understands the phrase as an appositive genitive because he states that "'the lower parts of the earth' should be understood as meaning 'the earth below'".³⁸

By now it should be clear that one's understanding of the syntactical force of the genitive τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 will be based upon one's understanding of the entire context of Eph. 4:7-11. Each of the three possibilities we have considered can provide an acceptable explanation for the use of the genitive τῆς γῆς in 4:9. Each of these possibilities has found adherents, although the tendency in the present century by grammarians and interpreters alike has been to favour an appositive genitive as the most probable explanation for the author's use of τῆς γῆς in 4:9.

There is one additional factor which lends further support to the understanding of τῆς γῆς as an appositive genitive and thus warrants our consideration: the frequency of appositive genitives as a stylistic feature of Ephesians. This has been noted by A. T. Lincoln in his 1982 article mentioned above; he identifies six other constructions in Ephesians as

descent at all in *Neutestamentliche Grammatik*.

³⁷A. T. Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982), p. 22.

³⁸F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), p. 343, n. 55.

appositive genitives. Apart from τῆς γῆς in 4:9, these may be briefly discussed. There are three in chapter two: τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ (2:14), "the intervening wall, namely, the barrier", which describes the wall of enmity which formerly divided Jew and Gentile; τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν (2:15), "the law consisting of commandments", which describes the totality of the Mosaic law as made up of individual commandments; and τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν (2:20), "the foundation of the apostles and prophets", which (although alternative explanations are possible) is best understood as describing the apostles and prophets themselves as the foundation upon which the church is being built. In chapter six Lincoln notes three more appositive genitives: τὸν θώρακα τῆς δικαιοσύνης (6:14), "the breastplate of righteousness", τὸν θυρεὸν τῆς πίστεως (6:16), "the shield of faith", and τὴν περικεφαλαίαν τοῦ σωτηρίου (6:17), "the helmet of salvation". All of these describe pieces of the 'spiritual' armour which Christians are instructed to appropriate for their own defence against evil spiritual forces (cf. 6:12). In addition to the appositive genitives identified by Lincoln in Ephesians, εἰρήνης in the phrase ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης in 4:3 should probably be considered a genitive of apposition, since the bond (σύνδεσμος) which believers are to maintain consists of peace itself; W. Bauer labelled this an 'epexegetic' genitive, which as we have already seen is an alternative term for an appositive genitive.³⁹

Conclusions regarding the use of the genitive τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9. Of course, the presence of other appositive genitives in Ephesians, no matter

³⁹W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed., trans. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, rev. F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), s.v. σύνδεσμος, p. 785.

how frequent, cannot prove that τῆς γῆς in 4:9 should be understood in the same way. Nevertheless, there are probably sufficient instances of the appositive genitive in Ephesians to warrant the observation that its use is characteristic of the author's style, as E. Percy in his stylistic analysis of Colossians and Ephesians concluded.⁴⁰ As a stylistic technique of the author of Ephesians, an appositive genitive in a passage like 4:9 would certainly represent a plausible explanation for the use of the genitive if other contextual factors were in agreement. Before we turn to the contextual factors relevant to this issue, however, we shall examine several other significant issues: (1) in the remainder of this chapter, the descent imagery in Eph. 4:7-11 as it relates particularly to Jonah; (2) in chapter three, the relationship of Moses-traditions about a heavenly ascent at Sinai to Ps. 68:19 (as quoted in Eph. 4:8) in the rabbinic literature and other extra-biblical sources; and (3) in chapter four, the relationship between Ephesians 4:7-11 and Pentecost.

Descent Imagery in the NT and Other Early Sources

In a work published in 1980 A. T. Hanson examined the background of the NT doctrine of the *descensus ad inferos* with particular attention to the passage which is usually understood to support the doctrine, 1 Peter 3:18-4:6.⁴¹ In the course of this study Hanson also examined a number of other NT passages, including Eph. 4:7-10 and Rom. 10:6-8, which are frequently understood as reflecting a *descensus ad inferos*. In evaluating the

⁴⁰E. Percy, *Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheserbriefe* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1946), p. 186.

⁴¹A. T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SPCK, 1980), pp. 122-56.

NT material Hanson turned to rabbinic accounts of the descent made by the prophet Jonah in the belly of the fish, some of which are quite elaborate in their descriptions of what Jonah did during his sojourn in the fish.⁴² Because of the potential relevance of both these areas (possible NT parallels and early Jewish descent imagery) to the understanding of the phrase τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς which specifies the locus of the descent in Eph. 4:9, we shall examine each in turn and attempt to assess its relevance for the interpretation of Eph. 4:9-10.

NT descent imagery

1 Peter 3:18-4:6. This passage is a well-known *crux interpretum* and a solution of its problems lies beyond the scope of the present work. It is important to note, however, that beyond similarities in language or imagery which might provide interpretive clues to the *descensus* terminology in Eph. 4:9-10, the interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6 is not determinative for the meaning of Eph. 4:7-11; the author of Ephesians may or may not have intended a reference to a *descensus* in 4:9-10 regardless of what the author of 1 Peter meant in 3:18-4:6.

Major studies of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6 have been done by B. Reicke (1946), W. Bieder (1949), and W. J. Dalton (1965).⁴³ A majority of scholars believe 1

⁴²E.g., Midrash Tehillim 26.9, B. 'Erubin 19a, Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer 10, etc.

⁴³B. Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1946); W. Bieder, *Die Vorstellung von der Höllenfahrt Jesu Christi*, Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments 19 (Zürich: Zwingli, 1949), and W. J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6*, Analecta Biblica 23 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965). Less lengthy examinations of the passage include those by E. Schweizer, "I Petrus 4.6", *Theologische Zeitschrift* 8 (1952), pp. 152-54, and C. E. B. Cranfield, "The Interpretation of I Peter iii.19 and iv.6", *Expository Times* 69 (1957-58), pp. 369-72.

Peter 3:18-4:6 refers to some sort of *descensus*, although Dalton argues that the proclamation to the "spirits in prison" took place after Christ's resurrection in the realm of the air, where the disobedient spirits were confined.⁴⁴ Arguing against Dalton's view that the message proclaimed by Christ in 1 Peter 3:19 was solely a message of condemnation to rebellious angelic beings in captivity, A. T. Hanson contends that because in 1 Peter 3 we are dealing with a Christian text, the all-important redeeming mission of Christ must have been the content of Christ's message to the spirits.⁴⁵ But Hanson's objection must surely be questionable, since it involves an assumption about what the author of 1 Peter believed the mission of Christ to be, and whether or not a message of judgement to rebellious angelic beings might or might not legitimately comprise a part of that mission.

In any event, the terminology used in 1 Peter 3:18-4:6 does not resemble that in Eph. 4:9-10 closely enough to suggest clear parallels; no phrase in 1 Peter 3:18-4:6 specifically corresponds to εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9. If in fact a *descensus* is involved in 1 Peter 3:18-4:6, it provides (as far as the interpretation of Eph. 4:9-10 is concerned) proof that such a concept was within the range of possibilities for a NT writer. But the immediate context of Ephesians 4 will have to provide evidence for such a *descensus ad inferos* before it would be valid to conclude that both passages were referring to the same (or a similar) event. As we have already seen

⁴⁴W. J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits*, pp. 165ff. It is worthwhile to note that Dalton's view is consistent with Eph. 4:8, where ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλώσιαν describes an activity contemporaneous with that described by the participle ἀναβάς. As H. Schlier in *Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930) points out, the author of Ephesians located the demonic powers in the air (ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, Eph. 6:12), and thus to overcome them Christ did not need to make a descent to the underworld; they were vanquished as part of his victorious ascent (pp. 3-5).

⁴⁵A. T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*, p. 132.

from our discussion of the grammatical possibilities for the meaning of the phrase τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9, a descent to the underworld is only one of several options available to the interpreter of Eph. 4:7-11; unless one approaches the text with the presupposition that the passage must speak of a *descensus ad inferos*, it is far from clear that such a concept is in view.

Rom. 10:6-8. Another NT passage often understood to allude to a *descensus ad inferos* is Rom. 10:6-8. Such a reference would establish the *descensus* as a Pauline doctrine, and this would strengthen the possibility that such an interpretation could also be valid for Eph. 4:9-10.⁴⁶ In Rom. 10:6-8 Paul alludes to Deut. 30:12-13, but in a form closer to the Palestinian Targum than to the Masoretic text or the LXX of Deut. 30:13. Palestinian Tg Deut. 30:12-13 reads:

The law is not in the heavens, that thou shouldst say, O that we had one like Mosheh the prophet to ascend into heaven, and bring it to us, and make us hear its commands, that we may do them! Neither is the law beyond the great sea, that thou shouldst say, O that we had one like Jonah the prophet, who could descend into the depth of the sea, and bring it to us, and make us hear its commands, that we may do them. For the word is very nigh you, in your mouth....⁴⁷

Both the association of Moses with the ascent to heaven and the association of Jonah with the descent into the depth of the sea may be significant in terms of the contrast developed by Paul in Rom. 10:6-8. It is clear that Paul, if he is familiar with the targumic interpretation of Deut. 30:12-13, has modified somewhat the statement dealing with the descent, changing "into the depth of the sea" to "into the abyss" (εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον). R. LeDéaut and

⁴⁶Pauline authorship of Ephesians must of course be considered a factor here, but the presence of a *descensus* in Rom. 10:6-8 would still strengthen the case for such an interpretation of Eph. 4:9-10 even if Ephesians is considered non-Pauline as long as its dependence upon (or relationship to) genuine Pauline material is acknowledged.

⁴⁷The text of Palestinian Tg Deut. 30:12-13 is quoted from J. W. Etheridge, *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch* (n.p., 1862; reprint ed., New York: Ktav, 1968), pp. 654-55.

M. McNamara (both of whom have studied the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch) have concluded that Paul was, in fact, familiar with the targumic rendition of Deut. 30:12-13 at the time he wrote Rom. 10:6-8.⁴⁸ McNamara explains Paul's use of ἄβυσσος in Rom. 10:7 by suggesting that "the great sea" in Pal. Tg Deut. 30:13 is a reference to Jonah 2:6, where Jonah says that יהוים (MT) has surrounded him, because the LXX translates this as ἄβυσσος. McNamara states: "The conclusion that seems to flow from the facts of the case is that Paul knew of this paraphrase of the text of Dt and adapted it for his own purpose."⁴⁹ A somewhat different possibility has been raised by A. M. Goldberg, who suggests that Paul was acquainted with the traditional interpretation behind Pal. Tg Deut. 30:12-13 rather than with the text of the Targum itself.⁵⁰ In light of the acknowledged difficulties involved in the dating of targumic materials, the more conservative stance taken by Goldberg is probably to be preferred.⁵¹

We may conclude, therefore, that there is a good possibility that Paul was aware of an interpretation similar to that found in Pal. Tg Deut. 30:12-13 when he wrote Rom. 10:6-8. The Moses and Jonah imagery may well be in the background of Rom. 10:6-8, as McNamara and LeDéaut have argued. This would almost certainly establish such imagery as Pauline (since

⁴⁸R. LeDéaut, *Liturgie juive et Nouveau Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965), p. 45, and M. McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), pp. 75-77.

⁴⁹M. McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, p. 77.

⁵⁰A. M. Goldberg, "Torah aus der Unterwelt?", *Biblische Zeitschrift* 14 (1970), pp. 127-31. A similar proposal for the relationship between Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19 has been made by R. Rubinkiewicz, "Ps LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", *Novum Testamentum* 17 (1975), pp. 219-24. Rubinkiewicz's proposal is discussed at greater length in ch. 3, pp. 148-54.

⁵¹For more extensive discussion of the difficulties in dating targumic literature, see ch. 3, pp. 95-108.

Pauline authorship of Romans is generally acknowledged). It is equally clear that in the case of Rom. 10:6-8 the ascent imagery associated with Moses and the descent imagery associated with Jonah has been applied by the author of Romans to Christ. This does not constitute conclusive proof, however, that such imagery must be in the background of Eph. 4:9-10, because the association of Moses' ascent to heaven with Ps. 68:19, the OT text quoted in Eph. 4:8, appears to be independent of any corresponding associations with Jonah.⁵² There may well be allusions to both Moses and Jonah in Rom. 10:6-8, but they are not specifically named in the context; only Christ is explicitly mentioned. It is true that the person doing the ascending and descending is not Christ himself, but someone going to bring him back, although in the context of Rom. 10:6-8 (which consists of a pair of rhetorical questions) the point is that no one needs to ascend to heaven or to descend to the abyss to bring Christ back, since Christ himself has already made the descent and the ascent, and is now near at hand. Likewise in Eph. 4:7-11 Moses is not specifically mentioned at all with respect to the ascent, and the context makes it absolutely clear that Ps. 68:19 is understood as a reference to the triumphal ascension of Christ.⁵³ If Moses-traditions are in the background of Eph. 4:7-11 (as we believe they are), the connection exists independently of Deut. 30:12-13 and its targumic interpretation. As long as we do not conclude prematurely that the descent described in Rom 10:6-8 and that mentioned in Eph. 4:9-10 must be identified as the same event,⁵⁴ the relationship between Pal. Tg Deut. 30:12-

⁵²See the present chapter, pp. 84-90, and ch. 4, pp. 197-219.

⁵³In the case of Christ in Eph. 4:7-11 this almost certainly presupposes his prior resurrection, but the resurrection is not explicitly mentioned in the context of Eph. 4:7-11 either.

⁵⁴Note the crucial difference in terminology: Rom. 10:7 has εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον, while Eph. 4:9 has εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς.

13 and Rom. 10:6-8 is instructive, because it suggests that the later traditions describing Moses' ascent to heaven to bring down the Torah may, in fact, have had their basis in a tradition concerning Moses' ascent to heaven which predated Ephesians.⁵⁵ Of even more importance is the stress in Rom. 10:8 on the present proximity of the "word" [τὸ ῥῆμα] which is the content of the apostolic preaching. The implication from the previous verses is that one does not need to descend into the abyss or ascend into heaven in search of the Messiah, because he is near at hand as a result of the apostolic message presented to the readers. In other words, Christ is present 'spiritually' through the apostolic preaching rather than being remote and inaccessible either in the underworld or in the heights of heaven.⁵⁶

Jonah and his descent in rabbinic literature and other sources

In our examination of the descent imagery in the background of Rom. 10:6-8 we have already encountered the suggestion that Paul, at the time he wrote Rom. 10:6-8, was familiar with the targumic interpretation of Deut. 30:12-13, and that Pal. Tg Deut. 30:12-13 links the descent "into the abyss" (εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον, Rom. 10:7) with the figure of Jonah the prophet,

⁵⁵The significance of the 'ascent' imagery with regard to Moses will be discussed in ch. 3, which examines the ascent imagery behind Ps. 68:19 and Eph. 4:8, as well as the ascent imagery surrounding Moses himself in (or prior to) the first century CE. See below, pp. 129-35, 168-69, and 192-94.

⁵⁶The concept of the descent of Christ as the Spirit at Pentecost (the position of the present study with regard to the descent mentioned in Eph. 4:9-10) would make a similar point in terms of the way in which the Christian in the present age has first-hand experience of the resurrected and exalted Christ. Christ, although exalted "above all the heavens", is not so distant as to be inaccessible to his people, thanks to the descent of the Spirit to the church at the first Christian Pentecost. This concept and its implications are discussed more fully in ch. 5 of the present study, pp. 251-65.

who according to the Targum descended "into the depth of the sea".⁵⁷ The imagery of Jonah and his descent is discussed in relation to Eph. 4:9-10 by A. T. Hanson, who sees Jonah in the background of the *descensus* imagery in Ephesians 4, and also connected to what some consider to be baptismal imagery in Ephesians 5.⁵⁸ At this point we need not pursue any further the question of baptismal imagery in Ephesians 5, except to note that Hanson's attempt to link the use of *ῥῆμα* in Eph. 5:26, which he refers to Christian baptism, with the use of the same word in Rom. 10:8, where it refers to the apostolic *kerygma*, is tenuous at best.⁵⁹

At the heart of Hanson's attempt to connect Jonah and the related *descensus* imagery to the descent described by the author of Ephesians in 4:9-10 lie the rabbinic accounts of Jonah's voyage in the belly of the fish. B. Erubin 19a records, without elaboration, that Jonah visited the place of the dead (Sheol), where he exclaims, in the words of Jonah 2:3, "Out of the belly of the nether world cried I...".⁶⁰ Midrash Tehillim 26.9 adds that Jonah was the son of the widow of Zarephath, who died and was raised to life again by Elijah.⁶¹ This would imply that Jonah was believed to have visited

⁵⁷The suggestion was made by R. LeDéaut in *Liturgie juive et Nouveau Testament* and M. McNamara in *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (see n. 48 above).

⁵⁸A. T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*, pp. 141-50. Hanson attempts to relate Eph. 5:14 to Jonah 1:5-6 on the basis of similarities in terminology, although such a connection is not made by B. Noack, "Das Zitat in Ephes. 5,14", *Studia Theologica* 5 (1951), pp. 52-64, in his attempt to trace the OT backgrounds of the quotation in Eph. 5:14. Hanson's suggestions regarding Eph. 5:14 are interesting but inconclusive. Strangely, he does not mention at all one of the most suggestive links between Eph. 5:14 and 4:8: both quotations are introduced by the unusual formula *διὸ λέγει*, which occurs as the introduction to an OT quotation nowhere else in the Pauline corpus.

⁵⁹A. T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*, p. 146.

⁶⁰*The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Mo'ed*, ed. I. Epstein, *Erubin*, trans. I. W. Slotki (London: Soncino, 1938), p. 130.

⁶¹*The Midrash on Psalms*, trans. W. G. Braude, 2 vols., Yale Judaica Series 13 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), vol. 1, p. 363.

the place of the dead once before, prior to his descent in the fish. Midr. Teh. 26.9 also records that Jonah entered into Eden during his life by reason of his merit.⁶²

By far the longest and most detailed account of Jonah's activities in the belly of the fish is found in Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer 10⁶³. Here we find Jonah, standing inside the mouth of the fish "just as a man enters the great synagogue", with the two eyes of the fish like windows of glass giving light to Jonah. He was also illuminated by a great pearl which hung inside the fish like the sun, showing all that was in the depths of the sea. During this time Jonah was supposedly in regular conversation with the fish. The fish was afraid of being swallowed by Leviathan, and so when Leviathan appeared before them, Jonah showed him the seal of Abraham (i.e., circumcision). Leviathan then swam two days' journey away from Jonah and the fish and did not molest them further. Jonah then asked the fish to show him all that was in the sea and in the depths. The fish, grateful for his rescue from Leviathan, obliged Jonah and took him on a veritable tour of the underworld. The sights included the great river of the waters of the Ocean,⁶⁴ the Reed Sea crossed by the Israelites in their escape from Egypt, the pillars of the earth and their foundations, the lowest Sheol⁶⁵ and

⁶²Since Jonah is not numbered among the nine persons who, in rabbinic tradition, entered into paradise while still alive, H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck [*Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, n.d.; reprint ed., 1969), vol. 1, p. 646] understand Midr. Teh. 26.9 to mean that Jonah saw Eden (paradise) from the fish, just as Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer 10 states that from the fish, Jonah looked upon Gehenna (Gehinnom). Nevertheless, the text of Midr. Teh. 26.9 does seem to state that Jonah not only saw Eden from afar, but entered there.

⁶³*Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, trans. and annotated by G. Friedlander (London: n.p., 1916; reprint ed., New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981), pp. 69-73.

⁶⁴This is apparently a reference to the waters which were thought to surround the entire earth according to rabbinic cosmology.

⁶⁵The Venice edition of P. R. E., printed in Hebrew in 1544 (the second printed edition; the

Gehinnom⁶⁶ (the lowest region of Gehenna), and the temple of God which stood on the seven mountains of Jerusalem.⁶⁷ Also included in Jonah's tour was a visit to the *Eben Shethiyah* (the foundation stone on which the entire earth stood). After this Jonah asked the fish to be still while he prayed, and immediately the fish spat Jonah out onto the dry land.

In evaluating the significance of these accounts of Jonah and his 'descent' in the belly of the fish, we must remember that all of the rabbinic accounts appear to be considerably later than the first century CE. Thus their usefulness in determining how Jonah as a prophetic figure was viewed during the period when the NT documents were undergoing composition is extremely limited. It would not be valid to infer from the later rabbinic accounts that Jonah would probably have been understood by a NT author to have made a *descensus ad inferos*. Some of the material in the rabbinic writings undoubtedly reflects traditional interpretations of an earlier period, but this must be confirmed from contemporary non-rabbinic sources; it cannot merely be assumed.⁶⁸ A. T. Hanson does acknowledge the problem of dating the sources, but still continues to argue that such imagery lies behind Matt. 12:40, thus proving that the tradition of Jonah's

first is the Constantinople edition of 1514), reads "Gehinnom" in place of "the lowest Sheol". Midrash Kônen likewise states, "there is one gate to Gehinnom in the sea of Tarshish".

⁶⁶The first printed editions (Constantinople, 1514; Venice, 1544; and Sabbioneta, 1567) read "the lowest Sheol" (see the previous note). Only the order of the two terms ("the lowest Sheol" and "Gehinnom") is in dispute in the earliest printed editions, not their inclusion or omission.

⁶⁷According to P. R. E., the temple stood on all the seven hills (mountains) at the same time. Rabbinic exegesis designated the names of these seven mountains according to names found in the OT: Mount Zion, Mount Moriah, the Holy Mount, the Mount of My Holy Beauty, the Mount of the House of the Lord, the Mount of the Lord of Hosts, and the Lofty Mount of the Mountains. Of course in the original contexts in which these names occurred, they did not necessarily designate the temple mount in Jerusalem.

⁶⁸For a fuller discussion of the problems involved in attempting to date the rabbinic literature and traditions behind it, see ch. 3, pp. 108-10.

descent to the underworld antedates the composition of Matthew's gospel.⁶⁹ We need not involve ourselves in a discussion of the authenticity of Matt. 12:40, which has been described by some scholars as an interpolation.⁷⁰ We may simply note that it is possible to understand the statement about Jonah in Matt. 12:40 in a symbolic or typological sense, without insisting that at this time Jonah was literally thought to have descended to Sheol (which to be completely consistent would probably have necessitated his death and resurrection). Thus it is highly questionable whether the mention of Jonah in Matt. 12:38-41 does indeed confirm, as Hanson asserts, that by the time of Matthew's composition Jonah was understood as making a *descensus ad inferos*. Such an inference is possible but by no means necessary from the evidence at hand.

While we are examining the possibility that at least as early as the composition of Ephesians Jonah was believed to have made a *descensus ad inferos*, we should look briefly at the LXX text of Jonah 1-2. If it appears likely that a *descensus* on the part of Jonah could have been inferred from the text of the LXX this might have some significance for the interpretation of Eph. 4:9-10, because (as A. T. Lincoln has demonstrated) the OT quotations in Ephesians are primarily based on the LXX and suggest a familiarity on the part of the author with the Greek translation of the OT.⁷¹

⁶⁹A. T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*, pp. 149-50.

⁷⁰Among those who view Matt. 12:40 as a later interpolation into the gospel are L. Cope, "Matthew 12:40 and the Synoptic Source Question", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973), p. 115; K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1954), pp. 132-33; A. H. McNeile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1915; reprint ed., 1961), pp. 181-82; and H. J. Holtzmann, ed., *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 1: *Die Synoptiker. —Die Apostelgeschichte* (Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1889), p. 141.

⁷¹A. T. Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982), pp. 16-57.

In the prayer of Jonah from the belly of the fish in Jonah 2:7 LXX the prophet states, "I descended into the earth... (κατέβην εἰς γῆν)".⁷² This is close to (but not identical with) the text of Eph. 4:9, which reads καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς.⁷³ A similar phrase also occurs in Jonah 1:3 LXX (καὶ κατέβη εἰς Ἰοππην) with respect to Jonah ("and he went down to Joppa"), and again in Jonah 1:5 LXX (Ἰωνᾶς δὲ κατέβη εἰς τὴν κοίλην τοῦ πλοίου, "but Jonah went down into the belly of the ship"). In both these latter instances the phrases form part of the overall 'descent' motif connected with Jonah in the first two chapters of the book, but do not in context directly speak of a *descensus ad inferos*.

The first example (from Jonah 2:7), however, may well have been associated with such a *descensus* by a reader of the book in Greek, because in the immediately preceding context of Jonah's prayer there are at least two additional references which might call to mind a *descensus ad inferos*. In Jonah 2:3 LXX the prophet (in his prayer to Yahweh from the belly of the fish) says, «ἐκ κοιλίας ἄδου κραυγῆς μου ἤκουσας φωνῆς μου», where the MT reads מבטן שאול שׁעתי שׁמעת קולי. Although this was probably intended to be understood as hyperbole in the poetic context of the original, a reader of the LXX could certainly conclude from the Greek translation that Jonah had made the *descensus*.⁷⁴ Such a conclusion would probably be reinforced by

⁷²The LXX text of Jonah quoted here and throughout this section is from *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Societatis Litterarum Göttingensis editum*, vol. 13, *Duodecim Prophetæ*, ed. J. Ziegler, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1967), ad loc.

⁷³The similarity between Jonah 2:7 LXX and Eph. 4:9 would be even greater if μέρη were omitted from the text of Eph. 4:9. For a discussion of this textual problem (in which we concluded that μέρη probably was part of the original text) see ch. 1, pp. 59-64.

⁷⁴It is also possible that the (later) rabbinic traditions arose from a similar literal interpretation of שאול in the Hebrew text of Jonah 2:3; this would certainly be in line with known rabbinic techniques of exegesis.

Jonah 2:6 LXX, ἄβυσσος ἐκύκλωσέ με ἐσχάτη, where the prophet says he was engulfed by the 'abyss'. As we have already seen in our discussion of Rom. 10:6-8, M. McNamara believed that this reference to the 'abyss' (ἄβυσσος) in Jonah 2:6 provided the conceptual link between the tradition in Pal. Tg Deut. 30:12-13 and Rom. 10:7 for the apostle Paul.⁷⁵ In summary, we may conclude that a reader of the LXX text of Jonah might indeed have come away from chapter 2 with the impression that Jonah accomplished a *descensus ad inferos*.

Conclusions regarding the descent imagery in the NT and other sources

Since almost everyone would concede that the LXX translation of Jonah antedated the composition of Ephesians, it does appear possible (although certainly not conclusive) that the author of Ephesians might have written 4:9-10 with the *descensus*-imagery of Jonah 2 LXX in mind. If this were the case, it might further suggest that a reading of Eph. 4:9-10 which associates the descent with a descent of Christ to Sheol, or the underworld, would be the most natural reading of the passage. Although we regard A. T. Hanson's attempt to relate the rabbinic accounts of Jonah's descent and the interpretation of Matt. 12:40 to a *descensus* in Eph. 4:9-10 as inconclusive, it does appear that the author of Ephesians could, without much difficulty, have arrived at similar conclusions for himself if he were familiar with the LXX text of Jonah. Since the OT quotations in Ephesians do suggest strongly a familiarity with (and dependence upon) the LXX by the author, we may consider it possible that our author was aware of the

⁷⁵See above, pp. 81-82.

descensus imagery in Jonah 2 when he wrote Eph. 4:9-10. Whether this awareness influenced him in his own reference to a descent beyond the level of similar (but not identical) terminology is a matter that must be decided on the basis of considerations in the immediate context of Eph. 4:9-10.⁷⁶ Before turning to these, however, we must first examine in considerable detail the ascent-imagery surrounding Moses in light of the (later) rabbinic interpretation of Ps. 68:19. In the following chapters we shall attempt to assess the development of this imagery linking Moses with Ps. 68:19 and/or a heavenly ascent at Mt Sinai and its implications for the ascent-descent motif in Eph. 4:7-11.

⁷⁶Contextual considerations affecting the interpretation of the descent mentioned in Eph. 4:9-10 will be examined in ch. 5 of the present study.

Chapter Three

The Association of Moses with Psalm 68:19

as Background to Ephesians 4

We may now turn our attention to the significance of Moses' association with Ps. 68:19 as background to Eph. 4:8-10. Various associations in imagery with other religious figures in Jewish or Gnostic literature who made ascents to heaven or to the heavenly realm have been suggested. We shall examine a number of these other accounts and attempt to evaluate their possible relationship to (or influence upon) the writer of Ephesians in the composition of the present account. The primary set of associations we shall consider—the one most often suggested to be in the background of Eph. 4:8-10—involves Moses and his legendary ascent to heaven as reflected in the Targum to the Psalms, the (later) rabbinic literature, and other early non-canonical sources. The Moses-traditions associated with Ps. 68:19 are extremely important in determining the sequence of Christ's descent in Eph. 4:9-10 with respect to the ascent mentioned in the psalm. If the author of Ephesians had available to him the traditions associating Psalm 68 with Moses, these could well have influenced his inclusion of a reference to the descent of Christ in the passage. A descent per se is not mentioned in the psalm quotation, but is inferred by the author of Ephesians in 4:9-10. If the Moses-traditions we are about to investigate were available in some form to the author of Ephesians, he would have been predisposed to infer a subsequent descent of Christ in 4:9-10 corresponding to the ascent mentioned in Ps. 68:19 itself, since Moses, following his ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the

Torah, descended to distribute it as 'gifts' to men. The 'giving of gifts' attributed to Moses in Ps. 68:19 is therefore implicitly connected with a descent, and the author of Ephesians would not have needed a great deal of imaginative creativity to see in this implicit descent a descent of Christ as the Spirit, distributing gifts to his church.

But extreme caution must be exercised when appealing to rabbinic interpretations of Psalm 68 to validate any interpretation of the descent in Eph. 4:9-10. The extant written sources are in many cases indisputably later than the composition of Ephesians, and vague appeals to 'prior oral tradition' must be backed up with sufficient evidence to establish a reasonable degree of certainty regarding the antiquity of such traditions. With this in mind we shall set out to investigate thoroughly any possible allusions to Moses-traditions regarding a heavenly ascent connected with Sinai and the giving of the Torah in all the extant literature, rabbinic and otherwise, at our disposal. We shall attempt to determine what may or may not be said with any degree of certainty concerning the use of such Moses-traditions by the author of Ephesians in 4:7-11.

*Moses' Ascent to Heaven in Ps. 68:19: The Tradition and
its Relationship to Ephesians 4:8*

Recent attempts to interpret Eph. 4:7-11 have made reference to the Targum to the Psalms, which applies Ps. 68:19 to Moses when he ascended Mt Sinai. In the words of Targum Psalms, "You ascended to the firmament, Prophet Moses; you led captive captivity; you learned the words of Torah; you gave them as gifts to the sons of men".¹ The observation was

¹Translation by the present writer from the Aramaic text of Tg Ps. 68:19 in *Hagiographa Chaldaice*, ed. P. A. de Lagarde (Leipzig: B. G. Teubneri, 1873), ad loc. For the Aramaic

initially made around the turn of the century by H. St J. Thackeray that the text of Eph. 4:8 is similar to that found in the Targum to Psalm 68, while both differ from the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint at a number of points.² Since Thackeray's remark, it has become increasingly common to find references to Tg Ps. 68 in commentaries and other discussions of Eph. 4:7-11.³ But the antiquity of the tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19 has yet to be definitively proven, and thus (before attempting to analyse the possible ways in which the writer of Ephesians might have made use of the Targum's application of Ps. 68 to Moses) it is necessary to investigate more fully the Targum to the Psalms and the tradition it reflects at 68:19. An attempt must be made to evaluate whether the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 with reference to Moses and his ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah⁴ could, in fact, have been available to the writer of Ephesians in a form approaching that found in Tg Psalms and the later rabbinic literature.⁵

text see below, p. 137.

²H. St J. Thackeray, *The Relation of St Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought* (London: Oxford University Press, 1900), p. 182. For a detailed comparison of Ps. 68:19 in the MT, LXX, Eph. 4:8, and Tg Psalms, see below, pp. 136-47.

³E.g., E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957), p. 144; J. Cambier, "La signification christologique d'Éph. IV.7-10", *New Testament Studies* 9 (1963), pp. 262-75; G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", *Studia Evangelica* 2, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), pp. 535-45; J. C. Kirby, *Ephesians, Baptism, and Pentecost* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1968), p. 146; J. Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 1971), p. 208; and A. T. Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982), pp. 16-57.

⁴Based on the account given in Ex. 19:3 ff. and parallels.

⁵H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, n.d.; reprint ed. 1969), vol. 3, pp. 596-98, list a number of parallels from rabbinic literature, but their list is by no means exhaustive. Similar lists of rabbinic parallels to Tg Ps. 68:19 are found in W. A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 206 note, and D. C. Smith, "The Ephesian Heresy and the Origin of the Epistle to the Ephesians", *Ohio Journal of Religious Studies* 5 (1977), p. 94, n. 32.

The Targum to the Psalms

The difficulty of dating the material found in the Targums constitutes a primary obstacle for their use in the interpretation of the New Testament, and the tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19 is no exception. Nevertheless, because of the importance of the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 found in Tg Psalms for the interpretation of the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10 (including the change from 'received' to 'gave' shared by Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19) we shall examine briefly the evidence from Tg Psalms itself which points to a later date for the extant document.

It is almost certain that Tg Psalms in the form in which it now exists is a relatively late work, although the time of final composition—or final redaction⁶—cannot at present be determined with any degree of accuracy

⁶In light of the uncertainties surrounding the origin of Tg Psalms in its present form, it is difficult to know whether it should be viewed as an essentially early work which has been subjected to one or more subsequent redactions, or whether it is for the most part a later composition drawing on a number of early traditions. B. J. Roberts, for example, in *The Old Testament Text and Versions* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1951), p. 209, has suggested that variation in the extent of paraphrase found throughout the present composition (ranging from strict literalness on the one hand to extreme paraphrase on the other) suggests that Tg Psalms as it now exists may have been assembled from a number of earlier targumim. Yet Roberts also proposes a later redaction intended to bring Tg Psalms into agreement with the Masoretic Text, based on evidence of conflate readings such as that found in Ps. 97:11 (see below, p. 102, also note 24). The problems in dating the earliest *written* Targums are extensive; in spite of the often-quoted prohibition of written targumim by R. Samuel in the Palestinian (Jerusalem) Talmud (P. Meg. 4.1), there is evidence that written targumim were in use during the Tannaitic period and even earlier. According to R. Jose, a written Tg Job was known to R. Gamaliel—although he did not approve of it and had it buried in a wall (B. Shab. 115a; a parallel account with minor variations is found in Soferim 5.15). There are also the fragmentary Targums found at Qumran, 11Q Tg Job [see *Le Targum de Job de la Grotte XI de Qumrân*, ed. and trans. J. P. M. van der Ploeg and A. S. van der Woude (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), and A. S. van der Woude, "Das Hiobtargum aus Qumran Höhle XI", *Vetus Testamentum Supplement* 9 (1963), pp. 322-31] and 4Q Tg Leviticus [see R. Le Déaut, *Introduction à la Littérature Targumique*, première partie (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), pp. 64-65]. A. D. York, in "The Targum in the Synagogue and in the School", *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 10 (1979), pp. 75-79, gives details and an evaluation of the conflict among the rabbis over the use of written targumim: according to R. Samuel (see above) the Targum is by implication a part of the Oral Law (hence the prohibition against writing it down). It occurs to the present writer that, given the present state of targumic studies in general (and of Tg Psalms in particular), attempts to apply source criticism and redaction criticism to

beyond the fourth to ninth century of the Christian era.⁷ There are, indeed, indications of a later date (for the final redaction, at least) to be found in a number of places in Tg Psalms. Greek words occur fairly regularly throughout: in Ps. 1:2, the Masoretic Text has תורה twice (בתורה and ובתורה); in the first instance Tg Psalms translates this as בנמסא (Greek νόμος), while the second is rendered by אוריהא (ובאוריהא), almost as a stylistic variation. Elsewhere in Tg Psalms, however (as is generally the case in the targmim), אוריהא is consistently used to translate תורה.⁸ In a number of contexts אנלי (Greek ἄγγελος) is found: in Ps. 50:6 the Masoretic Text "and the heavens declare his righteousness" becomes "and the angels of heaven...", removing the metonymy found in the Masoretic Text. Regarding the presence of transliterated Greek words in the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch, G. J. Cowling has proposed that the Aramaic

Tg Psalms make efforts to deal with the synoptic gospels using similar methods appear simpler by comparison. For further examples of difficulties (and disagreement) in dating Tg Psalms, see W. Bacher, s.v. "Targum", in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. I. Singer (New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1906), vol. 12, p. 62; L. Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1892), pp. 67-68, 84; R. Le Déaut, *Introduction à la Littérature Targumique*, pp. 131-35; and n. 7 of the present chapter (which follows).

⁷W. Bacher (s.v. "Targum", in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 12, p. 62) insisted on a date of final composition for Tg Psalms prior to the fall of Rome in 476 CE (see below, p. 96), but this was contested by G. H. Dalman in his *Grammatik des jüdisch-palästinischen Aramäisch*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1905; reprint ed. with *Aramäisch Dialektproben*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960), pp. 32-33, where he argued for a later date for the Palestinian targums on a linguistic basis. This represented a reversal of Dalman's previous position, since he had indicated in the first edition of *Grammatik* (1894) that the Palestinian targums might include sections of very early, possibly even pre-Christian, material. But he discarded this view in his later works, and it is largely due to their influence that Dalman's (revised) opinions—that the Palestinian targums were much later works, no earlier than 7th century CE—became the consensus view of scholars in the first half of this century. These historical developments are discussed by M. McNamara in *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, *Analecta Biblica* 27 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), pp. 19 ff.

⁸I.e., Ps. 78:10; 94:12; 119:1, 18, 29, 51, 53, 85, 150, and 165. The Masoretic Text quoted throughout the present work is taken from *Biblia Hebraica*, 7th ed., ed. R. Kittel (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1937); the Aramaic text of Tg Psalms employed throughout is that of *Hagiographa Chaldaice*, ed. P. A. de Lagarde (Leipzig: B. G. Teubneri, 1873).

translation was actually made not from the Hebrew text, but from a Greek version, probably a revision of the Septuagint similar to the version associated with Theodotion.⁹ If Cowling's evaluation of the evidence is accurate, it would point to a date for the Palestinian Targum considerably later than the New Testament period. In any case, many of the arguments adduced by Cowling would appear to apply to the Targum to the Psalms as well as to the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch.

Additionally, there are other indications in Tg Psalms which point to a fairly late date. A tendency to rephrase difficult (or uncertain) readings is seen in Ps. 68:18:¹⁰ the Masoretic Text has אלפי שׂאן "thousands of repetition (?)",¹¹ which the targumist (either because of his own uncertainty concerning the meaning or out of concern for the comprehension of his audience) simplifies as אלפין דאנגליא "thousands of angels". A theological purpose almost surely lies behind the paraphrase of Ps. 82:6, which in the Masoretic Text reads אֵי-אֱמַרְתִּי אֱלֹהִים אַתֶּם וּבְנֵי עֲלִיִן כְּלַכֶּם "I said, 'You are gods, and sons of the most High, all of you'", but is translated in Tg Psalms as אַנְא אֱמַרְיַחְהִיךְ

⁹G. J. Cowling, "New Light on the New Testament? The significance of the Palestinian Targum", *TSF Bulletin* 51 (1968), pp. 11-12. The main points cited by Cowling in favour of a Greek original behind the Palestinian Targum are as follows: (a) the complete absence of the pronominal object affixed to a finite verb (whereas the object is affixed to the verb in every other form of Aramaic; cf. דִּבְרָא לְהוֹן in Tg Ps. 68:19); (b) in the translation of the text the relative pronoun follows Greek usage, while in interpolated or supplementary material it follows normal Aramaic usage; (c) Greek words are used in the translation which are not integrated into the language (cf. the examples from Tg Psalms mentioned in the text of the present work); (d) there are numerous agreements with Greek versions; and (e) the best manuscripts of the Palestinian Targum differentiate between the words 'bread' and 'food', following Greek usage, rather than using the word 'bread' for food in general, as both Hebrew and Aramaic do. It should be remembered that, while Cowling's suggestions regarding the dating of the Palestinian Targum run counter to much current scholarly opinion, almost all of these same authorities would agree that the Targums to the Hagiographa (including Tg Psalms) are relatively late compositions.

¹⁰The verse immediately prior to 68:19, the primary subject of the present discussion.

¹¹F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs [*A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907; reprint ed. 1972), s.v. שׂאן (III.), p. 1041] indicate that the meaning of שׂאן is uncertain.

כמלאכי ארון חשיבין והיך אנגלי מרומא "I said, 'you are regarded (חשיבין) as angels (אנגלי מרומא), and as angels of heaven (כמלאכיא), all of you'". In John 10:34 this verse is quoted by Jesus in defense of his self-appellation 'Son of God', and it is possible that Tg Psalms shows evidence at this point of the growing rabbinic tendency, in the early centuries of the Christian era, to reinterpret anything in the Jewish scriptures which might be of use to Christian apologists.¹² In Shem. R. 29.5, for example, R. Abbahu, an Amora of the second generation (prior to 300 CE), is said to have explained the verse "I am the Lord your God" (Ex. 20:2) with the following comment:

A human king may rule, but he has a father and brother; but God said: 'I am not thus; I am the first, for I have no father, and I am the last for I have no brother, and besides Me there is no God, for I have no son.'¹³

It seems virtually certain that this is in response to Christian proclamation of Jesus as 'Son of God'. That the rabbis were willing to go to considerable lengths to eliminate any basis for Christian claims concerning the divinity of Jesus is further illustrated by B. Sanh. 38b:

R. Johanan said: In all the passages which the *Minim* have taken [as grounds] for their heresy, their refutation is found near at hand. Thus: *Let us make man in our image, —And God created [sing.] man in His own image; Come, let us go down and there confound their language, —And the Lord came down [sing.] to see the city and the tower; Because there were revealed [plur.] to him God, —Unto God who answereth [sing.] me in the day of my distress; For what great nation is there that hath God so nigh [plur.] unto it, as the Lord our God is [unto us] whensoever we call upon Him [sing.]; And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, [like] Israel, whom God went [plur.] to redeem for a people unto himself [sing.], Till thrones were placed and one that was ancient did sit.*

Why were these necessary? —To teach R. Johanan's dictum; viz.: The Holy One, blessed be He, does nothing without consulting His heavenly Court (מלאכי), for

¹²This point is not dependent on the authenticity of the account in John 10:31-39, which reflects, in any case, the understanding and usage of the material by the early church at the time of the Fourth Gospel's composition.

¹³*Midrash Rabbah*, ed. H. Freedman and M. Simon, *Exodus*, trans. S. M. Lehrman (London: Soncino, 1939), pp. 339-40; punctuation follows the edition cited. The idea expressed in Shem. R. 29.5, that God has no son, is echoed in P. (J.) Shab. 8, Midr. Sam. 5.7, and Ag. Ber. 31; the last (admittedly late) is a collection of homilies, probably compiled in the 10th century.

it is written, *The matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the Holy Ones.*¹⁴

The **חַיִּים** to whom R. Johanan refers are, in this case, almost certainly Christians¹⁵ who have appealed to the plural forms in the Old Testament passages cited as evidence for their claims about Jesus and his relationship to God. The rabbinic response in such instances is equally clear—and for the most part typical.¹⁶

¹⁴*The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nezikin*, ed. I. Epstein, *Sanhedrin*, trans. J. Shachter, vol. 1 (London: Soncino, 1935), pp. 244-45. Quotations, punctuation, and bracketed notes (with the exception of the Heb. **חַיִּים**, inserted parenthetically from n. 4, p. 245) are in the form given in the translation.

¹⁵Albeit probably Jewish Christians. The precise scope of the term **חַיִּים** is difficult to determine; it usually refers to sectarians or infidels, and is often applied to Jewish Christians, according to M. Jastrow, ed., *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (n.p., n.d.; reprint ed., Brooklyn, NY: P. Shalom, 1967), s.v. **חַיִּים** (III.), p. 776. The claim of H. J. Schoeps, in *The Jewish-Christian Argument: A History of Theologies in Conflict*, trans. D. E. Green (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), pp. 14-15, that **חַיִּים** "is invariably applied only to Jewish heretics" does not seem warranted. He cites B. Hullin 13b, "There are no *minim* among the gentiles"; but this is represented in the context of B. Hul. 13b only as the opinion of R. Nahman (in the name of Rabbah b. Abbuha). The tractate goes on to add: "But we see that there are! Say: The majority of gentiles are not *minim*". Whether Jews or gentiles, it is clear from the context of R. Johanan's remark in B. Sanh. 38b that the **חַיִּים** to whom he refers are Christians, since the discussion of plural forms in the OT appears to be related to disputes with Christians. It looks as if the people to whom R. Johanan refers are attempting to prove their point by arguing that the OT passages which involve plurals foreshadow or imply the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

¹⁶C.f., e.g., the 'stock' response of Justin's opponent in *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 38: βλάσφημα γὰρ πολλὰ λέγεις, τὸν σταυρωθέντα τοῦτον ἀξιῶν πείθειν ἡμᾶς γεγενῆσθαι μετὰ Μωυσέως καὶ Ἀαρῶν, καὶ λελαληκέναι αὐτοῖς ἐν στύλῳ νεφέλης· εἶτα ἄνθρωπον γενόμενον, σταυρωθῆναι, καὶ ἀναβεβηκέναι εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν, καὶ πάλιν παραγένεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ προσκυνητὸν εἶναι. And again, in 48: παράδοξός τις γὰρ ποτε καὶ μὴ δυνάμενος ὄλως ἀποδειχθῆναι δοκεῖ μοι εἶναι. Τὸ γὰρ λέγειν σε προυπάρχειν θεὸν ὄντα πρὸ αἰώνων τοῦτον τὸν Χριστὸν, εἶτα καὶ γεννηθῆναι ἄνθρωπον γενόμενον ὑπομείναι, καὶ ὅτι οὐχ ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἀνθρώπου, οὐ μόνον παράδοξον δοκεῖ μοι εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ μωρόν. A further instance in which Christian doctrine might have influenced (later) rabbinic exegesis may be found in the emergence of the concept of the Aqedah at some point early in the second century; the rabbis saw in the sacrifice of Isaac not only a solution to the destruction of the Temple, but also an answer to the claims of the early Christians that Jesus' crucifixion represented the ultimate sacrifice and sole means of atonement. This is suggested by P. R. Davies and B. D. Chilton in "The Aqedah: A revised tradition history", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40 (1978), 514-46; their dating of the Aqedah as post-Christian runs counter to the general scholarly consensus. Their view is defended further by B. D. Chilton in "Isaac and the Second Night: a Consideration", *Biblica* 61 (1980), pp. 78-88, who examines the Poem of the Four Nights from the Palestinian Tg Ex. 12:42, which is often taken as evidence that Isaac was seen as an expiatory figure associated with Passover in pre-Christian Judaism; his conclusion is that the material relating to Isaac is an addendum which is, in substance,

While on the one hand it is possible that Tg Ps. 82:6 represents a rabbinic reinterpretation of a passage done purposely to refute Christian apologists, on the other hand the paraphrase of Ps. 82:6 found in the Targum could be merely the result of the general tendency in most of the targumic literature against anthropomorphisms or any other statements which might threaten the transcendence or majesty of Yahweh.¹⁷ In light of the changes reflected in the other passages in the Psalms where אנגלי occurs, the latter explanation may be somewhat more probable.¹⁸ In Ps. 86:8, באלהים "among the gods" becomes in the Targum באנגלי מרום "among the angels of heaven", and this may be the result of a tendency similar to that which produced the change in 82:6: the suggestion that there might be other 'gods'—even if this is only a figurative reference to pagan deities—is one that can no longer be tolerated.¹⁹

Amoraic, and therefore does not substantiate the existence of a pre-Christian Aqedah.

¹⁷Although the Targums are not consistent in this regard, as is often assumed; occasionally anthropomorphic expressions are perpetuated and even amplified in the Targums, alongside the circumlocutions and paraphrases which avoid human forms. See M. L. Klein, "The Preposition קדם ('before'). A Pseudo-Anti-Anthropomorphism in the Targums", *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (new series, 1979), p. 503.

¹⁸Tg Ps. 82:6 may, of course, represent the work of a later redactor. But if he was concerned with Christian apologetic use of the Psalms, he was not very thorough (or perhaps was very nearsighted!), since he would have allowed a clearly messianic interpretation of Ps. 45:3 to remain (see below, pp. 104-5).

¹⁹Unfortunately this does not provide a great deal of help in dating the tradition. It could be argued that for post-Christian Judaism the perceived threat to strict monotheism came from Christianity. But this is not necessarily the case; during the early centuries of the Christian era the growth of apocalypticism and mysticism forced an expansion of such tensions within Judaism as well. [Cf., e.g., the speculation concerning Metatron (Enoch) in 3 Enoch 3-16 as discussed by H. Odeberg, *3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch* (Cambridge: University Press, 1928), pp. 79-146; his dating of the main body of this work in the latter half of the 3rd century is, however, disputed by G. G. Scholem, *Die jüdische Mystik in ihren Hauptströmungen* (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1957), pp. 48-49, who places this part of the work several centuries later.] Speculation concerning the existence of other divine powers in heaven within Judaism has been traced back as far as the time of Philo (who himself calls the λόγος a 'second God' in *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesis* 2.62) by A. F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, *Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity* 25 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), pp. 159-81. Segal also surveys all the pertinent rabbinic literature on the subject (pp. 33-155).

A tendency toward expansion of the text, as well as subtle refinement, is suggested by Ps. 96:1, where the Masoretic Text reads simply שירו ליהוה כל-הארץ "Sing to Yahweh, all the earth", which in Tg Psalms is amplified to שבחו אנגלי מרומא שבחו קדם יהוה כל צדיקי ארעא "Praise, angels of heaven, praise before Yahweh, all the righteous of the earth." Not only has the simple collective "all the earth" (i.e., "all who dwell upon the earth") been restricted to 'the righteous', but also a second (and entirely new) category has been introduced into the context with the inclusion of 'all the angels of heaven'. The use of the preposition קדם in Tg Ps. 96:1 does not, however, represent an anti-anthropomorphism;²⁰ its frequent use throughout Tg Ps. 96 (11 times in 13 verses)²¹ is simply an expression of respect or deference to high office which is not necessarily limited to Deity per se.²² Ps. 97:6, הגידו השמים צדק "the heavens proclaim his righteousness", demonstrates the same tendency to avoid metonymy which was encountered in 50:6, becoming יחנין אנגלי מרומא צדקתיה "the angels of heaven proclaim his righteousness". Finally, in Ps. 148:1, הללוהו במרומים "praise him in the heights", is expanded in the Targum to שבחו יהיה לכ חילי אנגלי מרומא "praise him all the hosts of the angels of heaven".

The tendencies toward amplification, refinement, and removal of theologically objectionable ideas noted in the preceding examples, in many respects typical of targumic literature, are not the only evidence upon which to base a suggested date for the final redaction of Tg Psalms as a

²⁰*Contra* É. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Ruth*, Analecta Biblica 58 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1973), p. 90, who states that "קדם" is "the only characteristic targumic expression avoiding anthropomorphism and anthropopathism that is found regularly in Jewish Aramaic outside of targum texts".

²¹I. e., 96:1 (twice), 2, 6, 7 (twice), 8 (twice), 9 (twice; one of these with כן), and 13.

²²M. L. Klein, "The Preposition קדם ('before'). A Pseudo-Anti-Anthropomorphism in the Targums", *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (new series, 1979), pp. 502-7.

whole.²³ There is at least one clear instance of conflation between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint: the Masoretic Text of Ps. 97:11 has אור זרע לצדיק "Light is sown for the righteous", which is read by the Septuagint (as well as Jerome and the Peshitta) as אור זרח לצדיק "Light dawns for the righteous". Tg Psalms combines both readings as נהור דנח ומיסר לצדיקיא "Light dawns and is sown (scattered) for the righteous". B. J. Roberts sees this conflation as evidence that an early Tg Psalms was later corrected to bring it into agreement with the Masoretic Text.²⁴ Additional evidence supporting a later date is found in Tg Psalm 108:11, where mention is made of the "godless city of Rome" (כרכא דרומי רשיעא) and "Constantinople of Edom" (קישנסינא דאדום).²⁵ W. Bacher has argued that this mention of both cities in connection with the Empire dates the composition of Tg Psalms before the fall of Rome in 476 CE.²⁶ Such a conclusion is far from certain, however: G. Dalman rejected Bacher's argument for an earlier date on the basis that both Rome and Constantinople could continue to be mentioned as 'types' of the power of Edom long after Rome had been destroyed; and in the opinion

²³For a discussion of the problem of 'final redaction' versus 'final composition', see notes 6 and 7 above.

²⁴B. J. Roberts, *The Old Testament Text and Versions*, p. 209; see also note 6 above. The conflate reading is also mentioned by R. Le Déaut, *Introduction à la Littérature Targumique*, p. 135. Neither Roberts nor Le Déaut, however, offer any comments regarding the scope of this proposed redactional activity throughout Tg Psalms (or why the conflate reading in Ps. 97:11 could not represent merely the preservation, once again, of a tradition which antedated the composition of the Targum—although this would be less likely the earlier the Targum is dated).

²⁵'Edom' is a figurative reference to the Roman Empire. See G. H. Dalman, *Aramäisch-neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch zu Targum, Talmud und Midrasch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1938; reprint ed. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967), s.v. אדום, p. 6.

²⁶W. Bacher, s.v. "Targum", in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 12, p. 62. The clause referring to Rome and Constantinople is apparently not present in all manuscripts of Tg Psalms, however; according to R. Le Déaut, *Introduction à la Littérature Targumique*, p. 132, the simultaneous mention of the two cities is not found in the text of the Targum printed in the London Polyglot.

of the present writer, the value of the phrases in question for establishing the date of the entire composition is tenuous in any case, since they may have been interpolated into the work at some later time in the process of transmission.²⁷

Although much of the evidence discussed thus far is usually taken to be indicative of a somewhat later date for Tg Psalms, there is some evidence pointing to an earlier date as well. Later Jewish sources such as Tanḥuma (39b) and Naḥmanides (כ"ח 73d on Ps. 45:4 and ש"ר דגמל 100d on Ps. 73:20) quote Tg Psalms and Tg Job and refer to both as 'Targum Yerushalmi';²⁸ this might point to a Palestinian origin for both targumim.²⁹ The version of Ps. 18 found in Tg Psalms is parallel to the same psalm found in Tg 2 Sam. 22,³⁰ but there are, according to R. Le Déaut, fewer traces of Babylonian influence in Tg Ps. 18 than in Tg 2 Sam. 22, which may again be indicative of a Palestinian origin for Tg Psalms.³¹ Perhaps significantly, this coincides with Bacher's observation that Tg Psalms contains a large number of variants (more than fifty) from the Masoretic Text in both pointing and even in the consonantal text, yet in many of these variants Tg Psalms agrees with both the Septuagint and the Peshitta against the Masoretic Text.³²

²⁷I.e., some time after Rome was rebuilt and had regained some of its former prominence. The omission of the phrases from at least some of the manuscripts (see above, n. 26) suggests some uncertainty over their authenticity. Dalman's evaluation of Bacher's arguments regarding the dating of Tg Psalms is found in his *Grammatik des jüdisch-palästinischen Aramäisch*, 2nd ed., p. 34, n. 2. See also n. 7 above.

²⁸As does R. Samuel Zarza, מ"ק 18b on Ps. 110:7.

²⁹In the opinion of R. Le Déaut, *Introduction à la Littérature Targumique*, p. 133.

³⁰These are parallel recensions in the Masoretic Text.

³¹R. Le Déaut, *Introduction à la Littérature Targumique*, p. 133.

³²W. Bacher, s.v. "Targum", in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 12, p. 62. This agreement between Tg Psalms and the Septuagint may, in fact, point to the use of a Greek version of the Psalms (rather than the Hebrew text itself) as the basis for Tg Psalms. If so, the case would parallel that put forward by G. J. Cowling with respect to the Palestinian Targum to the

Furthermore, Tg Ps. 45:3, reading שופרך מלכא משיחא מבני נשא ("Your beauty, King Messiah, is more excellent than the sons of men"), preserves a messianic interpretation, in spite of the fact that in the New Testament Heb. 1:8-9 interprets Ps. 45:7-8 (44:7-8 LXX) of Christ (πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν, Heb. 1:8). The interpretation found in Tg Ps. 45:3, however, is probably independent of the Christian exegesis of this passage. It would seem likely that it is in fact very early, standing as it does in sharp contrast to the interpretation(s) of Psalm 45 found in Midrash Tehillim (45.6): 45:3 ("You are fairer than the sons of men") is referred to the sons of Korah, whose deeds were fairer than those of Korah and his company; 45:4-5 ("Gird your sword on your thigh, mighty warrior...in your majesty ride victoriously, for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness") refer to Moses, who was thought worthy of Torah, which is compared to a sword; Moses rode up to heaven on a cloud, and was also very meek. Verses 6-8a ("Your arrows are sharp... your throne...is forever and ever...you have loved righteousness") also refer to Moses, who fought against Amalek, Sihon, and Og with sharp arrows, who grasped hold of the throne of the LORD,³³ and who executed the righteousness of the LORD.³⁴ Verse 8b, however ("Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness..."), is referred to Aaron, since it speaks of his anointing as high priest. All of these interpretations are given despite the fact that in Midr. Tehillim on Ps. 45:2, the 'King' has been

Pentateuch in "New Light on the New Testament? The significance of the Palestinian Targum", *TSF Bulletin* 51 (1968), pp. 6-14; see the discussion in n. 9 above.

³³Moses' grasping hold of the throne of Yahweh during his ascent to heaven (to save himself from the angels who wish to destroy him, to prevent him taking the Torah from heaven) is a theme which appears in some of the rabbinic accounts (e.g., B. Shab. 88b and Pes. R. 20.4) discussed later in the present chapter. See below, pp. 124-29.

³⁴The verse quoted in Midr. Teh., "he executed the righteousness of the LORD" (Deut. 33:21), actually refers, in context, to the sons of Gad in Moses' final blessing of the tribes.

understood as God himself. The tendency in Midr. Tehillim is obviously to derive, without regard for internal consistency, all possible applications of the verses except the obvious, messianic one. Whether or not this represents a reaction to Christian apologetic use of Psalm 45 in a christological sense, the simple and direct messianic interpretation of Psalm 45 by Tg Psalms would appear to be considerably earlier than that found in Midr. Tehillim. Yet this by no means demands a pre-Christian date for Tg Psalms, since Tg Ps. 45:3 may simply have preserved a much older tradition with its messianic interpretation at this point. It is also possible, as Cowling suggests, that a revival of messianic interest in Judaism took place some time in the 4th century, and this would be reflected on occasion in Tg Psalms, either as a result of interpolations or because Tg Psalms in its entirety dates from this period.³⁵

The examples cited thus far from Tg Psalms are, of course, far too few to provide an adequate basis upon which to propose a date of composition (or final redaction) for the work as a whole. A detailed analysis of the form and content of Tg Psalms in its entirety would be necessary before such conclusions could be drawn with any degree of validity.³⁶ Such exam-

³⁵G. J. Cowling suggests that, in the 4th century, Jewish-Christian conflict over the identity of the Messiah had become "pretty much a dead letter", yet messianism continued to flourish among the Jewish communities both in Babylon and northern Palestine (Galilee). Cowling's theories regarding the date and origin of the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch may well be applicable, in large part, to Tg Psalms as well, as mentioned in notes 9 and 32 above. See his "New Light on the New Testament? The significance of the Palestinian Targum", *TSF Bulletin* 51 (1968), p. 13.

³⁶See, e. g., P. Wernberg-Møller, "An Inquiry into the validity of the text-critical argument for an early dating of the recently discovered Palestinian Targum", *Vetus Testamentum* 12 (1962), pp. 312-30, in which he critiques the validity of a selective approach in studies attempting to establish a date for a targum by comparisons with other text-forms in the Masoretic Text and Septuagint (in this case referring to A. Díez Macho's arguments for the date of Tg Neofiti 1). Wernberg-Møller does not intend to imply that such arguments have no validity, but rather that they must involve a thorough study of the work in its entirety, with consideration given to all possible explanations for the forms and variants

ples do, however, serve to illustrate the difficulties inherent in any attempt to establish a date for Tg Psalms. The only reasonably safe conclusion which the current state of studies on the origin and date of Tg Psalms would seem to allow is that the Targum, as it now exists, probably does represent an eclectic combination of a number of different targumim, which were collected either in oral or written form before being assembled into the present composition.³⁷ Whether this represents, as such, the work of a single redactor cannot at present be determined, although a modification of Cowling's theory of the origin of the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch appears very attractive. The targumist, working from a Greek version of the Psalms which was closer to the Greek version of 'Theodotion' than to what is presently known as the Septuagint, translated the Psalms from Greek to Palestinian Aramaic, adding supplementary comments (mostly parenthetical) which may often have reflected earlier traditions; the Hebrew text of Psalms was little used, if at all. If a date can be loosely assigned, the late 4th century would seem to allow for the mention of Rome and Constantinople in Tg Ps. 108:11 (agreeing with Bacher's suggestion) if the mention of the two capitals formed part of the original composition.³⁸ The conflate reading in Tg Ps. 97:11 might already have been present in the version of Psalms employed by the targumist.³⁹ And the variants found in

in the text under study, before conclusions can safely be drawn regarding the date of the entire composition. No such study has yet been done in the case of Tg Psalms, as far as can be determined.

³⁷Cf. the similar conclusion by B. J. Roberts, *The Old Testament Text and Versions*, p. 209, mentioned above in n. 6.

³⁸The mention of Rome and Constantinople may, of course, result from a later interpolation. See above, p. 102.

³⁹See above, p. 102. For that matter, the change in Ps. 68:19 from מַלְאָכִים (Masoretic Text) and ἑλαβεῖς (LXX) to מַלְאָכִים (Tg Psalms) may have been present in the version used by the targumist as well, although at this point such a suggestion is purely speculative.

Tg Psalms which agree with the Septuagint against the Masoretic Text would add further support for such a thesis.⁴⁰ Appealing as this explanation is, however, the evidence cannot be regarded as conclusive.

Yet, even if there is much uncertainty over the final date and method of composition of Tg Psalms as it now exists, there is a high probability that it reflects, at some points, ancient (and possibly even pre-Christian) traditions.⁴¹ The presence of late words and phrases can do no more than suggest that the immediate contexts in which they occur comprise more recent additions; even this is not guaranteed, since the individual words and phrases may themselves represent interpolations. Likewise, the absence of earlier grammatical forms or other traces of Palestinian origin cannot disprove the inclusion of earlier traditions, since a later writer may have reformulated such older material using contemporary syntax and terminology. This is especially true in the case of the Targums, whose very *raison d'être* consisted, at least to a large extent, of an attempt to render ancient texts—material which could no longer be understood by the average member of the community—intelligible and applicable to a contemporary audience.⁴² Thus, in the case of Tg Psalms, where a date for the final form

⁴⁰See above, p. 103.

⁴¹That such is the case (to differing degrees) with almost all of the Targums has been the increasing realization of those concerned with this area of study over the last several decades. This shift in the critical evaluation of targumic materials by recent scholarship is discussed at some length by M. McNamara, "Targumic Studies", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 28 (1966), pp. 1-19.

⁴²According to A. D. York in "The Targum in the Synagogue and in the School", *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 10 (1979), p. 83, the Targums served an educational purpose in the synagogue schools as well. This is an additional role which does nothing to change the primary purpose of the Aramaic translations, however; they were originally intended (in either oral or written form) to make the scriptures accessible to the majority of the people who no longer understood Hebrew. Cf. the remarks by A. Sperber in *The Bible in Aramaic*, vol. 4 B: *The Targum and the Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 21; in his opinion the educational level of the audience for which the Targums were intended was not very high. If Sperber is correct in his assessment [vol. 4 A, *Hagiographa* (Leiden: E. J.

of the entire work cannot yet be assigned (and which, in any case, would almost certainly turn out to be post-Christian), it is still possible that some of the traditions which are preserved in the Targum may prove relevant to the exegesis of specific New Testament texts.⁴³ But each of these traditions must be considered on a case-by-case basis. If the Targum as a whole cannot be reliably dated, an approach must be employed which will enable the tradition in question to be dated independently of the entire work.⁴⁴ To such a proposed solution to the problems of dating the Moses-tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19 we shall now turn.

An approach to the tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19

Thus far we have seen that for the scholar who seeks to use material from the Targums (like the Moses-tradition associated with Ps. 68:19) in the interpretation of specific New Testament texts (like Eph. 4:7-11), the central problem remains one of establishing the antiquity of the traditions involved. This difficulty is inherent in the use of any targumic material, of course, in so far as the final written form of all targumim would almost certainly be later than the NT documents themselves. The use of traditions from Tg Psalms is (as we have seen in the previous section) particularly fraught with uncertainty, as a result of the special problems it presents, combined with the relatively small amount of attention devoted thus far to the study of

Brill, 1968), p. viii] that with the Hagiographa the Targums were becoming less and less translations as such, and more and more tended to show characteristics of midrash, then the tendency to reformulate earlier traditions would, in these Targums, be particularly influential.

⁴³E.g., such as Eph. 4:7-11.

⁴⁴This approach would also need to be followed if the entire Targum could be dated, but its date turned out to be post-NT (as in the case of Tg Psalms it almost certainly would).

the Targums to the Hagiographa. In each instance, the task must be to attempt (if possible) to reconstruct the history of the tradition in question, since one cannot assume the antiquity of the final form in which it appears in the written Targum.⁴⁵

The difficulties surrounding the dating of traditions within the rabbinic literature are basically very similar, and therefore it is appropriate to consider briefly the approach first suggested by R. Bloch. In order to classify and date traditions within the rabbinic literature, she proposed that analysis should proceed in two stages (in addition to the use of standard historical and philological criteria), which consist of external and internal comparison. External comparison consisted of setting alongside rabbinic writings containing undated traditions those non-rabbinic Jewish (and related) texts which can be dated, at least approximately. These external criteria could be found in Hellenistic Jewish works, apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, the works of Josephus, the ancient versions, glosses in the biblical text, the Qumran documents, the New Testament, early Christian literature (especially that related to Jewish sources), and the ancient Jewish liturgy. In contrast to this, internal comparison would seek to reconstruct the development of a given tradition within the bounds of rabbinic literature itself, taking into account known rabbinic methods of exegesis and transmission.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Thus the observation of G. R. Driver, in *The Judaean Scrolls* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p. 459, is particularly apt: "Although the Targums contain much ancient matter going far back into the period of the Second Commonwealth, no individual statement can be dated except by external evidence".

⁴⁶The method suggested by R. Bloch is adopted by G. Vermes in *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, *Studia Post-Biblica* 4 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), pp. 7-9; in this study Vermes set out to subject Bloch's method to a rigorous test. Her original articles on a proposed method for the study of *Traditionsgeschichte* in rabbinic materials are (in chronological order): "Écriture et tradition dans le judaïsme—Aperçus sur l'origine du Midrash", *Cahiers*

This approach to the study of traditions within rabbinic literature is extremely valuable for targumic studies as well, since it seeks to provide criteria by which the antiquity of a given tradition can be verified.⁴⁷ This is of particular usefulness in dealing with traditions found in Tg Psalms, which (as we have seen in the previous section) is of mixed character, making the material contained therein especially difficult to date.

Psalm 68 and Moses' Ascent to Heaven in Rabbinic Literature

An application of the method originally proposed by R. Bloch for the study of traditions in rabbinic literature to the tradition concerning Moses'

Sioniens 8 (1954), pp. 9-34; "Note méthodologique pour l'étude de la littérature rabbinique", *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 43 (1955), pp. 194-227; and "Note sur l'utilisation des fragments de la Geniza du Caire pour l'étude du Targum palestinien", *Revue des Études Juives* 114 (1955), pp. 5-35. There are obviously some similarities in this method to *Traditionsgeschichte* as employed in the study of the literature of the NT, e.g., see D. Catchpole, "Tradition History", in *New Testament Interpretation*, ed. I. H. Marshall (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1977), p. 168. J. Neusner, *Comparative Midrash: The Plan and Program of Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah*, Brown Judaic Studies 111 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 187-93, is critical of Bloch's approach because he sees little of value in being able to state that a certain story or saying circulated prior to the formulation of an otherwise undated document; instead, he is interested in working with entire documents and not with individual accounts or stories, and thus Bloch's method appears of little use to him. He does acknowledge that what she discusses in the first phase of her approach (which she referred to as "external comparison") is tradition history (p. 191). Neusner believes Bloch to be using the term "midrash" to mean something like "story" or "statement" (i.e., *haggadah*), so that what she is attempting is a new kind of *Traditionsgeschichte* or *Überlieferungsgeschichte*, with "midrash" understood merely as another word for "tradition". Neusner may well be correct; Bloch's method (as we have already noted) bears similarities to *Traditionsgeschichte* as applied to the study of the NT. Neusner's criticisms, however valid, do not affect the usefulness of Bloch's method for the present study, since all that interests us is the comparison of the various rabbinic accounts concerning Moses' ascent to heaven, with a view to determining their antiquity and possible relationship to Eph. 4:8-10.

⁴⁷R. Bloch herself, in "Note méthodologique pour l'étude de la littérature rabbinique", *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 43 (1955), saw the Palestinian Targum as standing at the base of the later haggadic tradition, as an expression of the transition between the Bible per se and the later rabbinic literature, representing the point of departure ("le point de départ") of what is properly called midrash, of which the Targum contains all the structure and all the themes (p. 212).

ascent to heaven found in Tg Ps. 68:19 may help us to determine the approximate date of this tradition in relation to the composition of Eph. 4:7-11. This would provide a clue as to whether the author of Ephesians could possibly have been familiar with such an ascent tradition concerning Moses and might thus have been influenced by it when he wrote Eph. 4:8-10. Knowledge of such Moses-traditions associated with Psalm 68, if they were common and widespread, would probably have predisposed the author in Eph. 4:9-10 to infer a subsequent descent of Christ corresponding to the ascent mentioned in Ps. 68:19 itself, since Moses, after his ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah, descended to distribute it as 'gifts' to Israel. We shall begin with a survey of the relevant rabbinic sources (the procedure called "internal comparison" by Bloch in her approach). Since there is an enormous amount of material dealing with Moses and his activities related to the giving of Torah to be found within rabbinic Judaism, only those texts which explicitly associate Ps. 68:19 with Moses and his ascent to heaven will be examined here. Furthermore, as most of the rabbinic literature is, by its very nature, extremely difficult to date, no attempt will be made to present the material in exact chronological sequence. Instead, our discussion will follow thematic lines, assuming (unless otherwise noted) that development generally took place from the simple to the more complex (given the recognized rabbinic methods of explanation, quotation, and transmission).

Pesiqta Rabbati 47.4. The shortest account of Moses' ascent in which mention is made of Ps. 68:19 is found in Pes. R. 47.4, attributed to R. Phinehas:

Another comment: The merit of Israel is implied, Israel to whom it was said *This (z't) thy stature is like to a palm tree* (Song 7:8). R. Phinehas said: Indeed Moses,

who ascended on high and took the Torah captive and brought it down, was able to do so not by virtue of his own strength, but by virtue of Israel's merit, as is said *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts by virtue of men* (Ps. 68:19)—that is, by virtue of Israel's merit, to whom it is said *And ye My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, are men* (Ezek. 34:31).⁴⁸

The lack of elaboration concerning Moses' ascent demonstrated by this account is probably best explained by the emphasis in the context, which is on Aaron rather than Moses. When Aaron entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, Satan would appear to make accusations against the people of Israel, but was forced to flee from Aaron's presence on account of the merits which accompanied him. The passage quoted, from section 4, is intended as a proof that the merit of Israel is included among those merits which went with Aaron into the innermost sanctuary. Ps. 68:19 is quoted only to show that it was on behalf of Israel's merit that Moses was able to receive the Torah; this involves a rather forced rendition of the כ-preposition at the end of the third clause of 68:19 (בְּאִדְמָה is interpreted to mean "by virtue of men"). The brevity of the account in this instance is probably not indicative of an early stage in the tradition surrounding Moses' ascent, but a natural result of the secondary and supporting nature of the reference to Ps. 68:19 within the context.

Midrash Tehillim 68.11. Next we may consider the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 found in Midrash Tehillim (Midr. Teh. 68.11). As might be expected, Ps. 68:19 is interpreted of Moses and his ascent to the presence of God to receive the Torah in the Midrash on the Psalms:

11. *Thou hast gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men* (Ps. 68:19). These words are to be read in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere: *A wise man goeth up to the city of the mighty, and bringeth down the strength wherein it trusteth* (Prov. 21:22). This wise man is Moses, of whom it is

⁴⁸*Pesikta Rabbati*, trans. W. G. Braude, 2 vols., Yale Judaica Series 18 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 809. Scriptural quotations, parenthetical references, italics, and punctuation are given in the form employed by the translator.

said "And Moses went up unto God" (Ex. 19:3); the words *thou hast received gifts for men* refer to the Torah which was bestowed upon Israel as a gift, at no cost. The words *The rebellious dwell but in a parched land* (Ps. 68:7) refer to the nations of the earth who were unwilling to accept the Torah; on the other hand, in the words *Yea, among the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them* (ibid. 68:19), *among the rebellious* refers to the children of Israel who had also been rebellious, but among whom, the presence of God came to dwell after they accepted the Torah.⁴⁹

A number of significant points emerge, however: in typical rabbinic fashion, other scriptures are adduced to interpret Ps. 68:19, in this case Prov. 21:22 and Ex. 19:3. No specific mention of heaven as the place to which Moses ascended occurs in Midr. Teh. 68.11, but this is probably assumed as implicit in the mention of the "city of the mighty" (Prov. 21:22) and the statement that Moses went "up unto God" (Ex. 19:3). Stress is placed on the fact that Torah was given to Israel as a gift, without cost; one might wonder about the possible relation of this emphasis on Torah as a gift to the substitution of the verb יהבהא in Tg Ps. 68:19. Yet it is Moses who 'receives' these gifts on behalf of men in Midr. Teh. 68.11; לקח as read by the Masoretic Text is obviously the *Vorlage*. By the introduction of a previous verse from Ps. 68 (v. 7), reference can be made to the rebellious nations of the earth who refused to accept the Torah.⁵⁰ The mention of 'the rebellious' in the latter part of 68:19 must (from the standpoint of rabbinic logic) obviously refer to Israel, since the 'presence of God' had chosen to dwell in their midst (something which could never be said of the nations, who were without Torah).⁵¹ Significant also in this account is what does

⁴⁹*The Midrash on Psalms*, trans. W. G. Braude, 2 vols., Yale Judaica Series 13 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 545. Again, the translator's form is employed in the inclusion of scriptural quotations, references, italics, and punctuation.

⁵⁰Reflecting the rabbinic belief that the Torah was offered to all the 70 nations of the earth, but was accepted only by Israel. This belief may well be pre-Christian, in light of the writings of Philo of Alexandria. See ch. 4, pp. 204-6.

⁵¹This interpretation may be at variance with Tg Ps. 68:19, which inserts the participle מתגיירין "becoming proselytes", probably to indicate that the rebellious in 68:19 are to be understood as Gentiles who repent.

not appear: there is no mention of any angelic opposition to Moses when he attempts to remove the Torah from heaven (indeed, there is no reference to angels whatsoever), no mention of any dialogue between Moses and God, and no mention of any 'gifts' given to Moses on behalf of men, other than the Torah itself. Although arguments from silence must be employed only with great caution (if at all!), nevertheless, the account of Moses' ascent to heaven in Midr. Teh. 68.11 shows a great deal of restraint in the relative simplicity of its exegesis and description when compared with most of the other rabbinic discussions of the giving of Torah. In this respect it is closer to Tg Ps.68:19 than many of the other rabbinic accounts.

Soferim 16.10 and Midrash Tehillim 22.19. Since these two accounts are essentially identical, they may be considered together. The first, *Soferim* (one of the minor tractates of the Talmud), mentions Ps. 68:19 and Moses' ascent to receive the Torah in 16.10 (41b). This account consists of a saying attributed to R. Joshua ben Levi concerning written haggadah.⁵² It needs to be examined in some detail (and compared with the parallel account in Midr. Teh. 22.19 as well), since it contains an ambiguity which led to a significant misunderstanding on the part of R. Rubinkiewicz in a recent article on the relationship between Tg Ps. 68:19 and the text of Eph. 4:8.⁵³ Tractate *Soferim* 16.10 reads as follows:

Rule 10. R. Joshua b. Levi said: I have never looked into a book of *'aggadta* [*sic*] except once when I looked and found written therein that the one hundred and seventy-five sections of the Torah, in which occurs any expression of speaking,

⁵²R. Joshua b. Levi is also mentioned in connection with the ascent of Moses and the quotation of Ps. 68:19 in Midr. Teh. 22.19 (a parallel account of the same incident) and B. Shab. 88b, which is a far more elaborate treatment of Moses' journey to heaven to receive the Torah.

⁵³R. Rubinkiewicz, "Ps LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", *Novum Testamentum* 17 (1975), pp. 219-24.

saying or commanding, correspond to the number of years of our father Abraham; for it is written, *Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for the sake of the man*, and it is also written, *The greatest man among the Anakim*. On this account the Rabbis instituted one hundred and seventy-five orders in the Torah [to be read in public worship] every Sabbath [as regularly as the] continual burnt-offering.⁵⁴

Rubinkiewicz, having just quoted from B. Shab. 89a (also attributed to R. Joshua ben Levi), in which Ps. 68:19 is interpreted as a reference to Moses' ascent to heaven, then quotes the present text,⁵⁵ Soferim 16.10 (41b), in which he (mistakenly) understands Ps. 68:19 to refer to Abraham, despite the editor's note to the contrary.⁵⁶ Rubinkiewicz then concludes (incorrectly) that Ps. 68:19 was not always interpreted consistently of Moses in rabbinic literature.⁵⁷ As far as the present writer can determine, however, there is no instance in the extant rabbinic literature where Ps. 68:19 is quoted in which it is not referred to Moses and his ascent to heaven to receive the Torah. Furthermore, the same incident is recounted in Midr. Teh. 22,19, and had Rubinkiewicz examined this parallel account, it is unlikely that he could have misunderstood the text of Soferim 16.10 as he did, since in Midr. Teh. 22.19 Moses is explicitly mentioned, and the reference to Abraham thus becomes clear:

R. Joshua ben Levi said: May evil befall me, if ever in my entire life I looked into a book of *Aggadah*, except once, when coming upon such a book I read the following in it: The one hundred and seventy-five sections of the Pentateuch, in which the words "speech," "saying," and "command" occur, correspond in number to the one hundred and seventy-five years of Abraham. And the proof? What God said to Moses: *Thou hast ascended on high ...thou hast received gifts because of a man* (Ps. 68:19). This *man* was Abraham, described as "the greatest man among the Ana-

⁵⁴*The Minor Tractates of the Talmud*, ed. A. Cohen, vol. 1 (London: Soncino, 1965), p. 292. Scriptural quotations, parenthetical notes, italics, and punctuation follow Cohen's edition.

⁵⁵He differs, in the process, at no less than four points from the text of *The Minor Tractates of the Talmud*, ed. A. Cohen, vol. 1, p. 292, which he cites as reference; one of these variants may have contributed to his misunderstanding of this text. See n. 59 below.

⁵⁶I.e., n. 49, p. 292, in which the editor, Cohen, clearly states that Ps. 68:19 refers to Moses.

⁵⁷R. Rubinkiewicz, "Ps LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", p. 224.

kim" (Josh. 14:15).⁵⁸

Here it is apparent that Moses is the one who ascended to heaven (Ps. 68:19), while it is Abraham upon whose merit the giving of Torah to Israel is based ("because of a man", reading באדם in 68:19 as a particular individual, rather than as the collective singular, 'mankind').⁵⁹

Turning now to consider the characteristics of the tradition associating Moses and his ascent to heaven with Ps. 68:19 in these accounts, we find that neither Soferim 16.10 nor Midr. Teh. 22.19 have much to contribute, since the tradition is not highly developed in either context. This should not be surprising, however, since neither context is particularly concerned with Moses and the giving of Torah directly; the main point in both is the correspondence between the 175 divisions of the Torah for public reading and the 175 years of Abraham's life. This correspondence requires an explanation from a rabbinic point of view (as it obviously could not be mere coincidence); thus Ps. 68:19 is conveniently invoked to explain the correspondence, since its third clause can (with a bit of stretching) be interpreted as a declaration that the Torah was, in fact, given because of the merit of Abraham. Thus, as was also the case in Pes. R. 47.4, the tradition concerning Moses and his ascent to receive the Torah is not elaborated in great detail in either Soferim 16.10 or Midr. Teh. 22.19, because it is not the primary concern in the context. It cannot, therefore, be inferred that the degree of simplicity reflected in these parallel accounts is indicative of an early stage in the history of the tradition, any more that it could from Pes.

⁵⁸*The Midrash on Psalms*, trans. W. G. Braude, p. 314. Scriptural quotations, italics, and punctuation follow Braude's translation.

⁵⁹Perhaps one reason Rubinkiewicz misunderstood Soferim 16:10 as he did lies in the fact that he misread "the man" as "the men", obscuring the reference to a single individual, Abraham. See R. Rubinkiewicz, "Ps LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", p. 224.

R. 47.4.⁶⁰

Shir haShirim Rabbah 8.11.2 (*viii.11.2*). In Shir. R. 8.11.2 there is a brief discussion of the giving of Torah to Israel in which Ps. 68:19 is quoted:

So when the Holy One, blessed be He, sought to give the Torah to Israel, the ministering angels tried to thrust Israel away, and they thrust themselves before the Holy One, blessed be He, and said: 'Sovereign of the Universe, it is Thy happiness, Thy majesty, Thy honour that Thy law should be in the heaven.' He replied to them: 'You have no concern with it. It is written therein, *And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days* (Lev. xv, 25). Is there any woman among you? So you have no concern with it.' Further it is written therein, *When a man dieth in his tent* (Num. xix, 14). Is there death among you? So you have no concern with it. And so the Scripture praises him [Moses] with the words, *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast taken thy captive* (Ps. lxxviii, 19), on which R. Aḥa said: This refers to the rules which apply to human beings, such as those relating to men and women with an issue, unclean women, and women in childbirth. So 'you have no concern with it'.⁶¹

This is the first rabbinic text examined thus far which makes any mention of angels at all in connection with the giving of Torah, and it is significant that they are portrayed here as seeking to oppose it. Later in the same context (beyond the section quoted above) the angels' motives are explained: they fear that if the Torah is removed from heaven and given to men, sooner or later the Divine Presence will leave heaven to abide in the lower world as well. This brings forth divine reassurance that even if Torah is given to those who dwell on earth, the Holy One himself will continue to dwell with the celestial beings, and thus the angels are satisfied to allow Torah to pass to men. The text of Shir. R. 8.11.2 as quoted, however, does not present a completely consistent account of the action. It is Yahweh himself who en-

⁶⁰In further support of this point, R. Joshua b. Levi, to whom both accounts are attributed (Soferim 16.10 and Midr. Teh. 22.19), is also associated with the account of Moses' visit to heaven in B. Shab. 88b-89a, which represents one of the most elaborate and highly developed forms of the tradition (see below, pp. 124-27).

⁶¹*Midrash Rabbah*, ed. H. Freedman and M. Simon, *Song of Songs*, trans. M. Simon (London: Soncino, 1939), p. 320. Scriptural references, quotations, italics, and punctuation conform to the edition cited.

ters into dialogue with the angels, quoting Lev. 15:25 and Num. 19:14 to prove to them that Torah is intended for men and not for angelic beings.⁶² Yet Ps. 68:19 is introduced in a way which implies that Moses ought to be given credit for successfully refuting the angels and 'capturing' Torah. This may reflect a certain amount of confusion with other versions of the story which do, in fact, present Moses as the one who dialogues with the angels and convinces them to relinquish Torah.⁶³ It should be noted as well that although Moses' name is not explicitly mentioned here in connection with Ps. 68:19,⁶⁴ the preceding context makes it clear that 'him' must refer to Moses.⁶⁵

Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer 46. A brief account of Moses' ascent to heaven to obtain the Torah is found in P. R. E. 46:

The ministering angels said to him: Moses! This Torah has been given only for our sakes. Moses replied to them: It is written in the Torah, "Honour thy father and thy mother". Have ye then father and mother? Again, it is written in the Torah, "When a man dieth in the tent". Does death happen among you? They were

⁶²It may be significant, as far as the dating of this version of the tradition is concerned, that both examples quoted are taken from the Pentateuch rather than from the Decalogue per se; elements from the Decalogue do appear in some rabbinic versions of this debate. But it is almost certain that long before any of these accounts existed in written form, the entire Pentateuch had come to be regarded as Torah.

⁶³E.g., *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer 46*, B. Shab. 88b-89a, and Pes. R. 20.4. But it is also possible that the apparent discontinuity in the account given in Shir. R. 8.11.2 is actually a result of extreme 'compression', i. e., some (crucial) details and transitions have been omitted. Thus "He replied to them: 'You have no concern with it'" may, in fact, refer to Moses rather than to Yahweh; what has been omitted from the account (perhaps because it was assumed to be understood) would be Yahweh's command to Moses to give a reply to the angels (cf. B. Shab. 88b and Pes. R. 20.4).

⁶⁴The inclusion of his name in brackets is a note by M. Simon, the translator.

⁶⁵Ps. 68:13 is quoted twice in the immediately preceding context; the second time it is referred to Moses:

'And the fair one in the house divideth the spoil': O thou fairest in the house, thou dividest spoil below. 'The fairest in the house' is Moses, as it says, *He is trusted in all my house* (Num. xii, 7). Thou givest it to him, and he divides it as spoil among the dwellers on earth (*Midrash Rabbah*, ed. H. Freedman and M. Simon, *Song of Songs*, trans. M. Simon, p. 320).

silent, and did not answer anything further.

Hence (the sages) say: Moses went up to the heavenly regions with his wisdom, and brought down the might of the trust of the ministering angels, as it is said, "A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and bringeth down the strength of the confidence thereof". When the ministering angels saw that the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Torah to Moses, they also arose and gave unto him presents and letters and tablets for healing the sons of men, as it is said, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led thy captivity captive; thou hast received gifts among men".⁶⁶

Again the angels are portrayed as seeking to dissuade Moses from taking the Torah from heaven; this time, however, it is Moses himself who disputes with them, and there is no mention of any direct intervention by Yahweh except the note that the Holy One himself presented the Torah to Moses. Only two citations from the Torah are mentioned in the dialogue: the command to honour fathers and mothers (Ex. 20:12, also mentioned in B. Shab. 89a and Pes. R. 20.4) and the law regarding ritual uncleanness when a man dies in his tent (Num. 19:14, also mentioned in Shir. R. 8.11.2). Prov. 21:22 is quoted and interpreted of Moses, as it is in Midr. Teh. 68.11 (and Shem. R. 28.1). Ps. 68:19 is actually included in the account as final proof of the angels' response when Moses is given the Torah: they "arose and gave unto him presents and letters and tablets for healing the sons of men". For the first time, with this text, one encounters the tradition that Moses received other gifts in heaven in addition to the Torah, and that these were bestowed by the angels, who showed no signs of resentment at having lost the debate. While this account is brief, the actual specification of the gifts (particularly the "tablets for healing the sons of men")⁶⁷ seems indicative of a later stage in the development of the tradition, even when compared with the description of the angelic gifts in B. Shab. 89a. What P.

⁶⁶*Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, trans. and annotated by G. Friedlander (London: no publisher, 1916; reprinted New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981), pp. 361-62. Quotations, punctuation, and parenthetical notes are in the form given in Friedlander's translation.

⁶⁷Apparently *Pittakin* (πίττικίον) in the original, according to the translator; see *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, p. 362, n. 4.

R. E. 46 (at least in its present form) does not contain is.mention of Moses being given the secret of preserving life by the Angel of Death, an element which does appear elsewhere.⁶⁸

Aboth de Rabbi Nathan 2.3 (18b). This text is primarily concerned with an account of how Moses came to break the tablets of the Decalogue when he came down Mount Sinai with them, only to find the Israelites sinning with the golden calf. In the course of this explanation there is one allusion to Ps. 68:19 and one direct quote, as follows:

'He broke the tablets.' How was this? It is related that when Moses ascended on high to receive the tablets which had been inscribed and were lying in readiness [to be revealed] since the six days of creation, as it is stated, *And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven [haruth] upon the tables*—read not *haruth* [graven] but *heruth* [freedom], for only he is truly free who occupies himself with the Torah—at that time the ministering angels arraigned Moses, saying, 'Lord of the universe! *What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou thinkest of him?...* They were referring disparagingly to Moses, saying, 'What virtue is there in man born of woman that he has ascended on high, as it is stated, *Thou art ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts?*' Moses took the tablets and descended with them, rejoicing exceedingly. But as soon as he saw the depravity with which they had depraved themselves in the episode of the calf, he said to himself, 'How can I give them the tablets, thereby binding them to the performance of weighty commandments, and in consequence condemning them [if they disobeyed] to death before Heaven, for it is written therein, *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me?* He turned back, but when the seventy elders saw this they hurried after him. He seized one end of the tablets while they seized the other end, but the strength of Moses prevailed over theirs, as it is stated, *And in all the mighty hand, and in all the great terror, which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel*. He glanced at the tablets and saw that the writing had flown from them; so he exclaimed, 'How can I give Israel these worthless tablets? I will grasp hold of them and break them,' as it is stated, *And I took hold of the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and broke them.*⁶⁹

Here again, the angels seek to prevent Moses from taking the Torah—in

⁶⁸Cf. B. Shab. 89a and Pes. R. 20.4. The "tablets for healing the sons of men" mentioned in P. R. E. 46 may be related, however.

⁶⁹*The Minor Tractates of the Talmud*, ed. A. Cohen, vol. 1 (London: Soncino, 1965), pp. 20-21. The ellipsis indicated at the end of the quotation from Ps. 8 is that of the present writer; all other quotations, punctuation, italics, and bracketed notes are in the form given in the translation. The quotation from Ps. 8 has been shortened for the sake of brevity, since virtually the entire psalm is quoted in A. R. N. 2.3.

this case the actual tablets of the Decalogue—from heaven; they do not, however, threaten to assault him, although they do speak of him disparagingly, using the words of Psalm 8 (quoted in A. R. N. 2.3 virtually in its entirety). No mention is made of any dialogue between Moses and the angels or Yahweh and the angels. God himself is, in fact, almost absent from the scene: the tablets are prepared beforehand (from the creation of the world, according to the text of A. R. N. 2.3) and God is not even mentioned directly in the account aside from the fact that the angels' accusation against Moses is directed to him as 'Lord of the universe'. Much of this can be seen as a result of the primary interest in the context, that is, to provide a justification for the breaking of the original tablets of the Decalogue by Moses. No doubt many of the missing elements in this account are simply assumed to be understood, as is often the case in rabbinic exegesis. Of more significance for our present investigation is the allusion found in the initial words of the section: "It is related that *when Moses ascended on high to receive the tablets*". No further reference to Ps. 68:19 occurs until Moses actually prepares to take the tablets and depart with them, but the wording (italicized in the above quotation) makes it clear that Ps. 68:19 is in view. That such a passing reference to Moses' ascent to heaven could be phrased in terms so much like the text of Ps. 68:19 suggests that by the time of this account at least, Moses had come to be so closely identified with the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 that the reference to the ascent taken from the psalm is almost assumed as a stock phrase. That Moses made the ascent to heaven from Sinai in order to receive the Torah, and that this ascent was described by Ps. 68:19, appear to be accepted facts by the time A. R. N. 2.3 was committed to writing.

Shemoth Rabbah 28.1. Shem. R. 28.1 constitutes the midrashic exegesis of Ex. 19:3, and as such, it should not be surprising to find Ps. 68:19 quoted at some point. As it turns out, however, practically the entire exegesis of Ex. 19:3 is based upon Ps. 68:19, and a number of familiar themes emerge, along with several new ones:

I. AND MOSES WENT UP UNTO GOD (xix, 3). It is written, *Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive* (Ps. lxxviii, 19). What is the meaning of '*Thou hast ascended*'?—Thou hast been exalted, because thou didst wrestle with angels on high. Another explanation of '*Thou hast ascended on high*': No creature on high has prevailed as Moses did. R. Berekiah said: The length of the Tablets was six handbreadths; two were—could we but speak thus!—in the hands of Him who called the world into being; two handbreadths were in the hands of Moses, and two handbreadths separated the two pairs of hands. Another explanation of '*Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive*': One who enters a city usually takes away something unnoticed and unprized by the inhabitants, but Moses ascended on high and took away the Torah on which all had their eyes—hence: '*thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive*': Lest you think that because he captured it, he took it gratis, the Psalmist adds: *Thou hast received gifts among men* (ib.), that is, it was given to him for a price. Lest you think that he actually paid in money, the Psalmist assures us that it was '*gifts*', namely, that it was given to him as a gift. At that moment, the angels wished to attack Moses, but God made the features of Moses resemble those of Abraham and said to the angels: 'Are you not ashamed to touch this man to whom you descended from heaven and in whose house you ate?' God said to Moses: 'It is only for the sake of Abraham that the Torah is given to you,' as it says, '*Thou hast received gifts among men*' (be-adam). The word '*adam*' in this verse refers to Abraham, for it says, *Which Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim* (Josh. xiv, 15). Hence, AND MOSES WENT UP TO GOD.⁷⁰

Whatever else may be said, it is difficult to see how the tradition associating Ps. 68:19 with Moses could be any more firmly established at this point, since it is, in fact, the primary text employed in the exegesis of Ex. 19:3. The first explanation of '*Thou hast ascended*'—that Moses '*wrestled*' with angels on high—suggests by its wording the account of Jacob and the angel at Peniel (Gen. 32:22-32), but it also recalls the angelic opposition to Moses which appeared in *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan* 2.3, *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer* 46,

⁷⁰*Midrash Rabbah*, ed. H. Freedman and M. Simon, *Exodus*, trans. S. M. Lehrman (London: Soncino, 1939), pp. 331-32. Quotations, italics, and punctuation conform to the edition cited.

and Shir haShirim Rabbah 8.11.2 (although the opposition in all these instances is only verbal). Later in the present text (and in B. Shab. 88b-89a and Pes. R. 20.4 as well) the angels actually threaten to attack Moses when he prepares to take the Torah down to Israel. Here, in Shem. R. 28.1, God miraculously causes Moses to resemble Abraham (whom the angels visited, an allusion to Gen. 18:1-21) in order to dissuade the angels from attacking.⁷¹ The reference to Abraham, however, provides the basis for introducing mention of his merit in obtaining Torah for Israel: God informs Moses that it is only because of Abraham that Torah is given. The third clause of Ps. 68:19, לקחת מחנה בארם, is interpreted as a reference to Abraham, and further support for this point is adduced by the quotation of Josh. 14:15. This discussion of Abraham proceeds along lines very similar to that found in Soferim 16.10 and Midr. Teh. 22.19, both of which mention Josh. 14:15 as well. The unique element in the case of Shem. R. 28.1 is the use of Abraham (or more specifically, the miraculous transformation of Moses to appear like him) to explain how Moses is protected from the angels; in other accounts he is delivered from their attack by grasping hold of the throne of God and quoting to them (at God's direction) words from the Torah.⁷² It is possible that the extended role of Abraham in the account of the giving of Torah in Shem. R. 28.1 developed out of Abraham's association with Ps. 68:19 (בארם) and Josh. 14:15 as seen in Soferim 16.10 and Midr. Teh. 22.19, and it may well be that the other version of Moses' deliverance from

⁷¹The modern reader might wonder why God did not simply order the angels to refrain from attacking Moses. Perhaps such a seemingly logical solution was too straightforward to appeal to rabbinic exegetes! (But see the discussion in the text above concerning Abraham's role in Shem. R. 28.1).

⁷²B. Shab. 88b and Pes. R. 20.4.

the hostile angels was also known at the time, with no attempt being made to reconcile the two accounts.⁷³

There are, in addition, similarities to the account in Midr. Teh. 68.11, particularly in the use of Prov. 21:22, to which the present text alludes, and in the stress on Torah as a gift, given at no cost (although Shem. R. is a bit difficult to follow on this point; nevertheless, it does conclude that Torah was a 'gift'). Conspicuous by its absence, however, is the account of the dialogue between Moses and the angels; in its place (to explain why the angels allowed Moses to take the Torah) is the transformation of Moses to resemble Abraham. Neither is there any mention of angelic gifts given to Moses following his acquisition of the Torah.

B. Shabbath 88b-89a. One of the more detailed accounts of Moses' ascent to heaven is found in B. Shab. 88b-89a, where (as in the shorter accounts in Soferim 16.10 and Midr. Teh. 22.19) most of the material is attributed to R. Joshua ben Levi. The section is quoted at length because it provides valuable insight into the way in which the traditions surrounding Moses' receiving of Torah have been expanded and developed when compared with accounts examined previously.

R. Joshua b. Levi also said: When Moses ascended on high, the ministering angels spoke before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Sovereign of the Universe! What business has one born of woman amongst us?' 'He has come to receive the Torah,' answered He to them. Said they to Him, 'That secret treasure, which has been hidden by Thee for nine hundred and seventy-four generations before the world was created, Thou desirest to give to flesh and blood! *What is man, that thou art mindful of him, And the son of man, that thou visitest him? O Lord our God, How excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory [the Torah] upon the Heavens!*' 'Return them an answer,' bade the Holy One, blessed be He, to Moses. "Sovereign of the Universe' replied he, 'I fear lest they consume me with the [fiery]

⁷³Of course, it is also possible that the (more restricted) role of Abraham mentioned in Soferim 16.10 and Midr. Teh. 22.19 may have been influenced by the account as given in Shem. R. 28.1, but since these accounts are generally shorter and make no mention of angelic opposition to Moses, this does not seem quite as probable.

breath of their mouths.' 'Hold on to the Throne of Glory,' said He to him, 'and return them an answer,' as it is said, *He maketh him to hold on to the face of his throne, And spreadeth [PaRSHeZ] his cloud over him*, whereon R. Nahman observed: This teaches that the Almighty [SHaddai] spread [PiRash] the lustre [Ziw] of His Shechinah and cast it as a protection over him. He [then] spake before Him: 'Sovereign of the Universe! The Torah which Thou givest me, what is written therein? *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.*' Said he to them [the angels], 'Did ye go down to Egypt; were ye enslaved to Pharaoh: why then should the Torah be yours? Again, what is written therein? *Thou shalt have no other gods*: do ye dwell among peoples that engage in idol worship? Again what is written therein? *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*: do ye then perform work, that ye need to rest? Again what is written therein? *Thou shalt not take [tissa] [the name...in vain]*: is there any business [massa] dealings among you? Again what is written therein? *Honour thy father and thy mother*; have ye fathers and mothers? Again what is written therein? *Thou shalt not murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal*; is there jealousy among you; is the Evil Tempter among you? Straightway they conceded [right] to the Holy One, blessed be He, for it is said, *O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is thy name*, etc. whereas '*Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens*' is not written. Immediately each one was moved to love him [Moses] and transmitted something to him, for it is said, *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast taken spoils [the Torah]; Thou hast received gifts on account of man*: as a recompense for their calling thee man [adam] thou didst receive gifts. The Angel of Death too confided his secret to him, for it is said, *and he put on the incense, and made atonement for the people*; and it is said, *and he stood between the dead and the living*, etc. Had he not told it to him, whence had he known it?⁷⁴

The section begins with an allusion to Ps. 68:19 in the phrase "when Moses ascended on high"; the phrase appears to have become virtually a title for any discussion of the giving of Torah when Moses' ascent of Mount Sinai is mentioned.⁷⁵ The dialogue which follows involves Moses, the angels, and Yahweh himself; the angels are portrayed as protesting at first (quoting Ps. 8, as a disparaging reference to Moses)⁷⁶ and then as overtly hostile.⁷⁷ The Torah itself is spoken of, in the angels' protestation, as not merely pre-existent, but "hidden...for nine hundred and seventy-four generations

⁷⁴*The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Mo'ed*, ed. I. Epstein, *Shabbath*, trans. H. Freedman, vol. 2 (London: Soncino, 1938), pp. 421-23. Quotations, bracketed notes, italics, and punctuation conform to the edition cited. M. Shab. 9.3 (the corresponding section of the Mishnah) contains no mention of any of this; it is all *gemara*.

⁷⁵Cf. the rabbinic practice of using the first word of a section as its title, as in the 5 books of the Pentateuch (Bereshith, Shemoth, etc.) and the titles of the *sedarim*.

⁷⁶As also in Aboth de Rabbi Nathan 2.3.

⁷⁷As implied in Moses' words, "I fear lest they consume me...".

before the world was created".⁷⁸ Moses' deliverance from the angels' threat occurs when Yahweh commands him to hold on to the divine throne and answer the angels from the words of the Torah.⁷⁹ As proof, Job 26:9 is cited, and in this latter verse a proof is found that God spread the glory of his *shekinah* over Moses to protect him from the angels.⁸⁰

The series of quotations from the Torah, addressed by Moses to the angels, is the longest in any of the rabbinic accounts, including six elements, each followed by an appropriate rhetorical question⁸¹ intended to demonstrate to the angels that Torah was not given for immortal celestial creatures such as they, but for human beings. Thus persuaded to relinquish the Torah, the angels respond with a refrain from Ps. 8:10, and each is (rather suddenly) moved to 'love' Moses and bestow gifts upon him.⁸² It is at this point that Ps. 68:19 is actually quoted, as proof of the angelic gifts. Although באדם is taken as singular (not collective), no mention is made in this version of the story of Abraham as the man on whose account the Torah was given; rather, the angelic gifts are presented as recompense to Moses for the angels' disparaging reference to him as 'man' (in their previous quotation of Ps. 8:5). Specific mention of the Angel of Death and his gift to Moses appears for the first time in any of the accounts examined

⁷⁸Again, cf. Aboth de Rabbi Nathan 2.3.

⁷⁹Cf. Pes. R. 20.4.

⁸⁰Based on the exegesis of מַלְאָכִים in the text of Job 26:9 (cf. Pes. R. 20.4). There is uncertainty over the rabbi to whom this observation should be attributed: in the present text it is R. Nahman, but in Pes. R. 20.4 the same observation is attributed to R. Nahum, and in B. Suk. 5a (a related account which does not mention Ps. 68:19, and thus is not considered further at this point) R. Tanhūm [Tanhūma?] is credited with the observation. A corruption of the name in the process of transmission would appear to lie behind the confusion.

⁸¹Appropriate from a rabbinic standpoint!

⁸²Cf. the accounts in P. R. E. 46 and Pes. R. 20.4.

thus far;⁸³ this leads, in turn, to the mention of Moses' intercession in the plague of Num. 17:11-13.⁸⁴

New elements present in the account of Moses' ascent in B. Shab. 88b-89a include the mention of the throne of Yahweh, the *shekinah*, the Angel of Death, and the plague of Num. 17:11-13. No mention is made in this account of Moses being transformed into the appearance of Abraham, nor of Abraham's merit before God as the reason that Torah is given to Israel. The immediate context of B. Shab. 88b-89a contains more embellishment and elaboration than any other rabbinic account of the giving of Torah in which Ps. 68:19 is mentioned.

Pesiqta Rabbati 20.4. The final rabbinic account to be examined which makes reference to Ps. 68:19 is Pes. R. 20.4. All the major elements included in this account of the giving of the Torah to Moses are also found in B. Shab. 88b-89a; the two accounts are so similar, in fact, that to quote Pes. R. 20.4 would be superfluous. Ps. 68:19 is employed in exactly the same way as in B. Shab. 89a, to prove that, having obtained the Torah, Moses also received a gift from the Angel of Death.⁸⁵ Slightly less attention is given to the 'dialogue' between Moses and the angels, where Moses quotes from the Torah and asks rhetorical questions which prove that Torah was intended for mankind rather than for celestial beings; only four questions are mentioned in Pes. R. 20.4.⁸⁶

⁸³Cf., however, the reference to "tablets for healing the sons of men" found in P. R. E. 46, a similarity which may suggest a relationship between the two accounts.

⁸⁴Also mentioned in Pes. R. 20.4.

⁸⁵The only difference in the two accounts is that in B. Shab. 89a Moses receives gifts from *all* the angels, while in Pes. R. 20.4 only the gift presented by the Angel of Death is explicitly mentioned.

⁸⁶Compared to six questions in B. Shab. 88b-89a.

What is of most interest in the account in Pes. R. 20.4 is the larger context in which the events surrounding Moses' ascent to heaven and the giving of Torah to Israel are located. Section 4 of Pisqa 20 gives elaborate details of Moses' journey to heaven when he went up to receive the Torah. Moses was carried up to the firmament by a cloud; when he prepared to walk about on it, he was challenged by the angel Kemuel, leader of twelve thousand destroying angels, whom Moses struck with a single blow and made to perish out of the world. Then Hadarniel, sixty myriads of *parasangs*⁸⁷ taller than the next tallest angel, frightened Moses so badly that he almost fell from the cloud, and God was forced to intervene, reminding Hadarniel that when the angels had sought to prevent the creation of man, he [God] had burned companies of them in the fire. Then God had to station himself in front of the fires of Sandalphon to allow Moses to pass safely by; later God intervened again to bring Moses past Rigyon, the river of fire whose coals consume angels and men. After God had led Moses past Gallizur, whose task it is to proclaim the evil that will come upon men, Moses was attacked by a troop of angels of destruction, who wished to burn him with the breath of their mouths for attempting to take the Torah from them. At this point God told Moses to hold on to his throne, and answer the angels from the Torah. Moses did so, the angels were satisfied, and the Angel of Death even taught Moses the secret of preserving life.

Even in this brief summary, the fantastic and mystical elements of the account of Moses' ascent to heaven in Pes. R. 20.4 can easily be seen. Traces of *merkabah* mysticism are present, as well as indications of gnostic

⁸⁷A *parasang* is a Persian mile, roughly 3.6 kilometres.

speculation.⁸⁸ Yet when the fantastic element is discounted, the same basic elements found in a number of the other rabbinic accounts (particularly B. Shab. 88b-89a) remain.

Conclusions concerning the rabbinic texts which apply Ps. 68:19 to Moses. An attempt must now be made to draw together the results of this investigation of the rabbinic texts which quote Ps. 68:19. A number of observations appear significant: first, every time Ps. 68:19 is mentioned in the rabbinic literature, it is, without exception, interpreted of Moses and his ascent to heaven to receive the Torah. That is, all sources are in agreement that Ps. 68:19 refers to Moses and his heavenly ascent; the 'captivity' he 'captured' refers to Torah.

Second, as far as other elements of Ps. 68:19 are concerned, there is much more variation. The third clause, לִקְחָהּ מִחַנּוּת בְּאָדָם, is interpreted in at least four different ways: (a) Torah was given 'by virtue of men', i.e., Israelites, in Pes. R. 47.4; (b) Torah was given 'for the sake of the man', i.e., Abraham, according to Soferim 16.10, Midr. Teh. 22.19, and Shem. R. 28.1; (c) Torah was given as a recompense to Moses for being called 'man' (in a disparaging sense) by the angels, in B. Shab. 89a; and (d) Torah was given to Moses 'as a mere man', i.e., Moses as a mere mortal was given the Torah, in Pes. R. 20.4. These interpretations, usually related to a somewhat unconventional understanding of the ל- preposition of the Hebrew text, are given without regard for their mutual inconsistency. Such a degree of diversity in the interpretation of this clause of Ps. 68:19 becomes more significant when viewed in relation to the relatively small number of rab-

⁸⁸Although not included in detail in the summary presented above; note in relation to the presence of *merkabah* mysticism, however, the mention of the throne in both Pes. R. 20.4 and B. Shab. 88b.

binic texts involved.

Third, the final clause of Ps. 68:19, **וּאֵף סֹרְרִים לִשְׁכֵן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים**, is not included in most rabbinic citations of the verse. The only text which does, in fact, include it is Midr. Teh. 68.11 (on 68:19); in this case it is interpreted as a reference to rebellious Israel, among whom, nevertheless, the presence of God came to dwell.

Fourth, not all accounts make mention of the presence and intervention of the angels. Those which do so demonstrate a developing tendency to portray the angels as (a) disparaging of Moses, because he is a mere 'mortal'; (b) seeking to dissuade Moses from removing the Torah from their presence in heaven; and (c) openly hostile, seeking to attack and destroy Moses, whom God must intervene to protect. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to speculate on how the role of the angels in the giving of Torah came to be developed ^{in connection with Ps. 68:19 in the rabbinic literature,} two possibilities may be briefly mentioned here. The phrase **שְׁבִיתָ שְׁבִי** "you led captive captivity" (that is, Torah) in Ps. 68:19 might have given rise to a natural question on the part of the rabbis, "From whom was Torah captured?" Not from God, certainly—thus it must have been captured from the angels. In addition, the previous verse, 68:18, contains a difficult reading, **אֱלֹפִי שְׁנָאן**, which Tg Psalms translates as **אֱלֹפִין דְּאַנְגְּלִיא** ("thousands of angels"), probably reflecting what was, by the time of the Targum, a traditional interpretation of the Hebrew text. However it came about, once the tradition associating the presence of angels with the giving of Torah was firmly established, it would provide a point of departure for hellenistic and gnostic influences, culminating in fantastic accounts of Moses' journey to heaven such as Pes. R. 20.4.

In conclusion, it seems reasonable to propose that the basic elements underlying the traditional rabbinic interpretation of Ps. 68:19 consisted of

two points: (a) Moses ascended to heaven to receive the Torah,⁸⁹ and (b) he there took Torah 'captive'. Later on it would be generally agreed that angels were present (whether or not they sought to attack Moses), and that Moses received gifts on behalf of men (whether or not this implied other things besides Torah itself). The variation evident in the rabbinic accounts makes it less likely, however, that these elements of the tradition are as old as the first two. Finally, the last clause of Ps. 68:19 was not usually included in rabbinic citations of the verse, and played very little part in the traditions related to the giving of Torah.⁹⁰

At this point, the question of the date of the tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19 may be re-examined briefly. It is significant that the two elements which appear most consistently in the rabbinic accounts and which, in fact, seem to form the basis for those accounts—that Moses ascended to heaven to receive the Torah, and that he there took Torah 'captive'—are identical

⁸⁹Although some authorities insisted that Moses did not go 'up' to heaven; rather, heaven came 'down' to him. See, e.g., B. Suk. 5a (which does not mention Ps. 68:19) and Mek. Bahodesh 4.54-58 (on Ex. 20:20) which states:

Neither Moses nor Elijah ever went up to heaven (לא עלה משה ואליהו למעלה), nor did the Glory (הכבוד) ever come down to earth. Scripture merely teaches that God said to Moses: Behold, I am going to call you through the top of the mount (לך מראש הוד) and you will come up, as it is said: 'And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mount'. [*Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael*, trans. J. Z. Lauterbach, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933), p. 224].

This interpretation of Moses' 'ascent' may be particularly significant in light of the probability that the Mekilta is quite ancient. According to J. Bowker in *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), p. 70, it is one of the earliest midrashim to have survived, and although it has since been revised and expanded, it dates basically from the Tannaitic period. Thus, while the tradition that Moses ascended to heaven to receive the Torah is ancient, it appears that there were a few dissenting voices. Nevertheless, it should be noted that neither Mek. Bah. 4.54-58 nor B. Suk. 5a make any mention of Ps. 68:19; all the rabbinic sources which do quote or allude to the psalm are unanimous in their interpretation that it refers to Moses' ascent to heaven to receive the Torah.

⁹⁰Although it easily could have: it would seem (by standards of rabbinic exegesis) to be an excellent text to relate to the rebellion of Israel with the golden calf, which Moses discovered when he came down from the mountain with the tablets of the Decalogue.

with the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 found in Tg Psalms. To this point, no external evidence by which these elements of the tradition might be (approximately) dated in relation to the time of composition of the New Testament (and of Ephesians in particular) has been examined. Nevertheless, these elements appear to be quite ancient; it seems conceivable, at least, that the tradition interpreting Ps. 68:19 as Moses' ascent to heaven to receive the Torah might have been in existence by the time Ephesians was written. As we have already noted, awareness of such Moses-traditions associated with Ps. 68:19 would probably have predisposed the author of Ephesians to infer from the ascent mentioned in Ps. 68:19 itself (quoted in Eph. 4:8) a corresponding subsequent descent of Christ in 4:9ff. to distribute gifts to his church, since Moses, after his ascent of Mt Sinai to 'take captive' the Torah, descended to distribute it as 'gifts' to men.

Because it does appear possible at this point that Moses-traditions associated with Ps. 68:19 may have been available to the author of Ephesians, we should look briefly at conclusions made on the basis of the rabbinic literature by A. T. Hanson. He believes the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 as a reference to Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah was known and accepted by the author of Ephesians:

Rabbinic exegesis had already interpreted the psalm in terms of Moses receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai and bringing it down as God's gift to Israel. Our author was well aware of this, and can accept the Moses typology exactly as Paul accepts it in Romans 10:6-8.⁹¹

Here we would differ with Hanson as to whether the author of Ephesians has used the Moses typology "exactly" as it is used in Rom. 10:6-8, since the two contexts are not identical, as we have already noted in our

⁹¹A. T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SPCK, 1980), p. 140. Hanson considers Ephesians to be deutero-Pauline (p. 136).

discussion of Rom. 10:6-8 in chapter 2.⁹² Hanson does not acknowledge that awareness of such Moses-traditions involving Ps. 68:19 would have influenced the author of Ephesians with regard to a subsequent descent of Christ; in fact, he continues to hold to a *descensus ad inferos* as the preferred interpretation of Eph. 4:9-10. The problem of dating the tradition we shall discuss in relation to Hanson's next point. He goes on to discuss the rabbinic emphasis on angelic opposition to Moses when he sought to remove the Torah from heaven. In relation to the author of Ephesians, he states:

...we can also cite *Shabbath* 89a, where Satan encounters Moses. Even more emphatic is *Pesikta Rabbati*, where a troop of angels of destruction meet Moses and attempt to burn him with a breath of their mouths, and where he even overcomes the angel of death. This would confirm our author in the belief that the psalm refers to Christ's conquest of the powers.⁹³

Several observations must be made with regard to these remarks: (1) Hanson appears to be appealing to the rabbinic evidence without regard for the problems of dating it. The account he mentions in *Pesiqta Rabbati* (20.4) is especially late, as is evident when one compares it with other rabbinic accounts of Moses' ascent to heaven. As we have seen from the preceding examination of rabbinic exegesis relating to Ps. 68:19, it is not certain that Ps. 68:19 was in fact interpreted as a reference to Moses' ascent of Sinai any earlier than the second or third century of the present era. Although we are in agreement with Hanson's conclusions regarding the antiquity of the tradition concerning Moses' ascent to heaven—it does appear to be pre-Christian—the rabbinic literature alone offers insufficient evidence to support such a conclusion. The evidence from the rabbinic literature

⁹²The discussion of Rom. 10:6-8 is found in ch. 2, pp. 81-84.

⁹³A. T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*, p. 141.

(particularly in the case of what appear to be later accounts) is not so clear in support of such a view as Hanson appears to believe. One can always appeal to the argument that the tradition behind the written sources is undoubtedly more ancient than the written form of the documents themselves, and such contentions cannot easily be disproven. But the antiquity of the tradition regarding Moses' ascent of Sinai based on the later rabbinic literature is not the foregone conclusion that many scholars have tended to assume. If the antiquity of this particular tradition can be established with any certainty, it will be through examinations of other non-rabbinic texts which can be (approximately) dated and not from assumptions made about the age of rabbinic interpretations based on the rabbinic texts themselves.⁹⁴

(2) The present writer is unable to discover a reference to Satan encountering Moses in B. Shab. 89a: the angels who seek to prevent Moses from removing the Torah from heaven are all 'good'; furthermore, the only allusion to Satan appears in Moses' rebuke of the angels, when he says to them, "is there jealousy among you; is the Evil Tempter among you?"⁹⁵ (3) Moses' 'overcoming' of the angel of death appears in both accounts mentioned by Hanson (B. Shab. 89a and Pesiqta Rabbati 20.4), but not in the context of Moses overcoming his own death through resurrection from the dead. Rather, both accounts state that Moses was taught the secret of preserving life by the angel of death, and this specifically refers to Moses' action in stopping the plague in Num. 17:11-13. B. Shab. 89a actually quotes from

⁹⁴This involves what R. Bloch referred to as a process of "external comparison". Her approach to the dating of rabbinic literature, which we have generally applied to the tradition of Moses' ascent to heaven in the rabbinic literature and Tg Psalms, is discussed above, pp. 108-9.

⁹⁵*The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Mo'ed*, ed. I. Epstein, *Shabbath*, trans. H. Freedman, vol. 2 (London: Soncino, 1938), pp. 421ff.

Numbers 17 in this instance, so the reference is unambiguous. (4) Hanson's concluding statement, "This would confirm our author in the belief that the psalm refers to Christ's conquest of the powers," assumes the point he is seeking to prove, i.e., that the author of Ephesians was indeed aware of some form of the tradition behind the rabbinic accounts of Moses' ascent to heaven based on Ps. 68:19. It furthermore assumes that the elements of the later rabbinic tradition mentioned specifically by Hanson antedate Ephesians. As we have seen in our examination of the rabbinic sources, however, it is precisely these elements of the tradition which appear to be later embellishments that do not go back as early as the first century CE. The two elements which we have found to be present in all the rabbinic accounts, and which are therefore most likely to be ancient, are that Moses ascended to heaven to receive the Torah, and that he there took Torah 'captive'. If any elements of the Moses-traditions concerning a heavenly ascent at Sinai are older than the NT writings it would probably be these, and these elements would be the ones most likely to have influenced the author of Ephesians in his use of Psalm 68:19 (Eph. 4:8). If we are to find reliable confirmation of this, we must turn to sources external to Targum Psalms and the classical rabbinic literature.

Psalm 68:19 in Early Non-Rabbinic Sources

After examining the use of Ps. 68:19 in the rabbinic literature, it is apparent that the two elements of the tradition most likely to be ancient are the interpretation of the 'one who ascends' (in Ps. 68:19) as Moses, and the 'captivity led captive' as the words of Torah which Moses received from God and brought down to distribute as gifts to men. As we have already seen,

these basic elements are virtually identical with the interpretation found in Tg Ps. 68:19. Whether they are as old as (or older than) the Epistle to the Ephesians has not yet been demonstrated, however, because none of the rabbinic sources we have just examined are as old as Ephesians in their extant (written) forms. If we are to establish the antiquity of these elements of the tradition, it will be necessary to examine all available sources external to the rabbinic literature and Tg Psalms which make use of Ps. 68:19 (the procedure referred to as "external comparison" by R. Bloch in her approach to the study of rabbinic literature) to see if there is any evidence that the interpretation of Psalm 68 as Moses' ascent of Sinai might antedate the composition of Ephesians and thus possibly have influenced its author. But first, it is necessary to take a closer look at the text of Ps. 68:19 itself as it appears in four of the major sources.

A comparison of Ps. 68:19 as found in the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, Eph. 4:8, and the Targum to the Psalms

A detailed comparison of Tg Ps. 68:19 with Eph. 4:8 forms a necessary preliminary to the examination of non-canonical sources which relate to the interpretation of the Psalm found in the Targum. At the same time, it is appropriate to consider the text of Ps. 68:19 as found in the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint, since Eph. 4:8 bears the outward form, at least, of a quotation. The presence of common features among the texts and versions might suggest points of contact between the traditions in question and their underlying sources.

The text of Ps. 68:19 according to these four sources may, therefore, be arranged as follows for the purpose of comparison:

<u>68:19 (MT)</u> ⁹⁶	<u>67:19 (LXX)</u> ⁹⁷	<u>Eph. 4:8</u> ⁹⁸	<u>68:19 (Tg Pss.)</u> ⁹⁹
עליח	ἀνάβης [B ^{2,3} , K ²] ἀνάβη [K [*]] ἀναβάς [B [*]]	ἀναβάς	סליקהא
למרום	εἰς ὕψος	εἰς ὕψος	לרקיע (משה נביא)
שביח	ἴχμαλώτευσας [K ² , B] ἴχμαλώτευσεν [K [*]]	ἴχμαλώτευσεν	שביחא
שבי	αἰχμαλωσίαν	αἰχμαλωσίαν	שביחא (אלפתא פיתגמי אוריתא)
לקח	ἔλαβες	ἔδωκεν	יהבא להון
מתנות	δόματα	δόματα	מתנן
באדם	ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ ἀνθρώποις [B ² , K]	τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐν ἀνθρώποις [F, G, pc]	לבני נשא
ואי	καὶ γὰρ	(end of quotation in Eph. 4:8)	וברם
סוררים	ἀπειθοῦντες [B ^{2,3} , K [*]] ἀπιθοῦντες [B [*]] ἀπειθοῦντας [K ²]		סרבניא (די מתגירין חייבין בתחובא)
לשכן	τοῦ κατασκηνοῦσαι		שרח עליהון שכונת
יה	κύριος		יקרא דידוה
אלהים	ὁ θεὸς		אלהים

⁹⁶The Masoretic text given is that of *Biblia Hebraica*, ed. R. Kittel, 7th ed. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1937), ad loc.

⁹⁷The Greek text is from *Septuaginta*, ed. A. Rahlfs, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935). The textual variants [bracketed] are found in *The Old Testament in Greek*, ed. H. B. Swete (Cambridge: University Press, 1909), ad loc.

⁹⁸The New Testament text is from *Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. E. Nestle and K. Aland, 26th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979), ad loc.

⁹⁹The text of Tg Psalms is that of *Hagiographa Chaldaice*, ed. P. A. de Lagarde (Leipzig: B. G. Teubneri, 1873), ad loc.

Verse 19 begins in both the MT and Tg Psalms with the verb in the second person singular (סליקתא and עליה); this was probably the original reading of the LXX as well (ἀνέβης, read by the two correctors of B and the second corrector of \aleph), but there is some uncertainty over the reading of the LXX, since the original hand of \aleph has the third singular (ἀνέβη), while the original hand of B supplies the participle ἀναβάς (as does Eph. 4:8). Since \aleph and B are both fourth century manuscripts, it seems probable that the text of Ps. 68:19 which they reflect has been influenced (either accidentally—i.e., unconsciously—or deliberately) by the New Testament citation of the psalm in Eph. 4:8.¹⁰⁰

Next, the MT reads למרום, which both the LXX and Eph. 4:8 translate as εἰς ὕψος; Tg Psalms has לרקיע. This term may represent a later interpolation in the Targum, of course, but Tg Psalms does use מרום elsewhere.¹⁰¹ It seems more likely that רקיע occurs in 68:19 because of its (admittedly later) association with the tradition of Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai.¹⁰² There are numerous discussions in the rabbinic literature which recount how Moses walked about on the firmament (רקיע), how thick the firmament was, how long it would take a man to journey across it, etc.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰That this is, in fact, highly probable in the case of [the original hand of] \aleph is demonstrated by the use of the third person singular in the case of the first two verbs (ἀνέβη and ἤχμαλώτευσεν, the second agreeing with Eph. 4:8), whereas the third verb abruptly (and inconsistently) becomes second person (ἔλαβες). The [second] corrector of \aleph , probably because he noticed this inconsistency, changed the first two verbs, which were in the third person, to participles, producing agreement with B and removing the inconsistency (since the person of the Greek adverbial participle is ambiguous, being determined by that of the finite verb to which it is subordinate).

¹⁰¹I.e., in Pss. 56:3, 71:19, 75:6, 93:4, 102:20, 144:7, and 148:1.

¹⁰²Naturally, this is in line with previous conclusions regarding a relatively late date for the final form of Tg Psalms. See the previous section of this chapter, "The Targum to the Psalms", pp. 95-108.

¹⁰³In B. Pes. 94a, for example, the thickness of the firmament is given variously as 1,000 *parasangs* (a *parasang* is a Persian mile, roughly 3.6 kilometres), one tenth of a day's

Tg Psalms follows the reference to the firmament (רקיע) with the first of three (parenthetical) interpretive comments in verse 19: the words משה נביא are added to specify who it was who ascended (and to whom the initial words of Ps. 68:19 are addressed). No trace of this comment is to be found in the MT, the LXX, or Eph. 4:8, of course, but the association of Moses with Ps. 68:19 was a 'stock' interpretation in the rabbinic literature, as we have noted in the preceding section.

The verbs in the following clause in both MT and Targum (שביח and שביחא) are second person singular; this is probably the original reading of the LXX (ἤχμαλώτευσας) as well, although the original hand of א substitutes third person singular (ἤχμαλώτευσεν). Again, this may well represent a harmonization with the New Testament text (Eph. 4:8).¹⁰⁴

Following the reference to 'captivity' (שביחה), the Targum makes the second of its interpretive comments on Ps. 68:19, אלפחא פיתגמי אוריהא, which explains the preceding phrase ("you led captive captivity") in terms of Moses' learning the words of Torah. Though not implied in the MT, the LXX, or Eph. 4:8, we have seen that this interpretation also is common in rabbinic literature.¹⁰⁵

At this point, the major divergence occurs between the MT and the LXX on the one hand and Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19 on the other. The two former sources state (as do all of the rabbinic sources which make use of Ps. 68:19) that the one who ascended 'received' gifts (קבל, ἔλαβες), whereas

journey (!), and (in 94b) 500 years' journey; in Ber. R. 4.5 it is described (by R. Aḥa) as having the thickness of a metal plate, while R. Joshua b. R. Nehemiah said the firmament is about two fingers in thickness. See also B. Ḥag. 13a and Midr. Teh. 4.3.

¹⁰⁴And again, the change may be either accidental or deliberate.

¹⁰⁵See the preceding section, "Ps. 68 and Moses' Ascent to Heaven in Rabbinic Literature", pp. 110-35.

Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19 read 'gave' (ἔδωκεν, יִתְּנָה) with reference to gifts. It is primarily on the basis of this similarity that the use of Tg Psalms (or the tradition behind it) by the writer of Ephesians has generally been proposed.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, there are two less noticeable differences: first, in Eph. 4:8 the verb occurs in the third person rather than the second, while MT, LXX, and Targum all have second person verbs; second, Tg Ps. 68:19 supplies the pronominal object (לָדוֹן) following the verb, to specify that it was the words of Torah (אֲרִיזָה פִּיחֲמֵי, from the preceding interpretive comment) which were given as gifts. Yet Tg Psalms maintains the use of second person verbs throughout the verse (following the Hebrew text); according to the interpretation of the Targum these are consistently addressed to Moses.

In the MT, בָּאֵרֶם specifies those who present the gifts; the phrase appears to be best understood as a collective singular. This probably lies behind the LXX reading ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ (the original reading of B, followed also

¹⁰⁶Beginning with H. St J. Thackeray, *The Relation of St Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought* (London: Oxford University Press, 1900), p. 182. However, the similarity between the texts of Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19 could be merely coincidental, whether the modification of Ps. 68:19 to read 'gave' rather than 'received' was made by the writer of Ephesians himself [so J. Bonsirven, who states that it is "impossible" to explain the modification to the text of Ps. 68 by another Greek version, or a targum, or a metathesis of the Hebrew letters (although he gives absolutely no justification for his claim), in *Exégèse Rabbinique et Exégèse Paulinienne*, Bibliothèque de Théologie historique (Paris: Beauchesne, 1939), pp. 307-308, and A. M. Harmon, "Aspects of Paul's Use of the Psalms", *Westminster Theological Journal* 32 (1969), pp. 6-7] or was adopted from a pre-existing source other than Tg Psalms (e.g., the text of Ps. 68:19 may already have been modified by the early Christian community) [so B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM, 1961), pp. 52-56]. The possibility that the targumist himself made use of a source (e.g. a Greek version of the Psalms) which had already changed the text of Ps. 68:19 to ἔδωκεν was mentioned above, p. 103, n. 32, also p. 106, n. 39. Obviously, the writer of Ephesians may have been following the same Greek version in quoting 68:19, independently of Tg Ps. 68:19 or the tradition behind it. In contrast to the complexities of the foregoing discussion, H. P. Hamann, in "Church and Ministry: An Exegesis of Ephesians 4:1-16", *Lutheran Theological Journal* 16 (1982), pp. 121-28, asserts that "it is easier to accept that explanation that Paul was quoting from memory and was quoting inaccurately" (p. 123). However, most of those who have investigated the problem would find such a solution too simplistic in light of the similar modification of the text found in Tg Psalms.

by one of B's correctors) which is probably to be preferred as original. The dative plural ἀνθρώποις (read by ℵ and the other corrector of B) is more likely a harmonization (either accidental or deliberate) with Eph. 4:8. The original text of Eph. 4:8 itself almost certainly reads τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, although F, G, and a few other manuscripts contain ἐν ἀνθρώποις, resembling the LXX text of Ps. 68 found in ℵ and followed by one corrector of B. The omission of the preposition ἐν in favor of the simple dative τοῖς ἀνθρώποις is more consistent with the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 given in Ephesians, where 'men' have become the recipients of the gifts mentioned in the psalm. Tg Psalms, likewise, has replaced בארם with לבני נשא; the change of prepositions is again consistent with the change in the preceding verb. With Tg Ps. 68:19, as with Eph. 4:8, the 'men/sons of men' have become the recipients of the gifts rather than the donors.

At this point the quotation of Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:8 ends. It will prove helpful for the study of the tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19 in non-canonical sources, however, to compare the remainder of the verse as found in the Targum with the MT and the LXX. The MT begins the final clause of Ps. 68:19 with סוררים, which is translated by the LXX with the participle ἀπειθεῖς and by Tg Psalms as סרביא, the Aramaic equivalent for 'rebellious, wilful, stubborn'. Following this, the Targum adds, in the third of its interpretive expansions in verse 19, a lengthy qualification: די מגיירין הייבין בתשובא. By the inclusion of the participle מגיירין Tg Ps. 68:19 appears to imply that the 'rebellious' (סרביא) are to be understood as Gentiles rather than as Israelites, since they must (in addition to repenting) become proselytes before the *shekinah* of Yahweh will come to dwell with them. But there is one highly suggestive exception to this 'obvious' understanding of the reference to proselytes. In the section of the Talmud which deals with the

regulations regarding proselytes, B. Yeb. 46a-48a, the question of whether a proselyte must undergo both circumcision and ritual ablution before being considered a 'proper' proselyte is answered as follows:

Our Rabbis taught: If a proselyte was circumcised but had not performed the prescribed ritual ablution, R. Eliezer said, "Behold he is a proper proselyte; for so we find that our forefathers were circumcised and had not performed ritual ablution'. If he performed the prescribed ablution but had not been circumcised, R. Joshua said, 'Behold he is a proper proselyte; for so we find that the mothers had performed ritual ablution but had not been circumcised'.¹⁰⁷

The inference made by R. Eliezer and R. Joshua, that both rites need not have been performed before the individual may be properly considered a full proselyte, is drawn from the experience of Israel in the wilderness, after the Exodus and just prior to the giving of Torah at Mt Sinai.¹⁰⁸ The implication appears to be that those who departed from Egypt as 'heathen' became 'proselytes' when they received the Torah and were, so to speak, 'converted' to Judaism. Thus, the conventional distinction between native Israelites and Gentile proselytes would not apply in this one instance. It seems possible that such an understanding lies behind the use of מְגִירִין in Tg Ps. 68:19, especially since the Sinai-motif is already assumed in the targumic interpretation of the preceding clauses of verse 19, and furthermore, Sinai is explicitly mentioned in the Hebrew text of the preceding verse (Ps. 68:18). Interestingly, such an understanding of the 'proselytes' in the Targum concurs with one of the few rabbinic interpretations of Ps. 68:19 which includes the final clause.¹⁰⁹ Midr. Teh. 68.11 (on 68:19) clearly

¹⁰⁷*The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nashim*, ed. I. Epstein, *Yebamoth*, trans. I. W. Slotki, vol. 1 (London: Soncino, 1936), pp. 302-303. It is of no consequence, as far as the present observation is concerned, that the debate over the validity of the conclusions reached by R. Eliezer and R. Joshua continues at considerable length.

¹⁰⁸See, e.g., Ex. 19:3-6 and Deut. 5:1-3.

¹⁰⁹However (as is common), such an understanding of מְגִירִין in the final clause of Ps. 68:19 is not unanimous in the rabbinic literature. Shem. R. 33.2, e.g., interprets the 'rebellious' in v. 19 as the heathen, with whom, in spite of their idolatry, Yahweh continues to dwell.

understands 'the rebellious' (MT, סוררים) as the Israelites themselves, despite the fact that in a preceding verse (68:7, "only the rebellious dwell in a parched land") the same word (סוררים) is interpreted as the nations of the earth who were unwilling to accept the Torah.¹¹⁰

The remaining phrase of Ps. 68:19 is translated literally from the MT by the LXX, and the Targum expands לשכן יה אלהים by rendering it as שרה שכינתו, עליון שכינתו יקרא דיהוה אלהים, incorporating a reference to both the *shekinah* and the 'glory' of Yahweh. As might be expected, this demonstrates the targumic tendency to avoid anthropomorphic expressions by the introduction of verbal 'buffers' which prevent God from appearing to come into close proximity with human and earthly affairs.¹¹¹

Conclusions on the comparison of four versions of Ps. 68:19. The

¹¹⁰See the preceding section, "Ps. 68 and Moses' Ascent to Heaven in Rabbinic Literature", pp. 112-13, for the relevant text of Midr. Teh. 68.11 (on 68:19). Of course, it is possible that the participle מצירין represents a later interpolation in the existing text of Tg Ps. 68:19; this might be suspected since the interpretive comment made by the Targum remains intelligible even if מצירין is omitted. Nevertheless, its presence tends to confirm conclusions reached in a previous section regarding a relatively late date for Tg Pss. (see the section "The Targum to the Psalms", pp. 95-108, for a discussion of the problems of dating the work). Furthermore, the interpretation provided by the participle מצירין in Tg Ps. 68:19 does coincide with the rabbinic interpretation of the verse in Midr. Teh. 68.11 (as discussed in the text above, p. 113). Finally, there is no evidence for the omission of the participle in any of the surviving mss. of Tg Psalms.

¹¹¹G. F. Moore, "Intermediaries in Jewish Theology: Memra, Shekinah, Metatron", *Harvard Theological Review* 15 (1922), pp. 41-85. It is important to note Moore's point (pp. 44-45) that the Targumists were not so much concerned with the elimination of anthropomorphic ideas which occurred in the Hebrew texts they translated, as with the avoidance of certain anthropomorphic expressions. But such instances are 'buffer-words', not ideas or hypostatizations (p. 53). Concerning שכינתו he states that it "acquires what semblance of personality it has solely by being a circumlocution for God in contexts where personal states or actions are attributed to him" (p. 59). Although R. D. Middleton, in "Logos and Shekinah in the Fourth Gospel", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 29 (new series, 1938-39), pp. 101-133, disagrees with Moore over the use of *memra* as a "buffer-word devoid of all theological content" (p. 113), he does agree with Moore that *shekinah* "does not indicate a Presence which takes the place of the Deity, but the Targums by the avoidance of the too frequent use of the divine name seek, in accordance with Jewish standards of thinking, a more reverent way of writing or speaking about God" (p. 123; cf. Moore, p. 58).

main point of divergence between the four versions of Ps. 68:19 included in the preceding analysis (MT, LXX, Eph. 4:8, and Tg Ps. 68:19), as noted above, consists of the change from $\eta\eta\rho\lambda$ / $\xi\lambda\alpha\beta\epsilon\varsigma$ (MT, LXX) to $\xi\delta\omega\kappa\epsilon\nu$ / אָהַבְתִּי (Eph. 4:8, Tg Pss.). While this does show agreement between Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19 against the MT and LXX, it does not necessarily offer conclusive proof that the writer of Ephesians was personally aware of the targumic interpretation of Ps. 68:19 (or the tradition behind it). Even if one admits on principle that "similarities prove borrowings", it does not follow that, in the case of two texts which bear resemblances, one 'borrowed' from the other.¹¹² Both may have 'borrowed' independently from a pre-existing common source, which would account for their similarities. Thus, while it cannot be proven or disproven that Eph. 4:8 shows the direct influence of the tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19,¹¹³ there are other possibilities that must be considered, some of which represent interrelationships far more complex than simple literary dependence. For example, both Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19 may independently reflect a variant in the Hebrew *Vorlage* at this point which differs from the MT, yet has not been preserved in any extant Hebrew manuscript.¹¹⁴ It is sometimes suggested that such a variant reading has been preserved in one of the early versions; the reading "gave" (*we-yahbhte*) for "received" in Ps. 68:19 is also found in some manuscripts

¹¹²See, e.g., A. D. York, "The Dating of Targumic Literature", *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 5 (1974), p. 56.

¹¹³At this point the possibility that Tg Psalms has been influenced by the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 found in Eph. 4:8 cannot be totally dismissed either, no matter how inherently improbable it may seem. After all, the final, written form of Tg Psalms is almost certainly later than Ephesians (see the previous section, "The Targum to the Psalms", pp. 95-108, for a discussion of the dating of Tg Psalms).

¹¹⁴Again, such a suggestion appears to have originated with H. St J. Thackeray, *The Relation of St Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought* (London: Oxford University Press, 1900); p. 182.

of the Syriac Peshitta, and this led W. E. Barnes to propose that these manuscripts preserved an ancient variant which was later harmonized with the LXX reading in part of the surviving Syriac manuscript tradition.¹¹⁵ The possibility that such a variant was found in a Greek version known to both the writer of Ephesians and the targumist independently of one another may be even greater.¹¹⁶ Or, however unlikely it may seem, it is possible that the writer of Ephesians and the targumist made the change from לקח to ἔδωκεν / דבחה independently of one another, and the agreement is coincidental.¹¹⁷ Another possibility is that the writer of Ephesians derived the version of Ps. 68:19 which he quotes in 4:8 from a pre-existing liturgical source independent of Tg Psalms; if so, the relationship of such a source to Tg Ps. 68:19 may well be impossible to reconstruct. In the case of

¹¹⁵W. E. Barnes, in *The Peshitta Psalter according to the West Syrian Text* (Cambridge: University Press, 1904), printed *we-yahbhte* (agreeing with Tg Psalms) in the text of Ps. 68:19 and *wa-nesabhte* (agreeing with the MT and LXX) in the apparatus; this arrangement is followed by the standard modern critical edition, *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version*, part 2, fascicle 3, *The Book of Psalms*, ed. D. M. Walter (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), p. 74. Barnes has noted that all the texts of the Jacobite recension read *we-yahbhte*, agreeing with Eph. 4:8 and Tg Psalms, while those of the Nestorian recension read *wa-nesabhte*, agreeing with the reading of the MT and LXX. The Jacobite manuscripts are older, and LXX influence can be demonstrated in other places, so Barnes concludes that the Jacobite reading *we-yahbhte* is original, and the Nestorian *wa-nesabhte* represents a harmonization with the text of the LXX. If this is correct, it would provide an independent tradition which supports the change from "received" to "gave" in Ps. 68:19. However, Barnes' conclusions have been challenged by B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM, 1961), p. 52, n. 2, who thinks it is *a priori* more probable that the original text was that of the MT and LXX, and that the change was made in the Jacobite recension. This was independent of influence from Eph. 4:8 according to Lindars, because (1) the two words are very similar and could be easily confused in the Estrangela script, and (2) the following word for "gifts" is a cognate of the verb in Syriac and could easily have influenced a copyist. Regardless of whether Barnes or Lindars is right in the proposed reconstruction of the Peshitta text, we must agree with Lindars' ultimate conclusion: in light of the uncertain history of the variant in the Jacobite recension, it would be precarious to insist on its value as an independent witness to the variant reading found in Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19.

¹¹⁶See above, p. 103, n. 32, also p. 106, n. 39 (preceding section) and below, n. 121, for further discussion of this possibility.

¹¹⁷So B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, pp. 52-53.

Ephesians, at least, it may be significant (with regard to the relationship between Eph. 4:8 and the other three versions of Ps. 68:19 involved in the present discussion) that the writer of Ephesians employs a participle (ἀναβάς) followed by third person singular verbs (ἠχμαλώτευσεν, ἔδωκεν) in the psalm citation, whereas the other three sources (including Tg Psalms) consistently use second person singular verbs throughout, following the Hebrew *Vorlage*.¹¹⁸ This change of person is often dismissed as insignificant by those examining the texts in question, since it is frequently assumed that such a change represents nothing more than a contextual adaptation by the writer of Ephesians.¹¹⁹ However, it is not at all clear that this is the case, since the other Old Testament quotations in Ephesians follow the text of the LXX quite closely.¹²⁰ It appears that the author of Ephesians could have incorporated Ps. 68:19 using second person verbs (as all the rabbinic sources which refer to verse 19 do) without undue difficulty, had he desired to do so. Therefore, the possibility that the version of Ps. 68:19 quoted in Eph. 4:8 is taken from a pre-existing source other than the Hebrew text, the LXX, or the tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19 must be given due consideration. In the final analysis R. Rubinkiewicz is probably correct when he states that the author of Ephesians was simply making use of a

¹¹⁸There is some variation among the LXX mss. with regard to the form of the first verb (i.e., ἀνέβης/ ἀνέβη/ ἀναβάς), but the original LXX reading was most likely second person. See p. 138 above, and also n. 100.

¹¹⁹Thus for example R. Rubinkiewicz, in "Psalm LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", *Novum Testamentum* 17 (1975), p. 220, states: "The most important variant is ἔδωκεν because the others can be understood as a small adjustment of the text that does not change the main idea". Likewise, J. Dupont in "Ascension du Christ et don de l'Esprit d'après Actes 2:33", in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), pp. 219-28, expresses a similar view: "Le fait que la construction passe de la deuxième à la troisième personne reste accessoire: l'adaptation au contexte peut justifier ce changement" (pp. 224-5).

¹²⁰As A. T. Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982), p. 45, has pointed out.

textual tradition which had come down to him rather than creating the change himself; this would appear to be the case since it seems unlikely that the textual tradition behind Tg Psalms could be dependent on Ephesians.¹²¹ In an attempt to confirm this we must continue our examination of Ps. 68:19 as it is quoted in both canonical and non-canonical literature.

Ps. 68:19 in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs

It is now necessary for us to examine the extra-canonical citations of Ps. 68:19 in the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, in order to discover whether interpretations similar to those found in Tg Psalms and the classical rabbinic literature are present. If so, this would prove helpful in our attempt to date the tradition associating Ps. 68:19 with Moses and his ascent to heaven to receive the Torah. Awareness of such traditions associated with Ps. 68:19 could explain why the author of Ephesians found it necessary to infer a descent in Eph. 4:9-10 from the ascent mentioned in the psalm quotation. Knowledge of these Moses-traditions would probably have predisposed the author to infer from the ascent mentioned in Ps. 68:19 a corresponding descent of Christ to distribute gifts to his church, just as Moses, following his ascent of Mt Sinai to 'take captive' Torah, descended to distribute it as 'gifts' to men. It is appropriate to begin an investigation of extra-canonical citations of Ps. 68:19 with the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, since there are two possible allusions to Ps. 68:19 found in the

¹²¹R. Rubinkiewicz, "Psalm LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", *Novum Testamentum* 17 (1975), pp. 219-24. Rubinkiewicz's theory is examined at greater length below in the section "Ps. 68:19 in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs", pp. 148-54.

Greek text of this document as edited by M. de Jonge.¹²²

Testament of Dan 5:11. Since it is understood as a direct allusion to Ps. 68:19 by R. Rubinkiewicz, Test. Dan 5:11 will be considered first.¹²³ The Greek text of 5:10-13 reads:

Καὶ ἀνατελεῖ ὑμῖν ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰουδᾶ καὶ Λευὶ τὸ σωτήριον κυρίου· καὶ αὐτὸς ποιήσει πρὸς τὸν Βελιάρ πόλεμον, καὶ τὴν ἐκδίκησιν τοῦ νίκους δώσει πατράσιν ἡμῶν. καὶ τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν λάβη ἀπὸ τοῦ Βελιάρ, ψυχὰς ἀγίων, καὶ ἐπιστρέψει καρδίας ἀπειθεῖς πρὸς κύριον, καὶ δώσει τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις αὐτὸν εἰρήνην αἰώνιον· καὶ ἀναπαύσονται ἐν Ἔδεμ ἅγιοι, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς νέας Ἱερουσαλήμ εὐφρανθήσονται δίκαιοι, ἧτις ἔσται εἰς δόξασμα θεοῦ ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος. καὶ οὐκέτι ὑπομένει Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐρήμωσιν, οὐδὲ αἰχμαλωτίζεται Ἰσραήλ, ὅτι κύριος ἔσται ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς, τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συναναστρεφόμενος, καὶ ἅγιος Ἰσραήλ βασιλεύων ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ἐν ταπεινώσει καὶ ἐν πρῶχει· καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ βασιλεύσει ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.¹²⁴

It is clear that the subject of the verbs λάβη, ἐπιστρέψει, and δώσει (all in 5:11) is the Lord himself, picked up from the phrase τὸ σωτήριον κυρίου in 5:10 and referred to as αὐτός. It seems probable that this constitutes an eschatological or messianic allusion; it was obviously understood as the latter by one or more of the Christian copyists (or interpolators) of the Testaments, since the exegetical phrase περὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ is found either in the margin or in the text itself (preceding verse 10) in a number of the principal manuscripts.¹²⁵ This person is the one who "will make war with Beliar" (10b),

¹²²See n. 124 below.

¹²³Rubinkiewicz's statement is found in "Psalm LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", *Novum Testamentum* 17 (1975), p. 222.

¹²⁴*The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text*, ed. M. de Jonge (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), pp. 108-109.

¹²⁵The manuscripts which include the phrase as a marginal note are: Codex Graecus 731, ff. 97r.-166v., a 13th century ms. in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; Codex Graecus 1238, ff. 350r.-379v., a late 12th century ms., also in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; and Codex Graecus Z.494 (= 331), ff. 263r.-264v., a mid-13th century ms. in the Biblioteca Nazionale di S. Marco in Venice. The manuscripts which incorporate the phrase into the text itself are: Codex Graecus 547 (Gardthausen) [= 770 (Kamil)], ff. 1r.-70r., a 17th century ms.; Codex Graecus 2170 [= 608 (Kamil)], ff. 8r.-88r., an 18th century ms.; and an unnumbered ms., ff. 1r.-38r., not earlier than the 17th century, all in the Library of the Monastery

"give the vengeance of victory to our fathers" (10c), "receive the captivity from Beliar" (11a), "turn the hearts of the disobedient to the Lord" (11b), and "give to those who call upon him eternal peace" (11c).

Certainly the suggestion of Rubinkiewicz—that 5:11 constitutes an allusion to Ps. 68:19—seems at first plausible: τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν in Test. Dan 5:11 appears similar to ἠχμαλώτευσας αἰχμαλωσίαν in Ps. 68:19 (LXX); ἐπιστρέψει καρδίας ἀπειθεῖς πρὸς κύριον sounds very much like the final clause of Ps. 68:19 (LXX), καὶ γὰρ ἀπειθοῦντες τοῦ κατασκηνώσαι κύριος ὁ θεὸς; and δώσει τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις αὐτὸν εἰρήνην αἰώνιον, at least according to Rubinkiewicz,¹²⁶ parallels the reading found in both Eph. 4:8 (ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις) and Tg Psalms (אשׁוּן לְבַי מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶת הַבָּרִי). If Rubinkiewicz is correct in his understanding of the parallelism, it would suggest that the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 as a reference to Moses and his ascent to heaven to receive the Torah—which, as we have already seen, appears routine by the time of the classical rabbinic literature¹²⁷—had not yet become established at the time the Testaments were written: the subject of Ps. 68:19 (according to Test. Dan 5:10) is the Lord himself, as in the original psalm. Thus—according to Rubinkiewicz—the Targum tradition current at the time of the composition of Test. Dan 5 did *not* contain the references to Moses and the words of Torah found in the extant composition known as Tg Psalms; instead, this 'proto-targum' would have read almost exactly the same as the

of St Catherine on Mt Sinai. The relatively late dates of the manuscripts which actually incorporate the phrase into the text suggest that what may originally have been a marginal gloss was probably assimilated into the text itself during the process of transmission, either deliberately or through scribal error. The problem of Christian interpolations in the Testaments is mentioned briefly below in n. 132.

¹²⁶"Psalm LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", *Novum Testamentum* 17 (1975), p. 222.

¹²⁷See the conclusion to the earlier section, "Ps. 68 and Moses' Ascent to Heaven in Rabbinic Literature", pp. 129-36 above.

MT and LXX of Ps. 68:19 as far as the allusion to Moses is concerned.¹²⁸

But how plausible is such an attempt to reconstruct the tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19 and Eph. 4:8? Rubinkiewicz argues that the use of δώσει in Test. Dan 5:11 indicates that the Targum tradition current at the time of composition of the Testaments had already incorporated the change from קיבל (MT) and ἔλαβες (LXX) to ἔδωκεν as found in Eph. 4:8. The obvious conclusion, for Rubinkiewicz, is that the reading represented by ἔδωκεν (more properly, ἔδωκες) in the text of Ps. 68:19 "was known long before St Paul".¹²⁹ However, Rubinkiewicz has overlooked the use of λαμβάνω in the opening clause of Test. Dan 5:11 (λήψεται, future tense, in the text he cites, though λάβη is the reading found in most of the manuscripts). According to the text of Test. Dan 5:11, the Lord himself (or the Messiah) receives the 'captivity' (αἰχμαλωσίαν) from Beliar (11a),¹³⁰ turns the hearts of the disobedient to the Lord (11b), and then gives (δώσει) to those who call on him eternal peace (11c).¹³¹ Since both verbs—λαμβάνω and δίδωμι—occur in Test. Dan 5:11, it is impossible to say what the contemporary Targum tradition would have been at this point, even assuming that Test. Dan 5:11 is, in fact, an allusion

¹²⁸Unlike the MT and LXX, however, the developing Targum tradition would already have changed the קיבל / ἔλαβες of Ps. 68:19 to קיביל / ἔδωκεν as found in the present Tg Ps. 68:19 and Eph. 4:8, according to Rubinkiewicz, *Novum Testamentum* 17 (1975), p. 224.

¹²⁹"Psalm LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", p. 222.

¹³⁰The following phrase, ψυχὰς ἀγιῶν, is highly suspect: it appears to be an interpretive gloss and, as such, suggests the work of a Christian interpolator. But the present argument is unaffected whether or not these words were found in the original text of Test. Dan 5.

¹³¹It is possible that 5:11c (καὶ δώσει τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις αὐτὸν εἰρήνην αἰώνιον) is also the work of a Christian interpolator (although none of the editors of the Testaments have listed it as such). If the clause is an interpolation, Rubinkiewicz's argument would be seriously undermined: as a later interpolation the phrase would be extremely difficult to date, nor could it be said with any degree of certainty that the phrase itself is older than Ephesians. But in the latter instance, it would seem far more likely that the Christian interpolator of the Testaments was himself influenced by Eph. 4:8, rather than the writer of Ephesians being influenced by the (Christian) interpolator of the Testaments.

to an interpretation (or translation) of Ps. 68:19 earlier than Ephesians itself (*pace* Rubinkiewicz). One might speculate that what is found in Test. Dan 5:11 represents the Targum tradition behind Ps. 68:19 actually in a state of flux—in transition from the קָבַל and $\epsilon\lambda\alpha\beta\epsilon\varsigma$ of the MT and LXX to the קָבַל and $\epsilon\delta\omega\kappa\epsilon\nu$ of Tg Ps. 68:19 and Eph. 4:8, since the ideas of receiving and giving in connection with Ps. 68:19 are combined in the text of Test. Dan 5:11 as it now stands. But it is equally possible to argue that Test. Dan 5:11 was originally written (or redacted, with possible Christian interpolations) some time after the composition of Ephesians, and that in fact the use of Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:8 has influenced the writer (or redactor) of the Testament of Dan at this point. As a result, nothing can be said with certainty about the change from קָבַל (MT) to קָבַל (Tg Psalms) in Ps. 68:19 based on the text of Test. Dan 5:11 unless (1) the approximate date of composition for Test. Dan could be established with some degree of certainty, and (2) unless the extent of redactional activity present in Test. Dan 5:11 could be accurately determined. Unfortunately, neither of these questions can be resolved at the present time, however; there is no complete consensus regarding a firm date for the composition of the Testaments or for the extent of Christian interpolation present within them. R. H. Charles and a number of others have argued for an essentially Jewish work with a minimum of Christian interpolations and a date prior to the first century of the present era. These views have been challenged, however; the most well-known alternative theory is that of M. de Jonge, who maintains the Christian origin of the Testaments in the second century CE. Although de Jonge's theory has not gained wide acceptance, it does cast considerable doubt over the dating of

the Testaments as far as the present study is concerned, and evidence from the Testaments will be employed only with the greatest caution.¹³²

Nevertheless, Test. Dan 5:11b (καὶ ἐπιστρέψει καρδίας ἀπειθείς πρὸς κύριον) does appear to contain an allusion to Ps. 68:19c, the final part of the verse not quoted in Eph. 4:8. The reference to the 'disobedient' (ἀπειθείς) again echoes the MT/LXX סוררים / ἀπειθοῦντες, as well as the סרבניא of the

¹³²The theory that the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs are essentially a Jewish work which has been interpolated by Christian copyists was first advanced by F. Schnapp, *Die Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen untersucht* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1884), pp. 5-88, and accepted by F. C. Conybeare, "On the Jewish Authorship of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 5 (1893), pp. 375-98, W. Bousset, "Die Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen, I. Die Ausscheidung der christlichen Interpolationen", *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 1 (1900), pp. 141-75, and R. H. Charles [see, e.g., the discussion in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, vol. 2: *Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), pp. 282-83, 289-90]. Charles tried to reduce the interpolations to a minimum and to find textual support for their removal, using primarily the Armenian version. His theory ultimately became the one commonly accepted. But objections have been raised: N. Messel, "Über die textkritisch begründete Ausscheidung vermeintlicher christlicher Interpolationen in den Testamenten der zwölf Patriarchen", in *Wolf Wilhelm Grafen von Baudissin zum 26. September 1917*, Beihefte zur ZAW 33 (Gießen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1918), pp. 355-74, argued convincingly that it is not possible to find a textual basis for the interpolation theories of Charles and Bousset either in the variants of the Armenian version or in those of the Greek manuscripts. J. W. Hunkin, "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs", *Journal of Theological Studies* 16 (1915), pp. 80-97, successfully demonstrated that Charles had wrongly underestimated the value of Cambridge University Library Ms. Ff. I.24 (ff. 203r.-261v.) which (in Hunkin's view) is the best available manuscript. Finally, M. de Jonge has made numerous attempts to show that the interpolation theory (in all its variations) cannot be maintained [in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Study of Their Text, Composition, and Origin*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill), 1953; "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the New Testament", *Studia Evangelica* 1, ed. K. Aland et al. (Berlin: Akademie, 1959), pp. 546-56; "Christian Influence in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs", *Novum Testamentum* 4 (1960), pp. 182-235; "Once More: Christian Influence in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs", *Novum Testamentum* 5 (1962), pp. 311-19]. De Jonge himself, in "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the New Testament", *Studia Evangelica* 1 (Berlin: Akademie, 1959), p. 556, holds that the Testaments are basically the work of a Christian writing in the latter half of the second century. If he is correct, there would be no question of priority between Test. Dan 5:11 and Eph. 4:8. On the other hand, H. C. Kee, "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs", in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth, vol. 1: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), pp. 775-80, is not convinced by de Jonge's arguments for a Christian origin of the Testaments. He favours instead a date in the mid-second century BCE during the Maccabean period, in what probably represents the current scholarly consensus. In any case, sufficient doubt has been cast over the date of composition of the Testaments and the amount of later interpolation (if any) to render their value as evidence for the textual tradition behind Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19 highly suspect.

Targum tradition. But the verb ἐπιστρέψει in Test. Dan 5:11 introduces the idea of repentance, an element included in the Targum tradition (as found in the extant Tg Ps. 68:19) but not mentioned in the MT or LXX of Ps. 68:19: **די מתגיירין הייבין בתשובא**, "who, becoming proselytes, repent in repentance", referring to the 'disobedient'. Here one is on more certain ground in attempting to establish a link between Test. Dan 5:11 and the tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19, since no part of the clause is found in Eph. 4:8. Yet, Test. Dan 5:11ff. makes no mention of the 'disobedient' becoming 'proselytes' as does Tg Ps. 68:19. In fact, the previous context (Test. Dan 5:7) indicates quite clearly that the 'disobedient' in 5:11, whose hearts the Messiah will turn back to the Lord, are in actuality the "sons of Dan", the "sons of Levi", and the "sons of Judah", who have rebelled and fallen into sin. Obviously, there would be no need for them to 'become proselytes'; they are already Jews by descent from the patriarchs. If there is indeed a relationship between Test. Dan 5:11 and the tradition behind Tg Ps. 68:19, it would appear that the Targum, at this stage in its development, did not contain the participle **מתגיירין**, "becoming proselytes", and it would be a very logical assumption that this word is in fact a later (and post-Christian) addition to the Targum tradition. As such, it would provide an insistence that the Gentiles must not only repent (which Christianity likewise claimed), but must also become Jewish proselytes, if the *shekinah* of Yahweh were to dwell with them.

Again it must be emphasized, however, that no link between Test. Dan 5:11 and Tg Ps. 68:19 can be conclusively demonstrated. Even the similarity between Test. Dan 5:11b and Tg Ps. 68:19c does not prove a relationship between the two. One cannot rule out the possibility that an interpretive translation of Ps. 68, or even a textual variant, was in circula-

tion prior to the composition of the Testament of Dan, and this same version (or variant) also became the basis of the written Targum to Ps. 68. In light of the uncertainties surrounding the dating of both Test. Dan and Tg Psalms, the most that can be said with any certainty is that Test. Dan is probably prior to Tg Ps. 68, at least in its written form.¹³³ Yet there is no indication in the context of Test. Dan 5 that the author was aware that Ps. 68:19 was connected with a tradition of Moses' ascent to heaven to receive the Torah, as Tg Ps. 68:19 explicitly states; rather, in Test. Dan 5:10, it is the Lord himself who performs all the activities of deliverance and vindication for his people. There does not appear to be any solid basis, therefore, for establishing the prior existence of the tradition related in Tg Ps. 68:19 regarding Moses and a heavenly ascent based on the evidence of Test. Dan 5:11. Furthermore, there is insufficient evidence at present to warrant the assumption that Test. Dan 5:11 constitutes an independent witness to a variant reading in the text of Ps. 68:19 which has not been preserved in the MT or LXX, but appears elsewhere only in Tg Ps. 68:19, Eph. 4:8, and the Peshitta.

Testament of Zebulun 4:8. The evidence that suggests a link between Test. Zeb. 4:8 and Ps. 68:19 and/or Tg Ps. 68:19 is even less conclusive. Test. Zeb. 4:8 reads:

καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἀνατελεῖ ὑμῖν αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος, φῶς δικαιοσύνης, καὶ ἰασις καὶ εὐσπλαγχνία ἐπὶ ταῖς πτέρυξιν αὐτοῦ. αὐτὸς λυτρώσεται πᾶσαν αἰχμαλωσίαν υἱῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκ τοῦ Βελιάρ, καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα πλάνης πατηθήσεται· καὶ ἐπιστρέψει πάντα τὰ ἔθνη εἰς παραζήλωσιν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὄψεσθε θεὸν ἐν σχήματι ἀνθρώπου ἐν ναῶ, ὃν ἂν ἐκλέξηται κύριος...¹³⁴

¹³³On the dating of Tg Psalms see the preceding section, pp. 95-108. Concerning the problems involved with the dating of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, see n. 132 above.

¹³⁴*The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text*, ed. M. de Jonge, pp. 100-101.

Possible allusions to Ps. 68:19 may be found in the word *αλχμαλωσίαν* and the phrase *ἐπιστρέψει πάντα τὰ ἔθνη εἰς παραζήλωσιν αὐτοῦ*. But in the case of Test. Zeb. 4:8, no mention of 'giving' or 'receiving' gifts is made at all, and the use of a word like *λυτρόω* (*λυτρώσεται*) to describe the 'redemption' of the 'sons of men' held captive by 'Beliar' strongly suggests Christian influence (interpolation, if not outright composition).¹³⁵ Nor is there evidence for any connection with Tg Ps. 68:19: here '*αλχμαλωσίαν*' is explained as 'men held captive by Beliar', while in Tg Psalms the phrase "you led captive captivity" is interpreted by the following clause as Moses' learning the words of the Torah. It might be possible to see in the phrase *καὶ ἐπιστρέψει πάντα τὰ ἔθνη εἰς παραζήλωσιν αὐτοῦ* from Test. Zeb. 4:8 an allusion to the expanded form of Ps. 68:19c found in the Targum (וּבְרַם סַרְבִּיָּא דִּי מִתְּגִיִּרִין הִיִּבִּין בַּתְּוֹבָא), "and even the rebellious, who, becoming proselytes, repent with penance"), since the 'turning all the nations' of Test. Zeb. 4:8 might suggest the 'proselytes' of the Targum. But in the respective contexts, the possibility of such a relationship seems remote. Once again, it appears that while Test. Zeb. 4:8 might possibly contain an allusion to Ps. 68:19, there is little evidence to suggest any connection with the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 found in Tg Psalms or the tradition behind the Targum. No mention of Moses, his ascent to heaven, or the Torah is to be found in the Testament of Zebulun.

Ps. 68:19 and the Book of Jubilees

At least one possible allusion to Ps. 68:19 is found in the Book of Jubilees. In Jubilees 24:31-32 we find the conclusion of Isaac's curse upon

¹³⁵For a brief discussion of the problems involved in determining the extent of Christian interpolations present in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, see n. 132 above.

the Philistines (which began in 24:28):

Because *if they go up to heaven*, from there they will fall;
 and if they are set firm in the earth, from there they will be torn out;
 and if they are hidden among the nations, from there they will be uprooted;
 and *if they go down to Sheol*, even there their judgment will multiply,
 and also there will be no peace for them there.
 And *if they go into captivity* by the hand of those who seek their life,
 they will kill them along the way.
 And neither name nor seed will be left for them in all the earth,
 because they shall walk in an eternal curse.¹³⁶

In considering this passage and its similarities to Ps. 68:19 several things must be noted: (1) in Ps. 68:19 there is reference only to an ascent (the author of Ephesians found it necessary to infer a descent after quoting Ps. 68:19), while Jubilees 24:31 refers explicitly to both ascent and descent; (2) in Ps. 68:19 it is Yahweh who ascends, while in Jubilees 24:31 it is the Philistine (collective singular); and (3) the contextual settings in the two passages are completely different. Ps. 68:19 describes the triumphal ascent of Yahweh to his heavenly throne, while Jubilees 24:31-32 recounts the curse which Isaac placed upon the Philistines. In view of these significant differences we may conclude that Jubilees 24:31-32 bears no relationship to Ps. 68:19. It is far more likely that the OT passage behind Jubilees 24:31-32 is Amos 9:2-4, which describes the Lord's coming judgement of unrighteous Israelites:

"Though they dig into Sheol,
 From there shall my hand take them;

¹³⁶O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction", in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth, vol. 2: *Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), p. 104. Wintermute would date Jubilees between 161-140 BCE (pp. 43-44). R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, vol. 2: *Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 1, dated the Book of Jubilees between 135-105 B.C., somewhat later than the date now suggested by Wintermute. For more extensive discussion of the dating of Jubilees, see ch. 4 of the present study, pp. 201, 209-10, and especially p. 216, n. 53. Italics in the quotation from Jubilees are those of the present writer, added to facilitate comparison with Ps. 68:19 and the text of Amos 9:2-4 which follows.

And *though they ascend to heaven,*
 From there will I bring them down.
 And *though they hide on the summit of Carmel,*
 I will search them out and take them from there;
 And *though they conceal themselves from my sight on the floor of the sea,*
 From there I will command the serpent and it will bite them.
 And *though they go into captivity* before their enemies,
 From there I will command the sword that it may slay them,
 And I will set my eyes against them for evil and not for good."¹³⁷

In Amos 9:2-4 the context, one of judgement, is much the same as Jubilees 24:31-32. Amos 9:4 also parallels Jubilees 24:32 in its reference to prisoners who are slain as they are led forth into captivity. There are far more similarities between Jubilees 24:31-32 and Amos 9:2-4 than between either of these passages and Ps. 68:19. Thus we may reasonably conclude that there is neither direct reference nor allusion to Ps. 68:19 (in particular) or to Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah (in general) present in Jubilees 24:31-32. Other Moses stories are found in Jubilees 46-50, but none of these give any additional information about Moses' ascent of Sinai or his assumption to heaven.

Ps. 68:19 in the writings of Justin Martyr

Twice in his writings Justin Martyr (died ca. 165 CE) quotes from Ps. 68:19 to substantiate his assertion that after the ascension Christ gave special gifts of the Holy Spirit to men. Both of these references occur in Justin's *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* and in context both appear to be related to Ephesians 4:7-16, since the giving of spiritual gifts is the subject under discussion both in Justin's text and in the context of Ephesians 4. Justin's words need to be examined in some detail, however, since his

¹³⁷Amos 9:2-4 is quoted from the *New American Standard Bible* (La Habra, Calif.: Foundation Press, 1963). Italics in the quotation are those of the present writer.

quotation of Ps. 68:19 does not exactly parallel that of Eph. 4:8 in one instance.

Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo 39.4-5. Justin's first use of Ps. 68:19 appears in the context of an explanation of the spiritual gifts given by the ascended Christ, and may in fact be a quotation not from Psalm 68:19 directly, but from Eph. 4:8. Justin has just explained to his Jewish acquaintance Trypho how God is currently withholding judgement on the Jewish people to enable more of them to become disciples of Christ. As they do this, they "receive gifts, each one as they are worthy, when they become enlightened through this name of Christ" [39.2]. Justin then describes some of the various gifts: a spirit of understanding [συνέσεως], of counsel [βουλήs], of strength [ισχύος], of healing [λάσεως], of foreknowledge [προγνώσεως], of teaching [διδασκαλίας], or of the fear of God [φόβου θεοῦ]. After Trypho expresses amazement, Justin then explains that the giving of such gifts was predicted in the Jewish scriptures (the OT), and quotes Ps. 68:19 as proof:

ἀλλὰ μετὰ τὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνέλευσιν προεφητεύθη αἰχμαλωτεῦσαι αὐτὸν ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πλάνης καὶ δοῦναι ἡμῖν δόματα. εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ λόγοι οὗτοι· «Ἀνέβη εἰς ὕψος, ἤχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκε δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.» οἱ λαβόντες οὖν ἡμεῖς δόματα παρὰ τοῦ εἰς ὕψος ἀναβάντος ἡριστοῦ ὑμᾶς, «τοὺς σοφοὺς ἐν ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἐνώπιον ἑαυτῶν ἐπιστήμονας», ἀπὸ τῶν προφητικῶν λόγων ἀποδείκνυμεν ἀνοήτους καὶ χεῖλεσι μόνον τιμῶντας τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτοῦ.¹³⁸

It seems clear from the context that Justin is attempting to prove to Trypho the existence of spiritual gifts by quoting from the OT scriptures, since a quotation from the NT would carry no weight with a Jew. Thus it is rea-

¹³⁸*Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo 39.4-5.* The Greek text of Justin Martyr is from the Βιβλιοθήκη Ἑλληνῶν Πατέρων καὶ Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συγγραφεῶν, vol. 3: Πολυκαρπὸς Σμυρνης—Ἑρμας—Παπίας—Κοδρατος—Ἀριστείδης—Ἰουστίνος (Athens: Apostolic Diaconate of the Church of Greece, 1955), p. 243.

sonable to assume that Justin is quoting (or intending to quote) Ps. 68:19 as it was found in the OT, rather than Eph. 4:8. This does not, however, rule out the possibility that Justin's quotation of the text of Ps. 68:19 has been influenced by his knowledge of Eph. 4:8, either intentionally or unintentionally.¹³⁹ There does in fact seem to be some mixture in Justin's actual wording between the LXX of Ps. 68:19 on the one hand and Eph. 4:8 on the other: Justin's quotation begins with ἀνέβη, the third person singular verb read by the original hand of ℵ in Ps. 68:19 LXX, while Eph. 4:8 reads the participle ἀναβάς. Yet with regard to the distribution of the gifts Justin agrees with Eph. 4:8, reading ἔδωκε[ν] against the ἔλαβες of Ps. 68:19 LXX. Finally, Justin also agrees with Eph. 4:8 in the inclusion of the article [τοῖς] before ἀνθρώποις, while the article is omitted by the LXX.

Based on the similarities and differences between the form of Ps. 68:19 quoted by Justin in *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 39.4-5 and the form of the psalm quoted by the author of Ephesians, it does not seem possible to establish the exact relationship between the two. But it does appear with respect to the substitution of the verb ἔδωκε[ν] for ἔλαβες as found in both the MT and LXX that at least two distinct possibilities exist: either both Justin and the author of Ephesians had access to a textual tradition in which the change from ἔλαβες to ἔδωκεν was already established, or else Justin has been influenced in his quotation of Ps. 68:19 at this point by the text of Eph. 4:8.

Two further observations may now be made which do not concern the relationship between the text of the *Dialogus* and Eph. 4:8, but do reflect Justin's own understanding of the giving of the spiritual gifts: (1) it was

¹³⁹A later copyist of Justin's works, familiar with the quotation of Ps. 68:19 in Ephesians, may have conformed the quotation to Eph. 4:8 as well.

after Christ's ascent to heaven that the spiritual gifts he describes were distributed, and (2) the captivity mentioned in Ps. 68:19 [αἰχμαλωσίαν] is understood to be the captivity of individuals to "error" [τῆς πλάνης].

Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo 87.5-6. Now we must consider the second text in which Justin quotes from Ps. 68:19. Speaking again of the spiritual gifts given to believers, Justin says:

ἀνεπαύσατο οὖν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐπαύσατο, ἐλθόντος ἐκείνου, μεθ' οὗ, τῆς οἰκονομίας ταύτης τῆς ἐν ἀνθρώποις αὐτοῦ γενομένης χρόνοις, παύσασθαι ἔδει αὐτὰ ἀφ' ὑμῶν, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ἀνάπαυσιν λαβόντα πάλιν, ὡς ἐπεπροφήτευτο γενήσεσθαι δόματα, ἃ ἀπὸ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ πνεύματος ἐκείνου τοῖς ἐπ' αὐτὸν πιστεύουσι δίδωσιν, ὡς ἄξιον ἕκαστον ἐπίσταται. ὅτι ἐπεπροφήτευτο τοῦτο μέλλειν γίνεσθαι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ μετὰ τὴν εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνάλευσιν αὐτοῦ, εἶπον μὲν ἤδη καὶ πάλιν λέγω. εἶπεν οὖν· «Ἀνέβη εἰς ὕψος, ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκε δόματα τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.» καὶ πάλιν ἐν ἑτέρᾳ προφητείᾳ εἴρηται· «Καὶ ἔσται μετὰ ταῦτα, ἐκχεῶ τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας μου, καὶ προφητεύσουσι.»¹⁴⁰

Justin tells Trypho that the Spirit "rested", that is, "ceased", when the Messiah [ἐκείνου] came, and thus the Spirit's activity among the Jewish people ceased at this time as well. But after the Messiah accomplished his "stewardship" among men, the gifts which had ceased among the Jewish people would be given again [λαβόντα πάλιν] to those who believed in him, as was prophesied beforehand. Justin says that he has mentioned before that the Messiah would give these spiritual gifts after he had departed into heaven (probably a reference to *Dialogus* 39.4, which we have examined above), and then quotes Ps. 68:19 as proof of his point. Following this, Justin quotes a second prophecy, this time from Joel 2:28-29, to show that spiritual gifts have been given to Christians after the ascension of Christ.

Two issues are of major importance here: (1) the determination (if

¹⁴⁰Again, the text of *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 87.5-6 is from Βιβλιοθηκὴ Ἑλληνῶν Πατέρων καὶ Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συγγραφεῶν, vol. 3, p. 292.

possible) of the source Justin used for his quotation of Ps. 68:19, and (2) the relationship Justin has established between the giving of the gifts mentioned in Ps. 68:19 and the first Christian Pentecost described in Acts 2 through his use of Joel 2:28-29. As far as the source of the quotation is concerned (as with *Dialogus* 39.4), it seems highly probable that Justin intended to quote Ps. 68:19 and not Eph. 4:8, since in a discussion with a Jewish opponent a NT citation would carry no weight. This does not, however, rule out the possibility of an unconscious assimilation of the quotation to Eph. 4:8, as pointed out in the discussion of *Dialogus* 39.4-5 above.¹⁴¹ Justin's quotation of Ps. 68:19 here in *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 87.6 is the same as his quotation in *Dialogus* 39.4 in all respects but one: in the third clause of the quotation he has expanded ἔδωκε δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις to read ἔδωκε δόματα τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. The addition of the word υἱοῖς is important because it is not found in the text of Eph. 4:8 nor in the text of Ps. 68:19 as read by the MT or LXX, but is contained in the Aramaic text of Tg Ps. 68:19.¹⁴² Would Justin have been familiar with the text of Tg Psalms? Such a conclusion seems highly unlikely, particularly in light of the indications of a far later date for Tg Psalms as a written composition.¹⁴³ It seems equally unlikely that Justin would have been familiar with the Aramaic oral tradition behind Tg Psalms. This has led R. Rubinkiewicz to suggest that Justin's *Dialogus* serves as witness to an independent textual tradition which lies behind Tg Psalms but survives in only four extant

¹⁴¹Nor does it rule out the possibility of assimilation to the text of Eph. 4:8 by a later copyist; see n. 139 above.

¹⁴²See the comparison of the texts of Eph. 4:8 and Ps. 68:19 in the MT, LXX, and Tg Psalms, pp 137ff.

¹⁴³See the section on "The Targum to the Psalms", pp. 95-108, for a discussion of the problem of dating Tg Psalms and the indications of a later date for the written composition.

sources: Tg Ps. 68:19, Eph. 4:8, the Peshitta psalter, and *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 87.6.¹⁴⁴ This suggestion has some merit because the text of Ps. 68:19 quoted by Justin does show a degree of divergence from all other known texts of Ps. 68:19 except for Tg Psalms and the Peshitta psalter in the inclusion of the word $\nu\lambda\omicron\iota\varsigma$. If this is the case it would suggest the possibility that the other major divergence from the text of Ps. 68:19 as found in the MT and LXX, the change from $\eta\eta\rho\lambda$ and $\epsilon\lambda\alpha\beta\epsilon\varsigma$ to $\epsilon\delta\omega\kappa\epsilon\nu$ and $\eta\delta\beta\eta\alpha$ as found in Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19, may also have originated in an independent textual tradition which was known to both the writer of Ephesians and the targumist, and which was also behind the Peshitta translation of Ps. 68:19.¹⁴⁵

With regard to the second point mentioned above—Justin's quotation from Joel 2:28-29—it should be noted that the connection between the giving of the gifts mentioned in Ps. 68:19 and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (as described in Acts 2:1-47), while implicit in the text of Eph. 4:7-16, is not directly asserted by the author of Ephesians. Yet this connection is explicit in Justin's *Dialogus*, since his use of Joel 2:28-29 constitutes a direct allusion to Peter's speech in Acts 2:14ff., where the same text from Joel is also quoted (Acts 2:17-21). As we have already mentioned above, Justin is probably not discussing the text of Eph. 4:7-16 directly in the *Dialogus*, since this would carry no validity with a Jewish adversary. Yet it does seem probable that Justin's argument is influenced at this point by his knowledge of Eph. 4:7-16 (if not derived almost totally from the argument of

¹⁴⁴R. Rubinkiewicz, "Psalm LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", *Novum Testamentum* 17 (1975), pp. 219-24.

¹⁴⁵"The targumist" is used here as a designation either for the person responsible for the oral tradition or for the person who put Tg Psalms in its final written form.

Ephesians itself) even if, for polemic reasons, he has not explicitly quoted Ephesians 4. Thus we have in Justin's own use of Ps. 68:19 in connection with Joel 2:28-29 evidence that the gifts mentioned in Ps. 68:19 were understood by Christians at quite an early date to refer to the gifts of the Holy Spirit which began at Pentecost, and it seems probable that Justin derived this insight from his understanding of the text of Eph. 4:7-16. We shall consider in the following chapter whether the connection between Psalm 68 and the feast of Pentecost may be even earlier than the time of Justin Martyr, and in fact antedates the first century CE (and thus might have influenced the author of Ephesians).

Ps. 68:18-19 in the writings of Irenaeus

Irenaeus, whose death is commonly put at around 202 CE at the time of renewed persecution under Septimius Severus, quotes Ps. 68:18-19 once in his *Demonstratio apostolicae praedicationis*, a work written in Greek but surviving only in an Armenian version.¹⁴⁶ In *Dem.* 83 Irenaeus states:

And that when raised from the dead He was to be taken up into heaven, David says as follows: *The chariot of God is myriadfold, thousands of charioteers; the Lord among them in Sina [sic], in the holy place, hath ascended on high, He hath led captivity captive. He hath taken, hath given gifts to men.* And "captivity" refers to the destruction of the dominion of the rebel angels. And he announced also the place whence He was to mount to heaven from earth; for *the Lord*, he says, *in Sion hath ascended on high.* For it was on the mountain which is called that of Olives, over against Jerusalem, after His resurrection from the dead, that, having assembled His disciples and having instructed them concerning the kingdom of heaven, He was lifted up in their sight, and they saw how the heavens opened and received Him.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶This work, sometimes known by its English title, the *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, was mentioned by Eusebius but thought to have been lost until an Armenian manuscript was discovered in 1904.

¹⁴⁷*St. Irenaeus: Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. J. P. Smith, Ancient Christian Writers 16 (Westminster, MD: Newman Press; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1952), p. 99. Punctuation and italics are those of the translator in the edition cited. The English

First of all it is interesting (and perhaps significant) to note that Irenaeus quotes not only verse 19 but verse 18 of the psalm as well. This suggests that his quotation might be independent of Eph. 4:8, since in Eph. 4:8 only verse 19 of Psalm 68 is quoted. Irenaeus' interpretation of the psalm leaves no doubt that he understood it to refer to Christ's ascension, so we appear to have clear evidence (in a tradition possibly independent from Ephesians) that as early as the end of the second century Psalm 68 was being interpreted christologically. Beyond this, there is a textual difficulty with Irenaeus' quotation of Ps. 68:18, which in the Armenian version is read as *Sina*. In the interpretation which Irenaeus gives for this verse it is clear that he meant Zion (*Sion*), that is, Mt Zion in Jerusalem. On the basis of this L. M. Froidevaux, in the absence of any manuscript support, emends the text of the quotation from Ps. 68:18 to read Zion instead of Sinai.¹⁴⁸ It is possible that he is correct, and *Sina* in the quotation from Ps. 68:18 represents a scribal emendation into conformity with the OT text of Ps. 68 known to the copyist. It is equally possible, however, that Irenaeus simply interpreted the reference to Mt Sinai that he found in the text of Ps. 68:18 as a reference to Mt Zion in Jerusalem. Such word-plays were a common form of rabbinic interpretation in the period when Irenaeus wrote and would not be in the least unusual, even for a Christian writer.

Another interesting point about Irenaeus' quotation from Ps. 68:19 is the duplication at the point of variance between the MT and LXX on the one hand and the texts preserved in Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19 on the other.

translation is cited because the Armenian text was not available to the present writer; unlike the other extant works of Irenaeus the *Demonstratio* does not exist in Latin (see the previous note).

¹⁴⁸L. M. Froidevaux, *Irénée de Lyon: Demonstration de la Prédication Apostolique* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1959), p. 149, n. 2; p. 150, n. 4.

Irenaeus gives a conflate reading by repeating the phrase: "He hath taken, hath given gifts to men". If we could indeed be sure that Irenaeus' quotation of Ps. 68:18-19 was independent of Eph. 4:8, we might have evidence here that Irenaeus was familiar with the same textual tradition which lies behind Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19, a variant not preserved in any manuscripts of the MT or LXX. But it is impossible to rule out the possibility that Irenaeus was familiar with Eph. 4:8 and its use of the psalm, and was merely conflating the version of Ps. 68:19 found in Ephesians with the OT text of the psalm as he knew it. It is also possible (although perhaps less likely) that the conflation is due to later scribal emendation. Thus it is difficult in any case to be certain about just how much can be proven from Irenaeus' quotation of Ps. 68:18-19 in *Dem.* 83. The most that can be said with reasonable certainty is that by the end of the second century CE a Christian interpretation of Psalm 68 was in circulation, an interpretation which referred the ascent mentioned in Ps. 68:19 to Christ's victorious ascent and conquest of the 'powers' following his resurrection.

Ps. 68:19 in the writings of Tertullian

Another early Christian writer, Tertullian (died ca. 220 CE), alludes to Ps. 68:19 twice in the course of his works. The first instance occurs in *Adversus Marcionem* 5.8.5, in a context where the ascent of Christ is connected with the giving of spiritual gifts:

Accipe nunc, quomodo et a Christo in caelum recepto charismata obuentura pronuntiarit: ascendit in sublimitatem, id est in caelum; captiuam duxit captiuitatem, id est mortem uel humanam seruitutem; data dedit filiis hominum, is est donatiua, quae charismata dicimus. Eleganter 'filiis hominum' ait, non passim 'hominibus', nos ostendens filios hominum, id est uere hominum,

apostolorum.¹⁴⁹

As with Justin's quotations, it is not clear whether Tertullian was quoting from Ps. 68:19 or Eph. 4:8. In the immediate context he refers to other passages in 1 Corinthians and Galatians, suggesting an intended reference to Eph. 4:8 here.¹⁵⁰ Likewise, the assumed reference to Christ as the subject of the material quoted also suggests that Tertullian is quoting Eph. 4:8 rather than Ps. 68:19 directly. Tertullian does, however, quote from Joel 2:28 in the next sentence after the material quoted above, so an OT allusion from Ps. 68:19 cannot be ruled out completely. Tertullian's use of Joel 2:28 in this context assumes the same connection between the giving of the spiritual gifts mentioned in Eph. 4:8ff. [Ps. 68:19] and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost found in Justin Martyr, since Joel 2:28 is quoted in Acts 2:17-21.¹⁵¹

In Tertullian's quotation from Eph. 4:8 [Ps. 68:19] he has inserted phrases prefaced by "id est" which give his explanation for the actions described by the quotation. The place to which Christ ascended ["in sublimitatum"] is interpreted as 'heaven' ["in caelum"]; the 'captivity led captive' are the dead ["mortem uel humanam seruitutem"], and the 'gifts' are the charismatic (spiritual) gifts distributed to Christians ["donatiua, quae charismata dicimus"]. Of particular interest is Tertullian's digression on the phrase "filiis hominum", which he sees as an allusion to the
 apostles in particular ["nos ostendens filios hominum, id est uere hominum, apostolorum"]. Such a connection with the apostles would have seemed natural to Tertullian because 'apostles' are mentioned in Eph. 4:11 as the first of a number of categories of spiritually

¹⁴⁹*Corpus Christianorum, series latina*, vol. 1: *Tertulliani Opera* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954), pp. 686-87.

¹⁵⁰E. g., 1 Cor. 11:23-27, 29 in 5.8.3; Gal. 4:19 in 5.8.6; Gal. 4:4 and 1 Cor. 7:29 in 5.8.7, etc.

¹⁵¹See above, pp. 162-63.

gifted individuals, and also because of the apostles' connection with Pentecost, an idea also present in the context as indicated by Tertullian's quotation of Joel 2:28. It is significant, however, that Tertullian's mention of the plural phrase "filiis hominum" to designate the recipients of the gifts indicates familiarity with a textual variant not present in Eph. 4:8. This is the same variant (found also in Tg Ps. 68:19 and the text of Ps. 68:19 in the Peshitta psalter) quoted by Justin Martyr in *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 87.6.¹⁵² As in the previous case, it is impossible to determine with certainty the source of Tertullian's quotation, but one must assume that Tertullian derived this reading from Tg Ps. 68:19, Ps. 68:19 in the Peshitta psalter, the writings of Justin Martyr, or an independent textual tradition also known by the preceding authors and/or copyists (but surviving today only in the four sources indicated).¹⁵³ On the whole the latter seems the most probable, although the remaining possibilities cannot be completely ruled out. This would further support R. Rubinkiewicz's contention that an independent textual tradition lies behind Tg Ps. 68:19, the Peshitta psalter, and the quotations of Ps. 68:19 in the writings of Justin Martyr.¹⁵⁴

Tertullian makes one further allusion in his works to the text in question in *De Anima* 55.2:

Quodsi Christus deus, quia et homo, mortuus secundum scripturas et sepultus secundum easdem, huic quoque legi satisfecit forma humanae mortis apud inferos functus, nec ante ascendit in sublimiora caelorum quam descendit in inferiora

¹⁵²See above, pp. 161-62.

¹⁵³It is not likely that a later copyist of Tertullian's works managed to assimilate *Adv. Marcionem* 5.8.5 to Tg Ps. 68:19, the Peshitta psalter, the writings of Justin in *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 87.6, or some other textual tradition, because of the nature of Tertullian's remarks, which are not a direct quotation but form an explanatory comment on the text of Eph. 4:8 [Ps. 68:19].

¹⁵⁴R. Rubinkiewicz, "Psalm LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", *Novum Testamentum* 17 (1975), pp. 219-24. See the discussion of the quotations in Justin Martyr above, pp. 157-63.

terrarum, ut illic patriarchas et prophetas compotes sui faceret...¹⁵⁵

It is clear from the context that Tertullian is actually alluding to Eph. 4:8-9 rather than the text of Ps. 68:19, because he makes reference not only to the ascent of Christ to heaven ["ascendit in sublimiora caelorum"], but also to Christ's descent 'into the lower regions of the earth' ["in inferiora terrarum"]. This allusion to Eph. 4:8-9 is of importance because it shows that Tertullian himself held the 'traditional' view of the *descensus*, that Christ descended to the underworld during the three days between his death and resurrection. Tertullian was one of the first to articulate this view, and apparently saw no inconsistency between such an understanding of the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9 and the connection of the ascent in Eph. 4:8 and the giving of gifted individuals to the Church in 4:11ff. with Pentecost, as indicated by his allusion to Joel 2:28 in *Adversus Marcionem* 5.8.6. However, Tertullian made no attempt (as far as his surviving works indicate) to relate the descent of Christ inferred by the author of Ephesians in Eph. 4:9-10 to the ascent indicated by the quotation from Ps. 68:19. In this he has been followed by many later interpreters who have assumed the reference to the descent in 4:9-10 to be extraneous to the argument of Ephesians 4.¹⁵⁶

Conclusions regarding the use of Ps. 68:19 in early non-rabbinic sources

We have now completed our examination of possible references to Ps. 68:19 in early non-rabbinic sources, including the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Book of Jubilees, and the writings of Justin Martyr and

¹⁵⁵*Corpus Christianorum, series latina, vol. 2: Tertulliani Opera* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954), p. 862.

¹⁵⁶The relationship of the descent inferred by the author of Ephesians in 4:9-10 to the argument of 4:1-16 and the entire Epistle is discussed at length in chapter 5 of the present study.

Tertullian. In the case of Test. Dan 5:11 we concluded (*pace* Rubinkiewicz) that no allusion to Ps. 68:19 can be demonstrated. Likewise, in Test. Zeb. 4:8 and Jubilees 24:31-32 we concluded, after examining the passages in question, that Ps. 68:19 was not in the background of these texts. In the writings of both Justin Martyr and Tertullian references to Ps. 68:19 do exist. But in both of these cases it is difficult to be sure to what extent the author's knowledge of Eph. 4:8 may have influenced his citation. In the case of Justin, at least, it does appear that he related the gifts mentioned in Ps. 68:19 to the gifts of the Spirit given at Pentecost, because he links the quotation of the passage to Joel 2:28-29, an OT passage clearly connected with the first Christian Pentecost by the account in Acts 2:17-21. Justin's use of Ps. 68:19 also suggests his familiarity with a textual tradition independent of Eph. 4:8 and closer to that found in Tg Psalms, since the form in which he cites the psalm in *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 87.6 is closer to that surviving today in Tg Psalms and the Peshitta psalter. The same can be said for Tertullian's use of Ps. 68:19 in *Adv. Marcionem* 5.8.5. To this extent Rubinkiewicz may well be correct, that a textual tradition was in circulation at least as early as the beginning of the Christian era which differed in some respects from what we now find preserved in the MT and LXX of Ps. 68:19. Hints of such a tradition may survive in sources like Tg Psalms, the Peshitta psalter, and the quotations of Ps. 68:19 by Justin and Tertullian. Although this may form a plausible explanation (however unverifiable) for the change from קָרַב (MT) and $\text{\xi\lambda\alpha\beta\epsilon\varsigma}$ (LXX) to $\text{\xi\delta\omega\kappa\epsilon\nu}$ made by the author of Ephesians in his citation of Ps. 68:19, it is not enough to confirm the presence or absence of the Moses-imagery in the source employed by the author of Ephesians for his quotation of the psalm.

*Accounts of Moses' Ascent to Heaven in Other Early
Sources Not Related to Psalm 68*

We shall now turn to some early sources which have been thought to reflect an ascent of Moses to heaven but which do not relate the ascent to Psalm 68 in any way. Most of these relate the heavenly ascent to Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah, although some accounts also refer to an assumption to heaven at the end of Moses' life. If it can be shown that the tradition of Moses' heavenly ascent is as old as (or older than) the first century, the possibility would exist that the author of Ephesians may have known and used such a tradition in 4:7-11, whether or not it was explicitly connected with Ps. 68:19 in his sources. Even if it cannot be conclusively demonstrated that such Moses-traditions were associated with Ps. 68:19 prior to the composition of Ephesians, the circulation of widespread traditions concerning a heavenly ascent of Moses at Sinai may have influenced the author of Ephesians as he wrote 4:7-11 if he had other reasons to relate them to Ps. 68:19, e.g., because both the giving of the Torah and Psalm 68 were associated already with the feast of Pentecost by the first century CE (possibilities which are investigated in chapter 4 of the present study). Here we shall attempt to examine the early sources which contain such Moses-imagery with a view to determining both how ancient and how widespread the tradition of Moses' heavenly ascent appears to be.

The 'Εξαγωγή of Ezekiel the Tragedian. The *'Εξαγωγή* is a tragic drama from the hellenistic period, written in iambic trimeter, which describes the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Its author, named Ezekiel, is called by Eusebius (quoting Alexander Polyhistor in *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.28.1) "the poet of tragedies" (ὁ

των τραγωδιῶν ποιητής).¹⁵⁷ The text of Ezekiel's work is extant only in fragments cited by Eusebius (who is himself quoting from an earlier work, Alexander Polyhistor's *Περί Ἰουδαίων*), Clement of Alexandria, and Pseudo-Eustathius.¹⁵⁸ The date of the *Ἐξαγωγή* has been the subject of considerable discussion. The author demonstrates knowledge of the Septuagint, which argues for a date subsequent to its translation. Fragments of the *Ἐξαγωγή* appearing in Alexander Polyhistor's *Περί Ἰουδαίων*, written sometime in the first century BCE, indicate a date prior to the middle of the first century BCE for Ezekiel's drama. K. Kuiper, in a 1903 article, argued for a date during or just after the time of Ptolemy Euergetes III (died 221 BCE), mainly on the basis of Ezekiel's mention of the legendary phoenix.¹⁵⁹ R. G. Robertson argues for a somewhat later date, in the first half of the second century BCE, based on the polemic against hellenistic Jewish poets using biblical material for their dramas in the Letter of Aristeas (lines 312-16), and on the probability that Ezekiel's work appears to have used a recension of the LXX text.¹⁶⁰ Assuming that Robertson is correct and a date prior to the middle of the second century BCE is to be preferred, this work is by far

¹⁵⁷Eusebius *Werke*, vol. 8: *Die Praeparatio Evangelica*, part 1: *Einleitung, die Bücher I bis X*, ed. K. Mras, 2nd ed. revised by É. des Places, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Berlin: Akademie, 1982), p. 524.

¹⁵⁸Extant portions of Ezekiel's drama are to be found in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.28-29 (see the previous note); Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata* 1.23.155-56, in *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vol. 2: *Stromata Buch I-VI*, ed. O. Stählin; revised by L. Früchtel; 4th ed. with addenda by U. Treu, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Berlin: Akademie, 1985); and (Pseudo)-Eustathius' *Commentarius in Hexaëmeron*, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, vol. 18 (Paris: Garnier, 1857), col. 729.

¹⁵⁹K. Kuiper, "Le Poète Juif Ezéchiël", *Revue des Études Juives* 46 (1903), pp. 161-77.

¹⁶⁰R. G. Robertson, "Ezekiel the Tragedian", in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2: *Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), pp. 803-804.

the earliest known source which alludes to the ascent of Moses to heaven at the time he went up Mt Sinai to receive the Torah.

One passage in the *Ἐξαγωγή* in particular appears to allude to a tradition concerning Moses' heavenly ascent at the giving of the Torah. It occurs in what appears to be the second act, when Moses has a dream which is interpreted by his father-in-law (the use of the dream as a dramatic device is paralleled in the tragedies of Aeschylus and other classical dramatists). Moses' dream in the *Ἐξαγωγή* has some similarities to those of Joseph (Gen. 37:9) and Daniel (Dan. 7:13-14) in the biblical material, although as E. Starobinski-Safran has observed, Ezekiel has departed entirely from the Exodus account at this point and engaged in a free creation.¹⁶¹ The dream, as Moses relates it to his father-in-law, is as follows:

Ἔδοξ' ὄρους κατ' ἄκρα Σιναίου θρόνον
 μέγαν τιν' εἶναι μέχρῃς οὐρανοῦ πτυχός,
 ἐν τῷ καθῆσθαι φῶτα γενναῖόν τινα
 διάδημ' ἔχοντα καὶ μέγα σκῆπτρον χερσὶ
 εὐωνύμῳ μάλιστα. δεξιᾷ δέ μοι
 ἔνευσε, κάγῳ πρόσθεν ἐστάθην θρόνου.
 σκῆπτρον δέ μοι παρέδωκε καὶ εἰς θρόνον μέγαν
 εἶπεν καθῆσθαι· βασιλικὸν δ' ἔδωκέ μοι
 διάδημα καὶ αὐτὸς ἐκ θρόνων χωρίζεται.
 ἐγὼ δ' ἐσείδον γῆν ἅπασαν ἔγκυκλον
 καὶ ἔνερθε γαίας καὶ ἐξῦπερθεν οὐρανοῦ,
 καὶ μοί τι πλῆθος ἀστέρων πρὸς γούνατα
 ἔπιπτ', ἐγὼ δὲ πάντας ἠριθμησάμην,
 κάμου παρήγεν ὡς παρεμβολὴ βροτῶν.
 εἶτ' ἐμφοβηθεὶς ἔξανίσταμ' ἐξ ὕπνου.¹⁶²

In the dream Moses describes his vision of a gigantic throne on the peak of Mt Sinai, so large that it appeared to touch the clouds of heaven. Upon the

¹⁶¹E. Starobinski-Safran, "Un poète judéo-hellénistique: Ezéchiél le tragique", *Museum Helveticum* 31 (1974), pp. 216-24.

¹⁶²The Greek text of the *Ἐξαγωγή* is from *Eusebius Werke*, vol. 8: *Die Praeparatio Evangelica*, part 1: *Einleitung, die Bücher I bis X*, ed. K. Mras, 2nd ed. revised by É. des Places, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Berlin: Akademie, 1982), p. 529. The reading Σιναίου in the first line of the quotation is based on a conjecture originally made by Dübner in 1846 and accepted today by most editors.

throne sat a man (φῶς, a poetic term for man attested in Homer and the later poets) with crown and sceptre, an image which may well be drawn from Daniel's vision of the son of man and the 'Ancient of Days' in Dan. 7:13. When Moses approaches the throne he is told to sit upon it and take the crown and sceptre. From the throne, Moses says, he looked upon the whole earth all around (γῆν ἅπασαν ἔγκυκλον) and at things under the earth (ἐνερθε γαίας) and above the heavens (ἐξὑπερθεν οὐρανοῦ). After this a multitude of stars fell at Moses' feet, and he counted up their number (a possible reference to the imagery of Joseph's dream in Gen. 37:9). Finally Moses tells how he awoke in terror from the dream. In the section which follows the sceptre, throne, and crown of the dream are interpreted by Moses' father-in-law as a reference to his accession as a ruler, while Moses' looking all around is related to his seeing of things present, past, and future (perhaps intended as a reference to Moses' prophetic activity).

The dream related in the *Ἐξαγωγή* does not include, in so many words, a reference to Moses' heavenly ascent when he went up Mt Sinai to receive the Torah. However, it seems highly probable from the imagery involved, and especially the similarities to the visions of Dan. 7:13-14, that a tradition of a heavenly ascent has influenced the author of the *Ἐξαγωγή* at this point. Although the sequence occurs in a dream and is not portrayed as a real occurrence, it does appear to illustrate a connection between Moses as a historical figure, the way he is presented in the Pentateuch, and the literary development of Moses as a mystical or mythical figure that we have already encountered in the later rabbinic literature.¹⁶³ What we are probably seeing in the *Ἐξαγωγή* of Ezekiel the Tragedian, as early as the first

¹⁶³Along these lines see L. Cerfaux, "Influence des mystères sur le Judaïsme alexandrine avant Philon", *Muséon* 37 (1924), pp. 36-48.

part of the second century BCE, are the beginning traces of a tradition which held that Moses, when he went up Sinai to receive the Torah, made a heavenly ascent.¹⁶⁴

The writings of Philo of Alexandria. Frequent mention is made of Moses in the works of Philo of Alexandria, who wrote as an approximate contemporary of Jesus in the first half of the first century CE. A number of these references suggest that Philo may have been influenced by contemporary traditions about a heavenly ascent of Moses at Sinai when the Torah was given, and thus warrant closer examination.

In *De Somniis* 1.36 Philo states that while on Mt Sinai Moses was in an incorporeal state as he listened to the divine music of the Cosmos. The music created in him such longing that he neglected to eat for forty days, and may have been the cause of his incorporeal experience, since after listening to it, Moses is said to have "become bodiless" (ἀσώματον γεινόμενον).¹⁶⁵ Philo in other places implies that Moses not only heard this celestial music, but became part of it himself, because on Mt Sinai he came to "stand with" God, i.e., share God's immutability, participating in the divine nature. Philo mentions this special relationship with God that Moses came to share at least three times in his works, each time in connection with an interpretive comment on the text of Deut. 5:31: *De Posteritate Caini* 28-31, *De Confusione Linguarum* 30-32, and *De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 8 (in the last-mentioned work Deut. 5:31 is applied to Moses' translation at death

¹⁶⁴Pace R. G. Robertson (see n. 160 above), who thinks it is still sufficient to say that both the content and function of Moses' dream in the dramatic narrative may be adequately accounted for by the author's knowledge of the Greek tragedians and the content of the OT.

¹⁶⁵The Greek text is from *Philonis Alexandrini, Opera quae supersunt*, vol. 3, ed. L. Cohn (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1902; reprint ed., Walter de Gruyter, 1962), p. 212. All the following quotations from the Greek of Philo are from Cohn's edition unless otherwise noted.

rather than to his ascent of Sinai to receive the law). A similar idea is also found in *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum* 2.29 where Moses, after he had left all mortal categories behind, is said to have been "changed into the divine" so that he might "become kin to God and truly divine".¹⁶⁶ Further use is made of the imagery of the celestial music in *Quod Deus Immutabilis sit* 23-26, where it is said that the soul of Moses became like a lyre, in perfect tune with the virtues, producing the symphony of a life in which the ideal virtues are perfectly expressed in actions. In *Legum Allegoriae* 3.141-143 Moses' ability to live for forty days without material food, sustained by the divine communications he received from God as God gave his laws (χρησμών θεοῦ νομοθετοῦντος), is seen as a demonstration of his complete renunciation of the physical body.

References concerning Moses' heavenly ascent in Philo which seem even more explicit may also be found: according to *De Mutatione Nominum* 7 Moses, "the explorer of nature which lies beyond our vision", ascended "into the darkness" (εἰς γὰρ τὸν γνόφον), that is, into "the invisible and incorporeal existence" (τὴν ἀόρατον καὶ ἀσώματον οὐσίαν ἀνιπτόμενοι) in order to attempt to search "everywhere and into everything" (πάντα διὰ πάντων ἐρευνήσας). When Moses ascended Mt Sinai in *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum* 2.27-52 he took with him Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, but these could not stand the glorious rays from God's presence, which appeared as flame. Only Moses could go onward toward the presence of God. The rays were not really flame, but only appeared to be so (2.47). When Moses went up into this glory, he went beyond the heaven into God himself, and there abides

¹⁶⁶Philo, Supplement 2: *Questions and Answers on Exodus*, trans. R. Marcus, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 70. The Greek text of this work has not survived; the edition cited is a translation from the Armenian.

(2.40). The clouds which the people saw, into which Moses disappeared, were only a sign of the intelligibles, a mere figure to be used in teaching them (2.52).

Finally, in *De Vita Mosis* 1.158 Philo may have employed a midrashic tradition which had already interpreted Moses' ascent of Sinai as a heavenly ascent.¹⁶⁷ Here Moses is said to have "entered into the darkness where God was" (εἰς τε τὸν γνόφον, ἔνθα ἦν ὁ θεός, εἰσελθεῖν λέγεται), an allusion to Ex. 20:21, which Philo then interprets as entrance into the "unseen and invisible substance which is the immaterial model of all things" (εἰς τὴν ἀειδῆ¹⁶⁸ καὶ ἀόρατον καὶ ἀσώματον τῶν ὄντων παραδειγματικὴν οὐσίαν), that is (as in *Quaes. Ex.* 2.40), beyond heaven and into the very presence of God himself.

Although some of the references to Moses' ascent of Sinai in Philo probably represent no more than the assertion of a mystical (incorporeal) experience on the part of Moses, the last one we have mentioned, *De Vita Mosis* 1.158, seems to go beyond this and affirm that Moses actually entered into the presence of God. Later when Philo describes Moses' translation (ascension) at death he will use terminology strikingly similar to that

¹⁶⁷W. A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 111, states: "The implication is that Philo is uniting the Hellenistic ideology of kingship with an existing midrash which interpreted Moses' ascent of Sinai as a mystical 'ascension'". A similar point is made by D. C. Smith, "The Ephesian Heresy and the Origin of the Epistle to the Ephesians", *Ohio Journal of Religious Studies* 5 (1977), p. 95.

¹⁶⁸E. R. Goodenough, in *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935; reprint ed. Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969), p. 186, n. 33, notes that all manuscripts and editors agree on reading ἀειδῆ here, which usually means "formless" but here seems to mean "unseen" (parallel with the following term, ἀόρατον). Goodenough suggests the text should be amended to read ἀιδῆ, although a passage in one manuscript of Plato's *Phaedo* (79a) reads ἀειδῆ for ἀιδῆ as here. A scribal corruption is probably responsible for the variation.

which he had used of Moses' ascent of Sinai.¹⁶⁹ In *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin* 1.86 Philo will state directly that Enoch (of whom he is speaking), the 'protoprophet' (ὁ πρωτοπροφήτης, a reference to Moses), and Elijah were all translated to heaven; in the case of the latter, "it would be more proper and correct to say, he ascended" (ἀνέβη).¹⁷⁰ In *De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 8 Moses is said to have been "translated" (μετανίσταται) at his death. In *De Vita Mosis* 2.288 Philo states that at the end of his life Moses had to make an "emigration (ἀποικίαν) from earth to heaven, abandoning this mortal life to be made immortal" (τὸν θνητὸν ἀπολιπὼν βίον ἀπαθανατίζεσθαι). The similarities in terminology between Philo's description of Moses' ascent of Sinai and his description of Moses' ascension to heaven at the end of his life suggest very strongly that Philo was aware (at least) of traditions which associated Moses with a heavenly ascent, and that furthermore (as far as he was concerned) these could be applied equally to either event in Moses' life. Thus the ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah could legitimately be viewed as an ascent to heaven, an ascent Moses made a second time at the end of his earthly life. The evidence from Philo's writings seems to indicate that a tradition of Moses' ascent to heaven, both at the giving of the Torah at Sinai and later at the end of his life, was circulating at or before the time Philo wrote, prior to about 45 CE (the probable date of Philo's death) and thus also prior to the composition of Ephesians.

¹⁶⁹This observation has been made by W. A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, pp. 124-25.

¹⁷⁰Philo, Supplement 1: *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, trans. R. Marcus, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 54. This work, like *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum*, is translated from an Armenian version since only a small portion of the original Greek text has survived.

Yet another passage in Philo's *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesis* mentions both an ascent and a descent in connection with Moses. *Quaes. Gen. 4.29* reads:

But it is necessary that the most pure and luminous mind should be mixed with the mortal (element) for necessary uses. This is what is indicated by the heavenly ladder, (where) not only an ascent but also a descent of the angels is mentioned. And this is what is said of the prophet, (namely) his descent and ascent reveal the swift turning and change of his thoughts.¹⁷¹

It is clear that "the prophet" here refers to Moses; Philo's reference is probably to the account of Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai in Ex. 19:17ff. Although heaven is not specifically named as the locus of the ascent, the previous sentence does speak of the ascent and descent of angels on the "heavenly ladder" (an allusion to Jacob's vision in Gen. 28:12ff.). In fact it is interesting to note that when taken together with the following reference to Moses, there are in these two sentences two references to both ascent and descent, arranged in Philo's text in chiastic order: ascent—descent (referring to the angels) and descent—ascent (referring to Moses). This implies a sequence of ascents and descents for Moses and is particularly suggestive in light of the similar chiastic arrangement of references to ascent and descent found in Eph. 4:8-10.¹⁷² In addition to the chiastic arrangement of ascents and descents, Philo's use of such imagery in *Quaes. Gen. 4.29* is important because, unlike his other references to a heavenly ascent by Moses, this one explicitly mentions a descent in conjunction with the ascent. It is also notable that in *Quaes. Gen. 4.29* multiple ascents and descents of Moses are in view, because the descent is mentioned first (which must be taken to imply

¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 304. Parentheses are those of the translator. See the previous note concerning the reason for citing an English translation of *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesis*.

¹⁷²See the discussion of the chiastic structure of Eph. 4:8-10 in ch. 5, pp. 234-36.

a prior ascent).¹⁷³ Since there can be little question that Philo wrote this prior to the composition of Ephesians, we may reasonably conclude that not only were traditions concerning Moses' heavenly ascent in circulation at the time, but also traditions which linked together in connection with Moses references to both ascent and descent.

The Biblical Antiquities of Pseudo-Philo. Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* is generally dated between 135 BCE and 100 CE, with a date in the first half of the first century (around the time of Jesus) considered most likely by D. J. Harrington.¹⁷⁴ There are several passages which have been understood to refer to an ascent of Moses to heaven; we shall examine each of these in turn in an attempt to discover whether a heavenly ascent is really implied. The first is *Bib. Ant.* 11:15: when the Lord spoke the Decalogue to Israel at Sinai, he called Moses to himself on the mountain. The text says that Moses "drew near the cloud, knowing that God was there", but it does not explicitly state that Moses went up to heaven.¹⁷⁵ Moses was detained by God for forty days and forty nights, during which he was shown the tree of life.¹⁷⁶ It might be possible to understand the text to mean that Moses was shown a vision of the tree of life while on the mountain, since later in the same paragraph the author states that Moses was shown the likeness of the tabernacle and its contents. But with regard to the tree of

¹⁷³It is also possible to explain the order with regard to Moses as a result of the chiasmic arrangement with the ascent and descent of the angels in the preceding sentence, however.

¹⁷⁴D. J. Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo", in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2: *Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), p. 299.

¹⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 319.

¹⁷⁶Presumably the one planted in paradise, an allusion to Gen. 2:9.

life, the text goes on to note that Moses cut off a branch from it, which he kept with him and later threw into the waters of Marah to purify them.¹⁷⁷ Thus the author appears to assert that the tree of life was actually present, and this implies that Moses had made the ascent to paradise (heaven).

At the beginning of the next chapter (12:1) a similar claim is made with regard to Moses' descent. Moses had been bathed with invisible light in the presence of God, and as he descended he "went down to the place where the light of the sun and the moon are; and the light of his face surpassed the splendor of the sun and the moon".¹⁷⁸ It appears that the author at this point thought of Moses as being in heaven rather than just atop Mt Sinai, since as he descended he passed "the place where the light of the sun and the moon are", probably a reference to the intermediate place between earth and heaven where the sun, moon, and stars are located.¹⁷⁹

Another passage in Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* which is sometimes understood to imply that Moses made an ascent to heaven is 19:10-12. Unlike the two former passages, however, this one speaks not of Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah, but of his ascent of Mt Nebo just prior to his death.¹⁸⁰ As in the biblical account, the Lord showed Moses the land of Canaan from the mountain prior to his death. The account in *Bib. Ant.* 19:10 goes on to state other things shown to Moses, however: the place from which the clouds draw water to water the earth, the land of Egypt, the

¹⁷⁷An allusion to Ex. 15:25.

¹⁷⁸*Bib. Ant.* 12:1, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, p. 319.

¹⁷⁹The cosmology of the author of the *Biblical Antiquities* is not clearly stated, but this seems to be a reasonable assumption based on what is known about contemporary beliefs.

¹⁸⁰The name of the mountain Moses ascended in *Bib. Ant.* 19:10 is not clear; one variant is "Horeb", but the translator (D. J. Harrington) notes that this is "certainly wrong in the light of Deut. 32:49" [*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, p. 327, note j]. Harrington supplies "Abarim" but notes that perhaps "Nebo" should be read [cf. Deut. 32:49].

place from which only the holy land is watered, and the place from which manna was rained on the Israelites, "even unto the paths of paradise".¹⁸¹ Although it would certainly be possible to infer from these statements that Moses had been taken up to heaven, they may also be understood to refer to events and places seen in a vision. This is probably preferable, since *Bib. Ant.* 19:12-16 records the death of Moses and his burial by God "with his own hands on a high place and in the light of all the world."¹⁸² It seems unlikely, on the whole, that *Bib. Ant.* 19:10 speaks of an ascension of Moses to heaven (just prior to his death); if so, the writer certainly chose an ambiguous way of referring to such an event.

In contrast to these statements, which seem to affirm the reality of Moses' death and burial, one final passage in the *Biblical Antiquities* seems to speak of Moses' entrance into heaven. In *Bib. Ant.* 32:9, Moses is shown various things prior to his death (as in 19:10-16), but then God says to him, "Let there be as a witness between me and you and my people the heaven that you are to enter and the earth on which you walk until now".¹⁸³ It may be that this is a direct contradiction to 19:12, where Moses was told that he was to 'sleep' until God returned to resurrect him; but it is also possible that 32:9 simply omits reference to the intervening period between Moses' death and his resurrection to enter heaven at some later time. In any event, *Bib. Ant.* 32:9 is concerned with events at the end of Moses' life and not with his ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah.

¹⁸¹*Bib. Ant.* 19:10, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, p. 328.

¹⁸²The last statement may imply that Moses' death and burial (although not the exact location) took place in public. Moses' death is also asserted in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* 4.8.48 [§326], and Testament of Moses [Assumption of Moses] 1:15 explicitly emphasizes that Moses' death took place in public. All the aforementioned statements may indicate conscious opposition to the view that Moses did not really die, but was taken up to heaven.

¹⁸³*Bib. Ant.* 32:9, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, p. 346.

While the last two passages (*Bib. Ant.* 19:10-12 and 32:9) are concerned with events surrounding Moses' death, the two passages mentioned first (11:15 and 12:1) do seem to imply a belief that Moses ascended to heaven when he went up Mt Sinai to receive the Torah. Although the *Biblical Antiquities* of Pseudo-Philo cannot be dated precisely, it is almost certainly to be assigned to the first century CE. Thus we have in *Bib. Ant.* 11:15 and 12:1 evidence that a tradition of a heavenly ascent was associated with Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah at least as early as the first century of the present era.

The Testament of Moses [Assumption of Moses]. The surviving document known as either the Testament of Moses or the Assumption of Moses is a Latin translation from an older Greek manuscript which purports to be the farewell address given by Moses to his chosen successor Joshua just prior to his death and the entry of the Israelites into the land of Canaan. The work presents enormous difficulties for the interpreter, however, because of dispute over its date and identification and also over the fact that the end of the document is obviously missing. We must pause to consider these difficulties briefly before examining any of the extant passages relevant to Moses' heavenly ascent.

There is no current scholarly consensus concerning the dating of the Testament of Moses, and opinions vary widely. They may, however, be generally divided into three categories: (1) those who would date the document in the first half of the second century CE, probably just after the war of 132-135 CE (a position argued by S. Zeitlin);¹⁸⁴ (2) those who would argue for

¹⁸⁴S. Zeitlin, "The Assumption of Moses and the Bar Kokhba Revolt", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 38 (1947-48), pp. 1-45.

a very early date, sometime during the Maccabean war of 168-165 BCE (supported by J. Licht and G. Nickelsburg);¹⁸⁵ and (3) those who would place the composition of the document in the first century CE, before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE (R. H. Charles and J. Priest).¹⁸⁶ On the whole, a date in the first century before 70 CE seems most probable, since in order to argue for a Maccabean date one must regard chapter 6, at least, as a later interpolation because Test. Moses 4:6 almost certainly refers to the death of Herod.

Another problem in addition to the date of the work is the proper identification of the document itself. Mention of apocryphal works associated with the name of Moses occurs frequently in early sources of both Jewish and Christian origin.¹⁸⁷ Some lists of noncanonical books include both an Assumption of Moses and a Testament of Moses, raising questions as to whether the surviving document should be identified as one or the other.¹⁸⁸ Ever since A. Ceriani identified the existing document on the

¹⁸⁵J. Licht, "Taxo, or the Apocalyptic Doctrine of Vengeance", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 12 (1961), pp. 95-103, and especially G. W. E. Nickelsburg, Jr, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism*, Harvard Theological Studies 26 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 28-31 and esp. 43-45, who argues for a Maccabean date based on a form-critical analysis of the document and the contents of chs. 8 and 9, which he believes to contain a description of the persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes. Nickelsburg is forced to consider ch. 6 a later interpolation, however, since there is virtually universal agreement that it refers to the reign and death of Herod the Great and mentions his three sons.

¹⁸⁶R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, vol. 2: *Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 411, and J. Priest, "The Testament of Moses", in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), pp. 920-21. Priest does not accept Charles' theory of a dislocation of the text in chs. 5-9, however, arguing that contemporary canons of consistency need not apply to an apocalyptic author.

¹⁸⁷A listing of these sources may be found in J. H. Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research*, *Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 7 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), pp. 159-66.

¹⁸⁸A collection of these lists, with brief discussion, is found in D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 391-95.

basis of a passage from the Acts of the Council of Nicea that apparently cites 1:14 (and perhaps parts of 1:6 and 1:9) as the Assumption of Moses, it has become common to refer to the document presently under discussion as the Assumption of Moses.¹⁸⁹ This is open to some question, however, since the form of the extant document is that of a farewell address or testament, a well-established literary genre in its own right, and the document ends at 12:13 in the middle of a sentence, so that it is impossible to know how Moses' death was described. R. H. Charles proposed that there were originally two separate works, a farewell address and an assumption account, that at an early period were joined together and the combined document was subsequently known as the Assumption of Moses.¹⁹⁰ As attractive as this theory may be, it cannot be proven, and we have chosen to follow J. Priest in referring to the existing document as the Testament of Moses on the basis of its predominant literary genre.¹⁹¹

There is no explicit reference in the surviving document either to Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah or to his assumption to heaven at his death. In fact, the passages in the extant document which do refer to Moses' death appear to speak of a natural death and a burial of the body. The first of these is 1:15, where Moses says,

The years of my life have come to an end and, in the presence of the entire community, I am going to sleep with my fathers.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹A. M. Denis, *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeca*, *Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), pp. 63-64.

¹⁹⁰R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, vol. 2: *Pseudepigrapha*, p. 208.

¹⁹¹J. Priest, "The Testament of Moses", in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), pp. 919-34.

¹⁹²Test. Moses 1:15, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, p. 927.

This is so strongly worded that it may actually constitute a polemic against a tradition which asserted Moses' assumption to heaven, since it stresses the public nature of Moses' death, as an event witnessed by the entire community.¹⁹³ This would imply that such a tradition was in circulation at the time Test. Moses 1:15 was written, and the author of the Testament wishes to discredit it. Another explicit reference to Moses' impending death is found in 10:11-12 and 14:

But you, Joshua son of Nun, keep these words and this book, for from my death and burial until his coming there will pass 250 times... However, I shall be asleep with my fathers.¹⁹⁴

The word translated "burial" in 10:12 is sometimes rendered as "assumption" and understood as an interpolation attempting to relate the present document to an Assumption of Moses. This seems unlikely, however, since 10:14 states explicitly that Moses will be "asleep with...[his] fathers", a clear reference in the same context to his death and burial, a state in which he will remain until the resurrection. An assumption immediately following his death would be very difficult to reconcile with such a statement. A final allusion to Moses' death occurs in Joshua's speech in 11:8:

For all who die, there are appropriately their sepulchers in the earth, but your sepulcher is from the rising to the setting of the sun, and from the South to the limits of the North, the whole world is your sepulcher.¹⁹⁵

The reference to Moses' sepulchre is somewhat obscure; it could perhaps be taken to imply that Moses' final resting place was not in the earth at all, but that he was taken up to heaven. This seems unlikely, however, since nothing else in the existing document refers explicitly to an assumption. It is far more probable that the writer is simply referring to the account of

¹⁹³See n. 182 above for a possible parallel in the *Biblical Antiquities* of Pseudo-Philo.

¹⁹⁴Test. Moses 10:11-12, 14, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, p. 933.

¹⁹⁵Test. Moses 11:8, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, p. 933.

Moses' death in Deut. 34:6, which states that no one knew the location of Moses' grave.

Because of the difficulties in dating the Testament and questions concerning its relation to another document known as the Assumption of Moses, one must be cautious in drawing inferences about traditions of Moses' heavenly ascent based upon it. It is clear that no mention is made in the surviving document of any ascent of Moses at Mt Sinai to receive the Torah; any reference to a heavenly ascent which the document might contain would refer to Moses' assumption to heaven at his death, not to the giving of the law. As we have seen in our examination of the relevant passages, however, even a reference to Moses' assumption appears unlikely based upon the extant form of the document. The most that can be said is that a tradition of Moses' assumption to heaven at death may have been in circulation at the time the Testament was written, and the author may be attempting to counter it by his assertion in 1:15. Such a conclusion gains additional support from similar assertions in other documents of approximately the same period such as the writings of Philo of Alexandria, Pseudo-Philo's *Bib. Ant.* 19:12, 16 and Josephus' *Ant.* 4.8.48 [§326].¹⁹⁶

The Jewish Antiquities of Josephus. The *magnum opus* of Flavius Josephus, the *Jewish Antiquities* (*Antiquitates Judaicae*), contains several passages which relate to the giving of the Torah at Sinai and the death of Moses. According to *Ant.* 20 [§267] (the concluding paragraph of the entire work) it was completed in the thirteenth year of Domitian's reign, i.e., 93-94 CE, although a second edition with additional material appears to have been produced some time after the death of Agrippa II around 100 CE. It is

¹⁹⁶See n. 182 above.

fairly certain in any case that the *Antiquities* dates from around the close of the first century CE.

The first reference to Moses' ascent is found in *Ant.* 3.5.3 [§88], when Moses appears to the Israelites after his descent from Sinai and tells them, among other things, that he had come to a sight of God and been a hearer of an immortal voice (τῷ θεῷ γὰρ εἰς ὄψιν ἐλθὼν ἀκροατῆς ἀφθάρτου φωνῆς ἐγενόμην).¹⁹⁷ This passage does not explicitly assert that Moses had been taken up to heaven, however; it appears much more probable that Josephus intended only to say that God had revealed himself to Moses atop Sinai. The same is true of a later passage, *Ant.* 3.5.8 [§99], where Moses describes what happened to him during the forty days he was on the mountain with God. Nothing in Moses' description, however, necessitates a heavenly ascent on his part; Josephus portrays the scene in such a way that everything Moses described could have been revealed to him in the form of a vision. Unlike the passage we have already examined in Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* (11:15), Moses in this account performs no activity while in the presence of God that might suggest he did not remain atop Mt Sinai but was taken up to heaven itself.

One final passage in Josephus' *Antiquities* deserves some attention, because it contains elements of imagery which have been associated with a heavenly ascent. However, it is not connected with Moses' ascent of Sinai but with his death. *Ant.* 4.8.48 [§326] records the disappearance of Moses at the end of his life: while he was still speaking with Joshua and Eleazar who had accompanied him, a cloud suddenly descended upon him and he disappeared in a ravine (νέφους αἰφνίδιον ὑπὲρ αὐτὸν σάντος ἀφανίζεται κατὰ

¹⁹⁷Josephus, trans. H. St J. Thackeray, vol. 4: *Jewish Antiquities, Books I-IV*, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1930), p. 358.

τινος φάραγγος). Josephus immediately goes on to state, however, that in the holy books Moses wrote of himself that he died, lest it should be said of him that because of his virtue he had gone back to the Deity (δείσας μὴ δι' ὑπερβολὴν τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν ἀρετῆς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον αὐτὸν ἀναχωρῆσαι τολμήσωσιν εἰπεῖν).¹⁹⁸ This latter statement by Josephus may well be intended to counter a tradition that Moses did not die, but was taken up to heaven at the end of his life.¹⁹⁹ The mention of Moses being taken in a cloud is suggestive because such imagery is often connected with a heavenly ascent. But the presence of such imagery proves little, because Josephus (although he includes it in his own account) is quick to add that according to the OT record ("in the holy books") Moses really died. The most we can infer from this account is that (perhaps) at the time Josephus was writing a tradition of Moses' assumption to heaven at the end of his life was circulating, and Josephus alludes indirectly to this tradition with the cloud imagery, but then deliberately refutes it by his statements about Moses' death. There does not seem to be any evidence from Josephus' writings that Moses made the ascent to heaven when he went up Mt Sinai to receive the Torah.

2 Baruch (The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch). This pseudepigraphical work purports to have been written by Baruch, Jeremiah's assistant, shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, although there is a general consensus today that in reality it was written after the destruction of 70 CE. E. Kautzsch would place the *terminus ad quem* around 96 CE because of the interrelationship between 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra.²⁰⁰ A. F. J.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., p. 632. Josephus sides with the rabbis who considered the last eight verses of Deuteronomy to have been written by Moses himself rather than by Joshua.

¹⁹⁹See also n. 182 above.

²⁰⁰*Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments*, trans. and ed. by E.

Klijn thinks that if 2 Baruch is dependent on 4 Ezra a date around 100 CE is most probable, but since dependence of both works on a common source seems more likely, 2 Baruch is probably somewhat later because it shows a more advanced stage of theological development. Thus Klijn suggest a date for 2 Baruch in the first or second decade of the second century CE.²⁰¹

There are two passages in 2 Baruch which relate to Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah, and which may point to a tradition of a heavenly ascent. The first is 2 Bar. 4:2-7, which contains a description of the heavenly, eternal Jerusalem which supposedly corresponds to the earthly city which is about to be destroyed. In 4:5 the Lord, who is speaking, states that he showed the heavenly city to Moses on Mt Sinai when Moses was shown the likeness of the tabernacle and its utensils. There is no explicit statement that Moses visited heaven, however, and in the context of 2 Baruch 4-5 (which contain a number of visions purportedly given to the author) it seems more probable that the author of 2 Baruch merely intends to affirm that Moses was shown a vision of the heavenly Jerusalem.

The second passage in 2 Baruch which speaks of Moses' time atop Mt Sinai is 59:3-11. This section describes in much more detail the things which were shown to Moses during his stay on the mountain in the presence of God. With typical embellishment which recalls accounts of the visit of Jonah to the underworld in rabbinic literature,²⁰² the author of 2 Baruch recounts what Moses saw:

Kautzsch, vol. 2: *Die Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments* (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms, 1975), p. 407.

²⁰¹A. F. J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch", in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), pp. 616-17.

²⁰²See ch. 2, pp. 84-90, for a description of these accounts.

But he also showed him, at that time, the measures of fire, the depths of the abyss, the weight of the winds, the number of the raindrops, the suppression of wrath, the abundance of long-suffering, the truth of judgment, the root of wisdom, the richness of understanding, the fountain of knowledge, the height of the air, the greatness of Paradise, the end of the periods, the beginning of the day of judgment, the number of offerings, the worlds which have not yet come, the mouth of hell, the standing place of vengeance, the place of faith, the region of hope, the picture of the coming punishment, the multitude of the angels which cannot be counted, the powers of the flame, the splendor of lightnings, the voice of the thunders, the orders of the archangels, the treasures of the light, the changes of the times, and the inquiries into the Law.²⁰³

Again, nothing in the list of things shown to Moses explicitly states whether Moses made a heavenly ascent when he went up Sinai; all the things seen by Moses could have been seen in a vision. Yet 2 Baruch 59:3, introducing the account quoted above, states that the heavens were torn asunder and those who stood next to the throne of the Almighty trembled, when he took Moses to himself. It might be possible to read the account in such a way that God's taking Moses to himself in 59:3 is understood to mean simply that God called Moses to himself atop Mt Sinai. In light of the description that follows, however, where the very powers of heaven are shaken, it seems much more probable that the author of 2 Baruch intended his readers to understand that Moses was taken up into the very presence of God himself. Thus we have found in 2 Baruch 59:3 additional evidence which indicates that Moses was understood to have made a heavenly ascent when he went up Mt Sinai to receive the Torah. If assumptions about the dating of 2 Baruch are correct, it is probable that such a tradition was already in circulation around 100-120 CE.

The Stromata of Clement of Alexandria. In *Stromata* 6.15 Clement of Alexandria (who died before 215 CE) records an illustration of how the words of the Scriptures are subject to multiple interpretations, and different readers perceive different things in them. The illustration employed by

²⁰³2 Baruch 59:5-11, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, p. 642.

Clement is generally thought to be quoted from the Assumption of Moses, although Clement never mentions his source by name. Recording how Joshua and Caleb witnessed the death and assumption of Moses while caught up by the Spirit, Clement states:

εικότως ἄρα καὶ τὸν Μωυσέα ἀναλαμβανόμενον διττὸν εἶδεν Ἰησοῦς ὁ τοῦ Ναυῆ, καὶ τὸν μὲν μετ' ἀγγέλων, τὸν δὲ ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη περὶ τὰς φάραγγας κηδείας ἀξιούμενον. εἶδεν δὲ Ἰησοῦς τὴν θέαν ταύτην κάτω πνεύματι ἐπαρθείς σὺν καὶ τῷ Χαλέβ, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁμοίως ἀμφω θεῶνται...δηλούσης, οἶμαι, τῆς ἱστορίας μὴ πάντων εἶναι τὴν γνῶσιν...²⁰⁴

It is clear that this fragmentary account of Moses' ascent (or assumption) relates to his death and burial, not to the ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah. It is interesting nonetheless, because it may contain a clue to the manner in which the various ascent-legends connected with Moses reconciled his assumption to heaven with the explicit account of his burial in Deut. 34:6. Joshua and Caleb, who are both lifted up by the Spirit (κάτω πνεύματι ἐπαρθείς), are witnesses of the death of Moses, but they saw him taken up double (τὸν Μωυσέα ἀναλαμβανόμενον διττὸν εἶδεν): one Moses with the angels, who (it is implied) escorted him to heaven, and another Moses on the mountains, honoured with burial in their ravines. Thus, while holding to the scriptural account of Moses' death and burial, one could also claim for him an assumption to heaven at the same time. No mention of Caleb's presence occurs in the biblical account, and although Moses blessed Joshua in Deut. 31:23, there is no indication that he (or anyone else) accompanied Moses up the mountain or witnessed his death. The extant document known as the Testament of Moses (or Assumption of Moses)²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴*Stromata* 6.15.132, 2-3, in *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vol. 2: *Stromata Buch I-VI*, ed. O. Stählin; revised by L. Früchtel; 4th ed. with addenda by U. Treu, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Berlin: Akademie, 1985), p. 498.

²⁰⁵See the discussion of this document above, pp. 182-86.

has Joshua in dialogue with Moses at the point where it breaks off; since the ending is lost there is no way to determine whether or not Joshua was about to witness Moses' departure. The idea encountered here, that Joshua and Caleb were transported in the Spirit to witness the death of Moses, may represent one attempt to explain how the account of Moses' death in Deut. 34:1-8 was written, since there was no one present to witness these events.

In the final analysis, however, the reference to Moses' assumption in *Stromata* 6.15 is of little consequence for our attempt to establish the date of the tradition associating Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the law with an ascent to heaven because: (1) it does not deal with the ascent of Sinai at all, but with a legend of Moses' assumption to heaven at death; and (2) Clement does not mention the source he is quoting, so there is no way to know whether this does in fact represent a quotation from the lost ending of the extant work known as the Testament of Moses (Assumption of Moses). Clement's own writings date from some time in the final decades of the second century CE, and although his source is undoubtedly older, there is no way to establish an independent date for it because he never specifies his source, nor does he quote from it extensively enough to permit independent identification.

Conclusions regarding the tradition of Moses' ascent to heaven and Eph. 4:7-11. In our examination of the traditions concerning Moses' heavenly ascent at Sinai when he received the Torah, we have discovered a number of significant references which enable us to establish with some degree of certainty the approximate date of such traditions. The dream of Moses contained in the *Ἐξαγωγή* of Ezekiel the Tragedian, although it contains no explicit reference to a heavenly ascent of Moses from Mt Sinai, does

seem to bear the influence of traditions concerning such an ascent by Moses. Thus it appears likely that such traditions have their origins at least as early as the middle of the second century BCE, the approximate date of composition of the *Ἐξάγωγή*. Furthermore, such traditions have almost certainly influenced Philo of Alexandria, writing before the middle of the first century CE. There are numerous references to Moses' ascent of Sinai in Philo's writings, as well as several references to his ascension at the end of his life. The similarity in the terminology Philo uses to describe both these 'ascensions' suggests that he was indeed aware of traditions which related to Moses' ascent to heaven at Sinai when he received the Torah. The *Biblical Antiquities* of Pseudo-Philo, written at about the same time, also indicates awareness of such Moses-traditions, because several references appear to imply that Moses made a heavenly ascent when he went up Mt Sinai.

The surviving document known as either the Testament of Moses or the Assumption of Moses also appears to allude to traditions of an assumption to heaven at Moses' death, although this evidence is not conclusive because the end of the document is missing and there are considerable difficulties involved with its dating, which may be as late as the early second century CE. In the *Antiquities* of Josephus there may be a polemic against the tradition that Moses ascended to heaven when he died, since Josephus goes out of his way to assert the biblical account of Moses' death and burial; this too would suggest that traditions of a heavenly assumption were circulating in the first century CE.

Somewhat later works like 2 Baruch (the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch) also supply evidence of traditions concerning Moses' ascent to heaven, and suggest that such traditions were in circulation at the begin-

ning of the second century CE. Similar evidence can also be found in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, dating from the end of the second century CE. Although it is often suggested that Clement is quoting from the document known as the Assumption of Moses, this cannot be conclusively proven, and Clement's account deals with Moses' assumption at death rather than a heavenly ascent at Sinai when the Torah was given.

The later evidence is of little overall value for establishing the earliest possible date for Moses traditions concerning an ascent to heaven at Sinai and connected with the giving of the law. We have, however, found sufficient evidence in the earlier documents from the first century CE or before to warrant the conclusion that traditions concerning Moses' ascent to heaven go back at least as early as the beginning of the present era, if not one or two centuries earlier. This is important for our study of the use of Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:8, for while such ascent-traditions concerning Moses are not explicitly connected with the psalm, they appear to have been in general circulation and were probably fairly widespread. This suggests the probability that such traditions of an ascent to heaven by Moses at Mt Sinai when he received the Torah would have been known to the author of Ephesians, and in his interpretation of Ps. 68:19 with reference to Christ's victorious ascent he has built upon such Moses-traditions to suit his own purposes in the epistle. (Such references might even be polemical in nature, but the absence of other disparaging allusions to Moses in Ephesians makes this difficult to prove.) Our case for such a reconstruction will be further strengthened if we can now go on to demonstrate a connection between traditions concerning Moses' ascent of Sinai and the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Weeks) as the celebration of the giving of the Torah. The following chapter will examine the evidence for such a connection in some detail.

Chapter Four

Eph. 4:7-11 and the Giving of the Spirit

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the major exegetical difficulty in Eph. 4:8 lies in the use of ἔδωκεν in the quotation from Ps. 68:19, since all extant versions of the LXX (following the Masoretic Text) read ἔλαβες at this point. As we have also noted, Targum Psalms reflects the same variation from the MT and LXX of Ps. 68:19 found in Eph. 4:8 (Tg Ps. 68:19 reads אֶתְּבִיחַ for MT לָקַח).¹ We have explored the possibility (first suggested by Thackeray in 1900) that the author of Ephesians was aware of the targumic interpretation of Ps. 68:19 (that is, the oral tradition behind the written targum) and adapted it for his own purposes.² Use of such a tradition by the author of Ephesians would be particularly significant for the interpretation of the descent mentioned in Eph. 4:9-10, because Tg Psalms interprets Ps. 68:19 as a reference to Moses, who first ascended Mt Sinai and 'captured' the words of Torah, which he then brought down and gave as gifts to 'the sons of men'. Since Moses' descent from Sinai to distribute to men the 'gifts' he had obtained there necessarily followed his ascent, use of this tradition by the author of Ephesians would explain why he found it necessary to infer from the text of Ps. 68:19 (as quoted in Eph. 4:8) a descent followed by the distribution of the gifts mentioned in 4:11ff. Use of these Moses-traditions by the author of Ephesians would thus imply that the de-

¹See the extended discussion and comparison of the texts of Ps. 68:19 according to the MT, LXX, Eph. 4:8, and Tg Ps. 68:19 in ch. 3 above, pp. 136-47.

²H. St J. Thackeray, *The Relation of St Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought* (London: Oxford University Press, 1900), p. 182.

scent of 4:9-10 should most naturally be understood as subsequent to the ascent described in the psalm quotation.

Difficulties associated with the dating of the tradition of Moses' ascent to receive the Torah contained in Tg Psalms have been discussed at length in the preceding chapter.³ Our investigation has discovered no conclusive evidence from the texts themselves which would prove beyond any doubt that the author of Ephesians did in fact make use of the rabbinic interpretation of Ps. 68:19 found in Tg Psalms. Neither have we proven, to this point, that such an interpretation of the psalm actually existed prior to the Christian era. However, while the evidence concerning Ps. 68:19 examined thus far is inconclusive, it still suggests an early date for the interpretation in question, because the evidence is both ancient (although not pre-Christian) and widespread. Wide geographical distribution of the evidence in such a case would seem to demand sufficient time for such dissemination to occur, so that a given tradition would have to be older than any single surviving written attestation. What we have discovered is that traditions associated with Moses' ascent to heaven at Sinai when he received the Torah do appear to have been in circulation prior to the first century CE and thus were available to the author of Ephesians when he wrote.

We may now turn to another line of evidence which offers some promise of demonstrating a connection between such Moses-traditions, Psalm 68, Pentecost, and Ephesians. Such a connection, in the context of the spiritual gifts mentioned in Eph. 4:11-16, would suggest that the author, knowing of the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 referring to Moses' ascent and

³See ch. 3, especially pp. 95-108 and 108-10.

descent with the Torah, chose however to see in it a reference to Christ's ascension following his resurrection and the subsequent distribution of the gifts of the Spirit to his followers. Not finding in the quotation from Psalm 68 a reference to the descent of Christ as the Spirit, however, the author of Ephesians was obliged to infer one. The Moses-tradition had already opened the way for him to do so, and this is what led him (in typical rabbinic fashion) to write verses 9-10, which refer to the descent.

*Psalm 68, the Early Jewish Synagogue Liturgy, and
Pentecost*

We may begin this part of our investigation with G. B. Caird's assertion that during the intertestamental period the feast of Pentecost, in addition to its traditional role as a harvest festival, had also come to be viewed as a celebration of the giving of the Torah to Moses on Mt Sinai.⁴ According to Caird, since neither Philo nor Josephus happen to mention the commemoration of the giving of Torah in association with the feast of Pentecost, some have questioned whether such an association can be regarded as pre-Christian. In an extended note Caird attempts to answer such an objection by outlining five strands of evidence which (in spite of the silence of Philo and Josephus) still suggest that at some time before the Christian era Pentecost began to be celebrated as the commemoration of the giving of the Torah to Moses at Sinai.⁵ We will need to examine Caird's

⁴G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", *Studia Evangelica* 2, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), pp. 539-40. Much of the same information may be found in C. H. Porter, "The Descent of Christ: An Exegetical Study of Ephesians 4:7-11", in *One Faith: Its Biblical, Historical, and Ecumenical Dimensions*, ed. R. L. Simpson (Enid, OK: Phillips University Press, 1966), p. 54, n. 26.

⁵This evidence is contained in note 1 of Caird's article, p. 540. Caird does not point out (although he could have done so) that arguing against a pre-Christian celebration of Pentecost

arguments and sources in some detail.

Caird begins with the general assertion that the process of assigning historical associations to the old agricultural festivals of ancient Israel was already occurring in the priestly code within the Pentateuch, where both Tabernacles and Passover had become feasts commemorating historical events (Lev. 23:42-43). Second, the rabbis had fixed the date of the giving of the Decalogue as 6 Sivan by calculating from the date given in Ex. 19:1. This method of computation is so widely attested in the rabbinic writings that it is likely to be ancient. Caird does not state the actual rabbinic evidence for the dating of the giving of the Ten Commandments, but assumes that the widespread distribution of the calculation in the rabbinic accounts demonstrates its antiquity. This point may be granted; but what degree of antiquity is required Caird does not say. He refers to volume 2 of G. F. Moore's *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, suggesting that the computational method used by the later rabbis may even have been intended by the writer who introduced the date into Ex. 19:1. As far as the rabbinic evidence is concerned, Moore mentions only B. Pesahim 68b. By the time this part of the Talmud was written, the association of Pentecost with the giving of the Torah at Sinai was assumed as the generally accepted opinion.⁶

Caird's third point concerns the establishment of the triennial lectionary system (the so-called 'triennial cycle'): as soon as this was established, Exodus 19 would have been the appointed reading for Pentecost in the second year of the cycle. Again Caird offers no substantiating evidence

as the commemoration of the giving of Torah based on the omission of such a reference in Philo or Josephus is an argument from silence.

⁶G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927; reprint ed., 1946), p. 48.

or sources for such a claim, and both the nature and date of the 'triennial cycle' are open to scholarly dispute. The term 'triennial cycle' itself is usually applied to Palestinian sabbatical scripture readings thought to be employed on a three-year cycle in the synagogue as opposed to the annual cycle (a yearly cycle essentially similar to that still in use today). According to B. Wacholder, while one could perhaps argue that the custom of reciting the related Pentateuchal passages on festival days dates back to the time of Ezra, a great deal of diversity prevailed in the practice of regular sabbatical readings in talmudic and post-talmudic times, and the division between the so-called 'triennial cycle' and the annual cycle probably did not occur before the talmudic period (ca. 220-550 CE). This can be substantiated because Palestinian sources (including the Tosefta, halakic and haggadic midrashim) do not mention lectionary cycles at all. Furthermore, the term 'triennial cycle' itself is a misnomer, because the cycle did not work with the regularity of the shorter annual cycle, since it did not begin on the same day every time and probably took closer to four years than three to complete.⁷ Therefore the assertion of Caird that Exodus 19 was the reading appointed for Pentecost as soon as the triennial lectionary system was established needs further substantiation, and the dating of the 'triennial cycle' itself is problematic, since it almost certainly post-dates the first cen-

⁷B. Wacholder, Prolegomenon to *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue*, by J. Mann (New York: Ktav, 1971; original ed. without Prolegomenon, 1940), pp. xv-xxii. Although Wacholder too has resorted to an argument from silence when he suggests the division between the 'triennial cycle' and the annual cycle did not occur before the talmudic period because Palestinian sources do not mention cycles at all, nevertheless his major points are well taken and represent a considerable revision of Mann's original theories about the Palestinian triennial cycle which were originally published in 1940. Perhaps the most important point to note is the diversity which prevailed in the practice of sabbatical scripture readings during the first few centuries of the present era; this should cause one to be cautious in assertions about what specific passages would have been read on specific days. This *caveat* is only somewhat lessened in the case where one is dealing with a major festival like Pentecost.

ture of the Christian era.

Caird's fourth point is taken from H. St J. Thackeray's *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship* (1921): Thackeray has probably established that Habakkuk 3 was already one of the prophetic readings appointed for Pentecost before the LXX translation of the minor prophets was made. It was chosen, according to Thackeray, because the storm theophany it contains was seen as a commentary on (or parallel to) Exodus 19, although the harvest theme of Hab. 3:17-18 would have been more appropriate to Tabernacles than Pentecost.⁸ Thackeray gives some further information about the date of the association between Exodus 19, Psalm 68, and the feast of Pentecost which Caird does not mention, although it would have supported Caird's previous point concerning Exodus 19 as one of the appointed readings for Pentecost. The oldest authority, tractate Megillah in the Babylonian Talmud,⁹ names the alternative readings for the feast of Pentecost: from the Law, Deut. 16:9 or Exodus 19, and from the Prophets, 'Habbakuk' or 'the Chariot' (Ezekiel 1). Additionally, B. Megillah states that now that the festival lasts two days (presumably instead of one) all four of the lessons are used. Thackeray adds that this statement dates from the first or second century of the Christian era, the age of the Tannaim.¹⁰ This raises the question of when the feast was lengthened from one to two days. Thackeray suggests that the author of the Book of Jubilees, in describing the institution

⁸H. St J. Thackeray, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), pp. 47-54. Thackeray's evidence for his conclusions about Habakkuk 3 as an assigned reading for Pentecost is too lengthy to be repeated here.

⁹The reference is to B. Megillah 31a, although Thackeray does not give the specific page (folio) number. The specific page reference in the tractate is given by J. van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), p. 201, and A. T. Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982), p. 20.

¹⁰H. St J. Thackeray, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship*, p. 46. Thackeray does not state how he arrived at the date given, however.

of Pentecost, places such emphasis on its being confined to "one day in the year" (a statement repeated three times in 6:17-22) that he is actually engaged in a polemic against the innovation of adding a second day at the time he is writing.¹¹ Since R. H. Charles suggested a date of "around 100 B.C." for Jubilees, this would indicate the assigned readings listed in B. Megillah are "certainly as old as A.D. 100, possibly as early as 100 B.C."¹² Of course, the assigned readings Thackeray has mentioned up to this point do not include any from the Hagiographa. Yet the inclusion of Exodus 19 as one of the appointed readings for Pentecost would seem to indicate that by this time the feast of Pentecost had somehow become associated with Moses' ascent of Sinai and the giving of the Torah. Thackeray does mention two psalms that were to be read on the feast of Pentecost, Psalm 29 (according to tractate Soferim) and Psalm 68 (according to unspecified rabbinic authorities). Thackeray proposes that the common theme which runs through all four of the passages from the Prophets and the Hagiographa (Hab. 3, Ezek. 1, Ps. 29, and Ps. 68) is a theophany in a thunderstorm, and it is natural to infer that parallels with the terrors of Mt Sinai were understood by those who selected them to make them particularly appropriate to

¹¹J. Potin, *La Fête Juive de la Pentecôte: Étude des textes liturgiques*, Lectio Divina 65 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971), vol. 1, p. 140, n. 30, disagrees with Thackeray's hypothesis. Potin notes that the references in Jubilees with their insistence on "one day in the year" may simply have been reminders intended to recall the importance of the festival to those who had forgotten to celebrate it, or who did not accord it sufficient importance, without implying a polemic against the addition of a second day.

¹²Ibid., p. 46. For the date of the Book of Jubilees Thackeray referred to R. H. Charles. However, R. H. Charles in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, vol. 2, *Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 1, gives the date of Jubilees as between 135 and 105 BCE. The same date is mentioned by A. T. Lincoln in "The Use of the OT in Ephesians", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982), p. 20. For further discussion of the problems involved in dating the Book of Jubilees see n. 31 and especially n. 53 below).

the feast of Pentecost.¹³ This assumes, of course (although Thackeray does not mention it), that the feast of Pentecost had already begun to be associated with the giving of the Torah at Sinai at some time before these readings were selected.

Thackeray does offer some specific evidence which he believes to indicate a connection between Psalm 68 and Pentecost (again, this evidence is not mentioned by Caird). Because Psalm 68 is not mentioned by tractate Soferim along with Psalm 29 as an appointed reading for Pentecost, Thackeray believes it to be more recent in this connection than Psalm 29. Thackeray understands the *Sitz im Leben* of Psalm 68 to be found in an incident recounted in 1 Macc. 5:45-54 and 2 Macc. 12:27-32 in which Judas Maccabaeus led an expedition into Gilead to rescue a number of his fellow-countrymen who were threatened with annihilation. This event became the basis, according to Thackeray, for the composition of the psalm; it was in celebration of the victory of the Maccabean forces in which no Israelite lives were lost. However, in 2 Macc. 12:31-32 (which apparently refers to the same events), Judas Maccabaeus and his troops immediately afterward "went up to Jerusalem, as the feast of weeks was close at hand."¹⁴ The feast of Pentecost (Weeks) would thus have coincided with the celebration of the victory, and (if Thackeray is correct in his belief that the psalm originated as a result of these historical events) it would have been natural for Psalm 68 to remain associated with the feast of Pentecost.¹⁵ This could be an addi-

¹³Thackeray, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship*, p. 47.

¹⁴*The Apocrypha of the Old Testament, Revised Standard Version*, ed. B. M. Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 287.

¹⁵Thackeray's reconstruction of the historical setting of Psalm 68 is based on an article by C. J. Ball, "Psalm LXVIII *Exurgat Deus*", in *Journal of Theological Studies* 11 (1910), pp. 415-32. The problems presented by Psalm 68 are extremely difficult and OT scholars have not been able to reach agreement concerning its background and setting. A discussion of

tional explanation (aside from the subject matter of the psalm itself) of how it eventually came to be one of the assigned readings for Pentecost, but such a historical setting for Psalm 68 is far from clear, and Thackeray's proposal must be considered an unproven hypothesis.

We may now return to consider Caird's final point, that the association of Pentecost with the Torah seems to be implied in Acts 2.¹⁶ In support of this Caird refers to a note in A. Guilding's *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship* (1960), so we shall attempt to evaluate the evidence she offers for the association of Pentecost with the giving of the Torah based on Acts 2.¹⁷ Guilding begins with the observation that B. Pesahim 68b preserves a tradition that Pentecost was the day on which the Law was given.¹⁸ Although no similar tradition has been discovered in Josephus or Philo, the similarities between the Lucan account of the giving of the Spirit at Pente-

these problems may be found in S. Iwry, "Notes on Psalm 68", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 71 (1952), pp. 161-65. A theory which has gained some recognition has been proposed by W. F. Albright in the light of discoveries from the Ras Shamra tablets. He suggests, in "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems (Psalm LXVIII)", *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23 (1950-51), pp. 1-39, that the psalm consisted of a collection of incipits (first lines of poems) from the Solomonic period, but later came to be understood (or perhaps better, misunderstood) as a unitary composition. More recently M. Dahood, *Psalms II: 50-100*, Anchor Bible 17 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), pp. 130-52, has incorporated some elements of Albright's analysis, but argues for a much greater conceptual unity throughout the entire psalm than the earlier theory would have allowed. Dahood (p. 133) would classify Psalm 68 as a triumphal hymn which, in mythopoeic language and mythological motifs that are sometimes historicized, celebrates the defeat of the Egyptians and the deliverance of the Israelites (68:2-7), the escape into the wilderness and the theophany at Sinai (2-9), and the settlement in Canaan (10-15), with the remainder of the psalm repeating variations on these themes. Within this framework he sees 68:16-19 as a reprise of the Sinai theophany theme. Whether or not one agrees completely with Dahood's analysis, it is easy to see why Psalm 68 became associated with the feast of Pentecost as soon as the feast itself began to be seen as a celebration of the giving of the Torah on Mt Sinai.

¹⁶G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", p. 540; n. 1.

¹⁷A. Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 181, n. 1. Guilding also mentions the use of Psalm 68 (along with Psalm 110) as a psalm for Pentecost in the synagogue liturgy in "Some Obscured Rubrics and Lectionary Allusions in the Psalter", *Journal of Theological Studies* 3 (n.s., 1952), p. 54.

¹⁸Also mentioned by G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, p. 48 (see n. 6 above).

cost and Philo's account of the giving of the Torah at Sinai have often been noted. Philo's statement in *De decalogo* 9 is of particular interest, because there he says that at the giving of the Law God commanded an invisible sound to be created which changed the air into flaming fire:

τὸν ἀέρα σχηματίσασα καὶ ἐπιτείνασα καὶ πρὸς πῦρ φλογοειδὲς μεταβαλοῦσα καθάπερ πνεῦμα διὰ σάλπιγγος φωνὴν τοσαύτην ἔναρθρον ἐξήχησεν.¹⁹

Although this parallel with Acts 2 is noted by Guilding in general terms, she does not mention an even more striking specific parallel with the giving of the Spirit in the NT: the occurrence in Philo's description of the giving of the Torah of the words πνεῦμα, φωνή, and ἐξήχησεν. Πνεῦμα used of the Spirit occurs throughout Acts 2; φωνή occurs in 2:6 as a description of the noise of those who began speaking with other tongues which caused a multinational crowd to gather (presumably out of curiosity). Perhaps the most interesting word of the three, however, is ἐξήχησεν (from ἐξηχέω, "to sound forth"). This may well be similar enough to ἐξέχεεν (from ἐκχέω, "to pour out"), used in Acts 2:33 in reference to the outpouring of the Spirit, to have suggested itself as a sort of word-play to a first century Christian reader, especially if one were already predisposed to associate the feast of Pentecost with the giving of the Torah.²⁰ Later in *De decalogo* 11 Philo adds,

φωνὴ δ' ἐκ μέσου τοῦ ῥυέντος ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ πυρὸς ἐξήχει καταπληκτικωτάτη, τῆς φλογὸς εἰς διάλεκτον ἀρθρουμένης τὴν συνήθη τοῖς ἀκωμένοις, ἧ τὰ λεγόμενα οὕτως ἔναργῶς ἔτρανοῦτο, ὡς ὄραν αὐτὰ μᾶλλον

¹⁹The Greek text of *De decalogo* is from *Philonis Alexandrini, Opera quae supersunt*, vol. 4, ed. L. Cohn (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1902; reprint ed., Walter de Gruyter, 1962), p. 276.

²⁰Of course, there is also the possibility that the suggested association of similar words was a deliberate attempt on the part of the author of Acts to model his account of the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost on Philo's account of the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Such may be the case, but it would be almost impossible to establish such a relationship of literary dependence with certainty. Acts 2:33 and its relation to Psalm 68 and the giving of the Spirit will be discussed in the following section of the present chapter (see below, pp. 219ff.).

ἡ ἀκούειν δοκεῖν.²¹

(...a voice sounded forth from the midst of the fire that streamed from heaven...for the flame became articulate speech in a language familiar to the hearers, and so clearly and distinctly did it express its words that the people seemed to see rather than hear them.)²²

Guilding sees this as an obvious parallel to Luke's account in Acts 2:5-13 that men "from every nation under heaven" (ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν) were gathered in Jerusalem, and each heard the apostles speaking in his own language (καὶ πῶς ἡμεῖς ἀκούομεν ἕκαστος τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἡμῶν). Guilding also mentions two rabbinic accounts which show similarity to the Lucan account in Acts 2: Mekilta Bahodesh (on Ex. 19:1), which states that the Torah was given to all the nations of the earth, though only Israel accepted it, and Tanhuma 26c, which records that the Decalogue went forth with a single sound, which divided itself into seven voices and seventy tongues, so that all people received the Torah in their own language. Guilding suggests that although the account in Exodus 19 (one of the assigned readings for the feast of Pentecost)²³ mentions fire and smoke atop Mt Sinai, there is nothing that would correspond to the sevenfold voice of God described in the latter of the two rabbinic accounts, so another source must be sought for this idea. The source Guilding proposes is Psalm 29, assigned by B. Soferim 18.3 as a reading for Pentecost.²⁴ Seven times in the psalm the voice of Yahweh is mentioned (29:3, 4 [2x], 5, 7, 8, and 9), and verse 7 in particular states, "the voice of Yahweh cleaves the flames of fire"; these indications may have given rise to the rabbinic accounts mentioned

²¹Again, the Greek text is from *Philonis Alexandrini, Opera quae supersunt*, vol. 4, ed. L. Cohn (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1902; reprint ed., Walter de Gruyter, 1962), p. 279.

²²The English translation of this portion of *De decalogo* 11 is that given by A. Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship*, p. 181, n. 1.

²³See above, pp. 198-201.

²⁴See above, pp. 202-3.

above. Against this it must be noted, however, as Guilding herself points out, that the LXX superscription for Psalm 29 assigned it not to Pentecost but to the concluding ceremony of the feast of Tabernacles (ἐξοδίου σκηνῆς).

The evidence Guilding offers from the rabbinic sources is subject to the normal criticism of all classical rabbinic literature when used to explain NT material: it is unquestionably of later date than the NT itself. It appears that the strongest evidence offered is that from Philo's *De decalogo*, since his work is almost certainly prior to the writing of the NT documents. Philo's reference to the sevenfold voice of God and the seventy languages in which it was heard strongly suggest that, of the later rabbinic writings mentioned by Guilding, these elements (at least) had their origins in or before the first century CE. Whether the association of the feast of Pentecost with the giving of the Torah is implied by Acts 2, however, has not yet been proven. Caird, in citing Guilding's evidence, appears to have assumed that it suggested some sort of deliberate allusion to Philo's description (or at least of a tradition similar to that found in Philo) on the part of Luke, an allusion which indicated Luke's awareness of the association of the feast of Pentecost with the giving of the Law at Sinai. This is certainly possible, but we will need to examine more evidence before we can concur with such a conclusion.

Before we leave Caird's attempt to associate the feast of Pentecost with the giving of the Law, there is one additional piece of evidence that warrants brief discussion. Caird mentions a rabbinic comment on Ps. 68:11 found in B. Shabbath 88b:

R. Jonathan said: What is meant by this verse, 'The Lord gives the word; they that publish the glad tidings are a great host'? Every single word that went forth from

the Omnipotent was split up into seventy tongues.²⁵

Caird infers from this bit of rabbinic exegesis that behind the composition of Acts 2 (as well as Eph. 4:7-11) there existed a Christian exegesis (or adaptation of a rabbinic exegesis) of Psalm 68. Once again, however, references to the Babylonian Talmud, which as a written composition is certainly later than the NT, do not constitute definitive proof of either Christian or rabbinic doctrine in the first century CE. We may, however, view the evidence as suggestive, because (1) there was certainly an oral tradition which preceded the written Talmud, although it cannot be precisely dated; and (2) the quotation from B. Shabbath 88b is similar to statements found in Tanḥuma 26c as mentioned by Guilding and discussed above. Repetition of evidence in rabbinic literature probably tends to increase the chances that it is indeed considerably more ancient than the written sources in which it is found.²⁶

Another recent study which has argued for the association of the feast of Pentecost with the celebration of the giving of the Torah to Moses at Mt Sinai is J. Potin's *La Fête Juive de la Pentecôte* (1971). Potin has examined in detail the Targums to Exodus 19 and 20, along with other related Targums, which deal with the theophany at Sinai and the giving of the Torah. He attempts to determine the religious significance of the feast of Pentecost with the aid of the Targums read in the course of the synagogue liturgy. The major difficulty with such a study, as Potin points out, is to determine how and when the original feast of Weeks, an agricultural festival, became the celebration of God's covenant with Israel (according to Essene and priestly tradition) and of the giving of the Torah (according to

²⁵G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", pp. 543-44.

²⁶See also the brief discussion of problems involved in dating the contents of rabbinic literature in ch. 3, pp. 108-10.

rabbinic tradition).²⁷ Potin concludes that in Essene tradition it was the renewal of the covenant which was most significant, so that Pentecost was celebrated as an annual covenant renewal ceremony, with the old feast of Weeks becoming the most important festival in the liturgical calendar. Such indications may be found in the Book of Jubilees. This interpretation of Pentecost differs significantly from the rabbinic tradition, however, where it is the theophany of Sinai and the giving of the Torah that are most important. Thus the two traditions reflect differing theological emphases. Because of the silence of Philo and Josephus regarding the feast of Pentecost as a celebration of the giving of the law, Potin is inclined to date the assignment of such a significance to Pentecost at about the time of the destruction of the Temple, when the Pharisees were able to impose their calendar and theological concepts upon the remnants of Judaism.²⁸

With regard to the use of Psalm 68 as a part of the synagogue liturgy for the feast of Pentecost, Potin notes a number of themes in common with other texts like Tg Habakkuk 3 and Tg Exodus 19, although he does not propose a date for the association of the psalm with Pentecost. Potin attributes the change in the text of Tg Ps. 68:19 to the targumist, who reversed the order of the consonants $\eta\text{ל}$ to read $\text{ל}\eta$ in order to derive his interpretation of the verse as a reference to the ascent and descent of Moses at Mt Sinai. This interpretation appears to have been known and used by the author of Ephesians in 4:8; according to Potin, "on peut donc dire que Paul a connu cette interprétation targumique".²⁹

²⁷J. Potin, *La Fête Juive de la Pentecôte: Étude des textes liturgiques*, Lectio Divina 65 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971), vol. 1, pp. 117-23.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 137-39.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 196-97.

The Book of Jubilees, Ascension, and Pentecost

Additional evidence which implies the association of the feast of Pentecost with the giving of the Torah at Mt Sinai has been mentioned by A. T. Lincoln, who suggests this association existed from the mid-second century BCE.³⁰ The Book of Jubilees makes Pentecost the most important of the annual festivals on the Jewish liturgical calendar. It is associated with various covenants in Israel's history, but especially with the covenant at Sinai (1:5, 6:11, 6:17, and 15:1-24). Since it is generally accepted that Jubilees was written between 135 and 105 BCE, this would point to the mid- to late second century BCE as the period in which the feast of Pentecost (Weeks) began to be regarded not only as a harvest festival, but also as a celebration of the giving of the Law at Sinai.³¹ In addition to the evidence mentioned by Lincoln, there is an interesting correspondence between two notations in Jubilees 1:1 and 15:1 which would strengthen the argument that the Book of Jubilees, at the time it was written, offers evidence for the feast of Pentecost being celebrated as the commemoration of the giving of the Torah to Moses. The date of Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah is given in Jubilees 1:1:

[it was] ...in the first year of the exodus of the children of Israel out of Egypt, in the third month, on the sixteenth day of the month, that God spake to Moses, saying: 'Come up to Me on the Mount...'.³²

³⁰A. T. Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982), p. 20. Similar information is also found in his previous work, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, SNTS Monograph Series 43 (Cambridge: University Press, 1981), p. 157.

³¹This is the date suggested for the composition of Jubilees by R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, vol. 2, *Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 1 (see note 12 above). For further discussion concerning the date of Jubilees, see note 53 below.

³²*The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, ed. R. H. Charles, vol. 2, *Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 11.

In Jubilees 15:1, Abraham is said to have celebrated the feast of Weeks (Pentecost) on the same day of the year:

And in the fifth year of the fourth week of this jubilee, in the third month, in the middle of the month, Abram celebrated the feast of the first fruits of the grain harvest.³³

Thus it appears that the author of Jubilees believed (or wanted those to whom he was writing to believe) that the giving of the Torah to Moses and the celebration of the feast of Pentecost coincided. Whether this is in fact the case or not is insignificant; the point is that the author of Jubilees believed (or wanted others to believe) that they did. This would be particularly understandable if, as Lincoln has suggested, the traditional association between the feast of Pentecost and the celebration of the giving of the Law found in the later rabbinic literature is as old as the Book of Jubilees. Indeed, with the emphasis in Jubilees on Pentecost as the most important of the annual festivals, and with special emphasis on its association with the covenant at Sinai, it appears probable that one of the reasons the Book of Jubilees was written was to support the connection of the giving of the Law with the feast of Weeks (Pentecost). That such may be the case is suggested by the fact that the Qumran community followed the calendar of the Book of Jubilees, and their annual celebration of the renewal of the covenant was probably combined with the annual renewal of the vows made by each individual upon entrance into the community at Pentecost.³⁴ We shall return to

³³Ibid., p. 34.

³⁴A. T. Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians", p. 20; Manual of Discipline [I QS] 1:7-2:19 is cited by Lincoln for comparison. Also mentioned in a note (n. 25, p. 51) is the calendrical work of J. van Goudoever, pp. 139-44 (see note 9 above) and the comments of J. C. Kirby, *Ephesians, Baptism and Pentecost* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1968), pp. 61-69. A. Jaubert in "Le Calendrier des Jubilés et de la Secte de Qumrân: Ses origines bibliques", *Vetus Testamentum* 3 (1953), pp. 250-64, discusses the relationship between the Book of Jubilees and the Qumran sectarians. Jaubert's hypothesis (which has not met with widespread scholarly acceptance) is that the calendar found in Jubilees was preserved by

examine the relationship between the Book of Jubilees and the feast of Pentecost further after we have investigated another approach that attempts to connect the giving of the Torah to Moses at Sinai with the celebration of Pentecost.

So far we have found strong indications that the feast of Weeks (Pentecost) had become associated with the celebration of the giving of the Torah to Moses at Sinai some time prior to the first century CE. A similar conclusion has also been reached by G. Kretschmar in an article on the relationship between the ascension and Pentecost in early Christian tradition in which he attempts to analyse traditions which attribute the celebration of the ascension to the same day as Pentecost (i.e., fifty days after Easter rather than the forty days indicated in the Lucan account in Acts 1:3). Kretschmar believes that a variant tradition which celebrated the ascension and Pentecost on the same day can certainly be traced back as early as the first century CE.³⁵ He begins with a survey of the evidence from the post-apostolic writings and the early Fathers: the *Doctrine of Addai* appears to place the ascension and the giving of the Spirit on the same day, and as late as the first half of the fourth century CE Eusebius appears to have celebrated the ascension fifty days after Easter.³⁶ Jerome, in his commentary on Matthew (on 9:15) mentions that the Montanists on the fiftieth day after Easter begin another forty days of fasting like the forty days before Easter.³⁷ Since Matt. 9:15 (the text commented upon by Jerome) states that the atten-

the Essenes and is essentially the same as the one in use at Qumran in the first century.

³⁵G. Kretschmar, "Himmelfahrt und Pfingsten", *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 66 (1954-55), pp. 209-53.

³⁶J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, vol. 24 (Paris: Garnier, 1857), col. 700.

³⁷J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*, vol. 26 (Paris: n.p., 1845), col. 58.

dants of the bridegroom will fast when the bridegroom is taken away from them, this would almost certainly indicate that the Montanists understood the ascension to have occurred on the fiftieth day after Easter.³⁸ In this evidence Kretschmar sees indications of a very old tradition, independent from that recorded in Acts and antedating the addition of that book to the canon. To trace this tradition further back, into the first century, he then turns to connections between the Christian celebration of the ascension and the giving of the Spirit on the one hand and the Jewish feast of Weeks on the other. Of the NT passages which Kretschmar examines, the first is Acts 2:1-13, in which the ascension is closely connected with the giving of the Spirit, as Peter's speech in Acts 2:32-36 makes clear. The second passage is Eph. 4:7-12: here the gifted individuals named in 4:11 are clearly seen as gifts of the exalted Christ to the church (i.e., the gifts named in the quotation from Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:8). Thus Kretschmar thinks Eph. 4:7-12 speaks of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost even though the specific word *πνεῦμα* is missing, since (1) the early church considered all the "offices" to be intimately connected with the Spirit, and (2) the connection of this passage with both Johannine and Lucan statements (GJohn 15:26, 16:7, 20:17, and 20:22; Acts 2:1-13, 2:32-34) is so close.³⁹ Kretschmar argues based on the text-form of the quotation of Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:8 for a Palestinian origin for this layer of tradition. Here he mentions the (later) rabbinic traditions which associated Ps. 68:19 with Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah as 'gifts' to

³⁸Of course this assumes the accuracy of Jerome's information concerning the Montanists, written some one and one-half centuries later.

³⁹Kretschmar, "Himmelfahrt und Pfingsten", p. 214. The description of the gifts (or gifted individuals) given to the church in Eph. 4:11ff. as "offices" is Kretschmar's terminology, not that of the present writer; he states: "...für die frühe Kirche ist jedes Amt im Geist verwurzelt...".

distribute to men.⁴⁰ It appears that the author of Ephesians (or a still earlier tradition he has employed) has taken a Jewish tradition concerning Moses and applied it to Christ. Kretschmar thinks this tradition, involving Ps. 68:19, can also be seen in the background of Acts 2:33-34;⁴¹ he thinks the connection of Moses' ascent of Sinai can be established without doubt for Eph. 4:7-11, and probably also for Acts 2:33.⁴² In further support of this he points to several examples of early Christian art which appear to link the Moses typology with the ascension of Christ.⁴³ Kretschmar concludes at this point that there are so many similarities between the depiction of Christ's ascension in early Christian tradition and the giving of the Law to Moses in Jewish tradition that one must be dependent upon the other. While for his argument it is unimportant which is older, he does point out that it is inherently more probable that the Moses-typology is the older of the two.

Kretschmar then sets out to establish the earliest possible date at which this Moses-typology could have become associated with the feast of Pentecost. It is clear that the feast of Weeks appears in the OT as a harvest festival, yet in later rabbinic writings it has become the celebration of the giving of the Torah to Moses at Sinai.⁴⁴ The question is, at what point did the significance of the feast of Pentecost shift from a harvest celebration to a

⁴⁰In the present work, these have been examined extensively in chapter 3. See above, pp. 110-35.

⁴¹The relationship of Ps. 68 to Acts 2:33 and the giving of the Spirit will be discussed at greater length in the following section of this chapter. See below, pp. 219ff.

⁴²"Für Eph. 4 ließ diese Verbindung sich ja auch eindeutig aufzeigen, für Act. 2,33 wahrscheinlich machen", Kretschmar, "Himmelfahrt und Pfingsten", p. 218.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 218-20.

⁴⁴We have already examined many of the sources involved while evaluating G. B. Caird's article earlier in this section. See above, pp. 197-207.

celebration of the giving of the Law? At this point we may add the question, in regard to the thesis put forward in the present work, whether such a shift in significance was pre-Christian or not, for if it were older than the Epistle to the Ephesians it would mean that the Moses-typology (involving Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah) would have been available to the author. This would have predisposed him to think in terms of a descent of Christ subsequent to the ascent mentioned in the psalm quotation, since Moses' descent from Sinai with the 'gifts' of the Torah followed his ascent. Kretschmar mentions the assigned readings for Pentecost in the Jewish synagogue lectionary: according to the Mishnah, Deut. 16:9-12, and in addition, from the Tosefta and the Jerusalem Talmud, Exodus 19. Both of these are mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud along with two additional prophetic readings, Ezekiel 1 and Habbakuk 3. Later layers of tradition mention as readings from the Hagiographa Psalms 68 and 29.⁴⁵ A liturgical poem from the Egyptian diaspora found in the vicinity of Oxyrhynchos appears to be a Pentecost-composition containing allusions to Exodus 19, Habbakuk 3, and Psalm 68, but a reliable date cannot be assigned.⁴⁶ Another provocative suggestion is L. Finkelstein's hypothesis that the well-known controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees over the dating of the feast of Weeks fifty days after Passover had its origins in a difference of

⁴⁵Kretschmar cites as his source for the assigned readings mentioned above I. Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt: J. Kauffmann, 1924), pp. 138, 164. Elbogen lists Ps. 68 as the appointed reading for the feast of Weeks (Pentecost) according to the Sephardic and Romanic ("der romanische, besser rumelische oder griechische") rituals (p. 138). Both of these are later than the Palestinian and Babylonian rituals. Of the two, the Romanic is older, although neither can be dated exactly, since the first surviving editions are from Venice (1524) and Constantinople (1574).

⁴⁶H. Loewe, "The Petrie-Hirschfeld Papyri", *Journal of Theological Studies* 24 (1923), pp. 126-41.

opinion concerning the nature of the feast of Weeks: the Pharisees considered the feast a celebration of a historical event, the giving of the Law at Sinai, and therefore required a fixed annual date; while the Sadducees automatically counted fifty days after Passover, since for them the feast remained only a harvest festival.⁴⁷ If this could be proven, it would strongly suggest that the shift in meaning for the feast of Weeks had already begun prior to the first century CE; however, Kretschmar in his evaluation is forced to conclude that this remains a theory without compelling proof.⁴⁸ There is no absolutely certain rabbinic evidence for the observance of Pentecost as the celebration of the giving of the Torah at Sinai before the second century CE.

From the rabbinic evidence, Kretschmar turns his attention to the Book of Jubilees.⁴⁹ Here he finds evidence that the connection between the feast of Weeks and the giving of the Torah is older than the rabbinic traditions previously examined. One of the problems associated with Jubilees is its peculiar calendar, which is arranged so that a given date falls on the same weekday in every year. The feast of Weeks, in particular, occurs annually on the fifteenth day of the third month.⁵⁰

⁴⁷L. Finkelstein, "The Book of Jubilees and the Rabbinic Halaka", *Harvard Theological Review* 16 (1923), pp. 39-61; the material on the calendar of Jubilees is found on pp. 40-45.

⁴⁸"...hat diese Argumentation L. Finkelsteins manches für sich, aber sie bleibt doch reine Hypothese ohne zwingende Beweiskraft", Kretschmar, "Himmelfahrt und Pfingsten", p. 223.

⁴⁹Some aspects of the relationship between the celebration of the feast of Weeks (Pentecost) and the Book of Jubilees have already been examined. See above, pp. 200-201, 209-10.

⁵⁰The details of the calendrical system are found in Jubilees 6, which states that a year is to contain 364 days (52 weeks) with 4 quarters of 91 days each. This can be interpreted in several different ways. If the calendar of Jubilees consists of a solar calendar of 364 days with 12 months of 30 days each plus 4 commemorative days outside of the monthly reckoning, one at the beginning of each of the four seasons, it would contain 52 weeks, and a given date would fall on the same day of the week in every year. Although Finkelstein, in *Harvard Theological Review* 16 (1923), p. 42, has argued for a calendar of 12 months of 28

As long ago as 1925 J. Morgenstern demonstrated that the calendar of Jubilees is older than that of the rabbis and in its essential elements contains ancient Israelite traditions.⁵¹ More recently A. Jaubert proposed that this calendar originated at the same time as the priestly code ("le code sacerdotal") and the book of Ezekiel.⁵² Since it is probable that the Book of Jubilees was written in the Maccabean period, (perhaps in the first quarter of the second century BCE) the older priestly calendar it contains probably had some influence on the Pharisees.⁵³ This calendar also found its way

days each with an intercalary week at the end of each quarter of the year, O. S. Wintermute ["Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction", in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), pp. 35-142] favours the former view, with months of 30 days and 4 annual commemorative days per year (p. 39), and this appears to be the present consensus. Which of these reconstructions may be more accurate is beyond the scope of the present work. The important point to note is that with either system, a given date would fall on the same day of the week in every year, thus insuring absolute regularity for the celebration of the festivals.

⁵¹J. Morgenstern, "The Three Calendars of Ancient Israel", *Hebrew Union College Annual* 1 (1925), pp. 13-78; also "Supplementary Studies in the Calendars of Ancient Israel", *Hebrew Union College Annual* 10 (1935), pp. 1-148.

⁵²A. Jaubert, "Le Calendrier des Jubilés et de la Secte de Qumrân: Ses origines bibliques", *Vetus Testamentum* 3 (1953), pp. 250-64, esp. pp. 258-63. Kretschmar expresses some doubt over the validity of her thesis, at least in its entirety ("Himmelfahrt und Pfingsten", p. 225, n. 69). Caird, as we have seen, also mentions that the process of assigning historical associations to the old agricultural festivals of ancient Israel was already occurring in the priestly code within the Pentateuch (see above, p. 198). Although he states no source for his assertion, he may well have been aware of Jaubert's article.

⁵³On the dating of Jubilees Kretschmar mentions the work of H. H. Rowley and P. Kahle. This material may be found in H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*, 2nd ed. (London: Lutterworth Press, 1947; reprint ed., Greenwood, SC: Attic Press, 1980), pp. 99-105, and P. E. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (London: British Academy, 1947; reprint ed., Munich: Kraus, 1980), p. 12, n. 3. An even earlier date for Jubilees, sometime in the post-exilic period prior to the time of the Maccabees, has been proposed by S. Zeitlin, "The Book of Jubilees: Its Character and its Significance", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 30 (1939), pp. 1-31. Zeitlin argues that the text of the Torah used by the author of Jubilees differs substantially from that known to us today, and that in the time when Jubilees was written several differing texts of the Torah may have been in circulation. This would suggest that Jubilees is older than the Maccabean period, before the present text of the Torah became established as the standard one. Zeitlin's theory, which places great weight on the calendrical system of Jubilees, has not met with widespread acceptance. See also note 31 above. On the influence of the Jubilees calendar on the Pharisees, see S. Gandz, "Studies in the Hebrew Calendar", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 40 (1949-50), pp. 251-77; especially pp. 274-77, which give a summary of the historical development as reconstructed by Gandz. The most up-to-date survey of problems and theories concerning the dating of Jubilees is found in O. S.

into the astronomical book contained in the Ethiopian Book of Enoch (chs. 72-75) and in Slavic Enoch (chs. 11-16).

But in Jubilees the feast of Weeks appears as more than just an agricultural festival; it was the day on which the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai was to be celebrated. This took place on the fifteenth day of the third month, on which the Torah was given to Israel and the covenant between God and Israel was confirmed.⁵⁴ According to Jubilees 6:1-2 the feast of Weeks was instituted after the Noahic flood when God sealed the covenant with Noah. On the fifteenth day of the third month God made the covenant with Abraham, and he celebrated the feast of Weeks (14:10-11, 15:1). On the same date Isaac was born (16:13), and Jacob was blessed by Abraham (22:1-2), thus renewing the covenant (22:15). Jubilees 6:19 seems to indicate that the celebration of the feast of Weeks was renewed at Sinai. In fact, it appears likely that the author of Jubilees conceived of a single covenant of God made with Israel in the distant past and renewed throughout history on repeated occasions. It was as a commemoration of this covenant that the feast of Weeks was to be celebrated. Kretschmar thinks it probable that such a significance for the feast of Weeks is connected to still

Wintermute, "Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction", in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), pp. 35-142, esp. pp. 43-44. Wintermute attempts to relate the discovery of fragments of Jubilees found at Qumran to the problem of dating the work. He concludes that Jubilees must have been written (1) before the date of the earliest fragment found at Qumran; (2) before the date of Qumran documents that depend on Jubilees; and (3) before the date of the split between the Maccabean establishment and the Qumran sect. This points to a date between 161-140 BCE, somewhat earlier than the previous consensus.

⁵⁴This clearly appears to be an instance of covenant renewal as far as Jubilees is concerned. Moses ascended up to God on the 16th day of the 3rd month according to Jubilees 1:1. The order of events of Moses' ascent appears to follow that of Ex. 24:12. Thus the offering which ratified the covenant (described in Ex. 24:3-8) would have taken place on the preceding day, the 15th day of the 3rd month. Probably, however, the entire giving of the Law recounted in Ex. 19:16ff. would have also taken place prior to the ratification and offering of the 15th day.

earlier traditions and did not originate with the Book of Jubilees itself.⁵⁵ Hints of this may be found in 2 Chron. 15:8-15 when King Asa gathered all Judah and Benjamin, along with many from the northern tribes, together at Jerusalem "in the third month" to renew the covenant between God and Israel. Thus Kretschmar concludes that the connection between the feast of Weeks and the giving of the Law at Sinai is pre-Christian, although the point of contact between the two traditions is not the Law but the covenant. Later in Palestinian Christian circles the old Jewish feast of Pentecost continued to be celebrated, in which the previous content of the feast (Moses' ascension of Sinai to receive the Torah and the renewing of the covenant) was preserved as a type of the new salvation-history of the ascension and the founding of the church, in much the same way as the Jewish Passover carried over in the Christian celebration of Easter.⁵⁶ Kretschmar's reconstruction of the Jewish interpretation of Psalm 68 and its influence on early Christian tradition has since been cited with approval by C. F. D. Moule⁵⁷ and R. Le Déaut; the latter considers the connection between the ascension of Christ and Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai to be well established.⁵⁸ More recently conclusions similar to Kretschmar's have been advanced by J. Dupont who also regards them as virtually certain.⁵⁹

Thus it appears probable that the feast of Weeks (Pentecost) had become associated with the celebration of the giving of the Torah to Moses at

⁵⁵Kretschmar, "Himmelfahrt und Pfingsten", p. 226.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 229.

⁵⁷C. F. D. Moule, "The Ascension—Acts i. 9", *Expository Times* 68 (1956-57), p. 206, n. 3.

⁵⁸R. Le Déaut, "Pentecôte et tradition juive", *Assemblée du Seigneur* 51 (1963), p. 32.

⁵⁹J. Dupont, "Ascension du Christ et don de l'Esprit d'après Actes 2:33", in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), pp. 219-28. A list of Dupont's published works on the significance of Pentecost and the possible allusion to Ps. 68:19 in Acts 2:33 are given in the article cited, p. 224, n. 20.

Sinai some time prior to the first century, probably in the Maccabean period around the time the Book of Jubilees was written, if not sooner. This conclusion has important implications for the present work, because it suggests that a tradition associating Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah was already associated with the feast of Pentecost (and probably with Psalm 68 as well) prior to the time Ephesians was written. Awareness of such traditions would explain why the author of Ephesians found it necessary to infer a descent (in Eph. 4:9-10) from the ascent mentioned in the quotation from Ps. 68:19 (Eph. 4:8), since Moses, following his ascent of Mt Sinai to 'take captive' the words of Torah, descended to distribute them as 'gifts' to men. But just as for the author of Ephesians it was Christ who made the victorious ascent, so also it was Christ who descended (as the Spirit) to distribute gifts to his church. Before drawing any final conclusions, however, we shall examine more closely the account of the first Christian Pentecost in Acts 2 to see if further corroborative evidence may be found there.

Psalm 68, Acts 2:33, and the Giving of the Spirit

We have already seen that in Jewish tradition the feast of Pentecost appears to have become associated with the celebration of the giving of the Torah to Moses at some time prior to the first century CE. It is also possible that Psalm 68 had become associated with this tradition as well, because of its similarities to the description of the giving of the Law at Sinai in the accounts in the Pentateuch. In light of the Christian interpretation of Pentecost as the giving of the Spirit to the church found in Acts 2:1-47, it would not have taken great imagination for the author of Ephesians to relate Ps. 68:19, which in all probability he understood already as a reference to

Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah for distribution as gifts to men on the basis of Jewish tradition, with the descent of the Spirit to distribute gifted individuals to the young church. Such a connection would have been even easier to make if the writer were familiar with a version of Ps. 68:19 which contained ἔδωκεν, קָבַץ (as in Tg Ps. 68:19) or its equivalent in place of קָבַץ or ἔλαβες (as in the MT and LXX). Although it is entirely possible that the author of Ephesians himself could have made such an interpretive change in the text, it seems unlikely (given the existence of the same variant in Tg Ps. 68:19 and several other early sources) that he found it necessary to do so.⁶⁰

Certainly the connection of Psalm 68 with Pentecost and the giving of the Spirit may have been original with the author of Ephesians. But if the psalm were already associated with Pentecost in early Christian as well as Jewish tradition, then in all probability the author of Ephesians was merely adopting a use of Psalm 68 already familiar to him. We shall now attempt to trace the connection of Psalm 68 with Pentecost in early Christian tradition by showing that Psalm 68 also lies behind the account of the first Christian Pentecost in Acts 2:1-47.

Acts 2:33, toward the end of Peter's speech as recorded in Acts 2:14-36, has been a focus of attention for those who consider Psalm 68 to be in the background of the tradition concerning the first Christian Pentecost. The Greek text of Acts 2:32-33 reads:

τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀνέστησεν ὁ θεός, οὗ πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν μάρτυρες·
τῇ δεξιᾷ οὖν τοῦ θεοῦ ὑψωθείς, τὴν τε ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ

⁶⁰See ch. 3, pp. 136-47, for a discussion of additional differences in the text of Ps. 68:19 as found in the MT, LXX, Tg Psalms, and the quotation in Eph. 4:8. Among those who have held that the author of Ephesians himself was responsible for a deliberate alteration in the wording of Psalm 68 in order to achieve his interpretation is S. L. Edgar, "New Testament and Rabbinic Messianic Interpretation", *New Testament Studies* 5 (1958-59), pp. 47-54.

ἀγίου λαβῶν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, ἐξέχεεν τοῦτο ὁ ὑμεῖς καὶ βλέπετε καὶ ἀκούετε.⁶¹

It is clear that there is no direct quotation from Psalm 68 present in this text. However, considerable scholarly discussion has taken place concerning the possibility of an allusion to Ps. 68:19 underlying the text of Acts 2 as it stands today.

The first modern interpreter to suggest that Ps. 68:19 lies behind Acts 2:33 was F. H. Chase, who in 1902 published a series of lectures on Acts given the previous year. He proposed that the connection between Christ's ascent to heaven and his exaltation to the right hand of God mentioned in the following verse (Acts 2:34) is best explained if the tradition behind 2:33 originally contained a citation of Ps. 68:19 which has become virtually unrecognizable in the existing redaction. Chase suggested Psalm 68:19 as the source of the quotation in the underlying tradition not only because of the sequence of thought, but on the basis of the actual language of Acts 2:33-34, which uses the words ὑψωθείς, ἀνέβη, and λαβῶν.⁶² Chase's suggestion was taken up by H. J. Cadbury in his 1933 study of the speeches in Acts, which was primarily concerned with the manner of presentation of the argument from scripture.⁶³ Cadbury saw in Acts 2:34, which begins with οὐ γὰρ Δαυὶδ ἀνέβη εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, a reference to a psalm which speaks of an ascent to heaven. Beginning with οὐ γὰρ the author (or speaker) of the source behind the present text of Acts affirms that the aforementioned ascent does not

⁶¹*Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. E. Nestle and K. Aland, 26th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979), ad loc.

⁶²F. H. Chase, *The Credibility of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Macmillan, 1902), p. 151. This work constituted the Hulsean Lectures for 1900-1901.

⁶³H. J. Cadbury, "Note XXXII. The Speeches in Acts", in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, part 1: *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake, vol. 5: *Additional Notes to the Commentary*, ed. K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury (London: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 402-27. Cadbury's comments on Acts 2:33-34 are found on pp. 408-9.

concern the presumed author of the psalm (the same explanatory use of γάρ may be seen in Acts 13:36).⁶⁴ Verse 34 contains a quotation from Ps. 110:1, however, which corresponds only vaguely to the idea of an ascent to heaven, and does not appear sufficient to account for the entire statement in verse 33. Thus the reference to a heavenly ascent in 2:34 must have been inferred from something in 2:33; but the problem arises when one attempts to find in Acts 2:33 mention of a psalm which speaks of an ascent to heaven: no explicit quotation of such a psalm is to be found. What remains in 2:33 appear to be traces of an allusion to Ps. 68:19: the participle ὑψωθείς recalls the phrase ἀναβάς εἰς ὕψος in Ps. 68:19, and the phrase λαβὼν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν suggests the phrase ἔλαβες δόματα (Ps. 67:19 LXX).⁶⁵ Cadbury also noted that there are other instances where scriptures are implied but not actually quoted in Acts; this is clear from 13:15, where readings from the law and the prophets are mentioned, but not specified.

Cadbury's suggestion is repeated (with some expansion) by W. L. Knox in his brief work on Acts published in 1948. Knox also proposes that the argument of Acts 2:32-36 is much more easily understood if one supposes that the source used by Luke made allusion to Ps. 68:19 at this point (according to Knox, "Luke was not well enough versed in rabbinical theology to appreciate an allusion which in his sources was probably made clearer").⁶⁶ Knox goes on to mention that Psalm 68 is today one of the assigned readings for Pentecost in the modern Jewish prayer book, and the rabbinic exegesis of the psalm applied it to Moses, who ascended Mt Sinai to

⁶⁴This reference is incorrectly cited by Cadbury, p. 409, as Acts 13:37.

⁶⁵See the comparison between the texts of Ps. 68:19 found in the MT, LXX, Eph. 4:8, and Tg Psalms in ch. 3 above, pp. 136-47.

⁶⁶W. L. Knox, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge: University Press, 1948), pp. 85-86.

receive the law and bring it down to men. Knox goes on to state:

Luke's source was no doubt aware of the appropriateness of the Psalm in view of the rabbinical interpretation, and I suspect that we have in it evidence that the Psalm in question was already a Psalm for Pentecost in the Jewish liturgy.⁶⁷

These assertions by Knox have been criticized on two counts by J. Dupont:

(1) they are based on later Jewish traditions, which Knox makes no attempt to trace back as early as the first century CE; and (2) in positing that Luke's source quoted or alluded to Psalm 68, Knox makes no attempt to find in the extant text of Acts 2:33 any remaining vestige of Ps. 68:19.⁶⁸

G. Kretschmar, whose 1955 article we have already discussed at some length in the preceding section, also sees the possibility that Acts 2:33 has been influenced by Ps. 68:19.⁶⁹ He argues that the agreement between Eph. 4:7-12, Acts 2:33, and the Johannine tradition concerning the manner in which they associate the exaltation of Christ and the giving of the Spirit indicates an ancient tradition within Christianity. Kretschmar also establishes that by the time the Book of Jubilees and the related Qumran texts were written, the feast of Pentecost had already become associated with the celebration of the giving of the law at Sinai. Such a background would suggest (if Ps. 68:19 were understood in Jewish tradition at this time to refer to Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah) that the allusion to Ps. 68:19 in

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 86. See ch. 3, pp. 110-35, for a discussion of the rabbinic interpretations of Ps. 68:19, and the preceding section of the present chapter, pp. 197-208, for the evidence connecting Ps. 68 with the celebration of the giving of the law and the Jewish feast of Pentecost.

⁶⁸J. Dupont, "Ascension du Christ et don de l'Esprit d'après Actes 2:33", p. 222. Although Dupont's criticisms of Knox's assertions are valid as such, much more work has been done on the antiquity of the Jewish traditions associating Ps. 68 with Moses' ascent of Sinai. See the discussions of this in ch. 3, pp. 108-35, and the previous section of the present chapter, which deals with the tradition surrounding the Jewish feast of Pentecost and the celebration of the giving of the law at Sinai, pp. 209-19. With regard to Dupont's second criticism, others before Knox had already shown such literary traces of Ps. 68:19 in Acts 2:33-34 (see the discussion of the suggestions of F. H. Chase and H. J. Cadbury above).

⁶⁹G. Kretschmar, "Himmelfahrt und Pfingsten", *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 66 (1954-55), pp. 209-53. See the preceding section, pp. 211ff.

Acts 2:33 implied a replacement of the current Moses-typology with that of Christ's ascent and the giving of the Spirit.

Not long after Kretschmar's article appeared, his suggestions were taken up by C. F. D. Moule in a 1957 article on the ascension in Acts.⁷⁰ Moule notes that Ps. 68:19, quoted in its "Rabbinical interpretation" in Eph. 4:8, may also be alluded to in Acts 2:33.⁷¹ In either case, the psalm was applied by Jewish interpreters to Moses, who ascended Mt Sinai to receive the Torah from God and give it in turn to men, and Christians saw in Christ the new Moses. More recently R. Le Déaut, in an article first published in 1961, has also noted that Ps. 68:19 has probably influenced the redaction of Acts 2:33, although he does not elaborate as to how such influence originated or what the redaction history of the Acts passage might have been.⁷²

In the same year that Le Déaut's article first appeared, B. Lindars put forward in his *New Testament Apologetic* the theory that Ps. 68:19 (alluded to in Acts 2:33) was behind the Christian concept of the giving of the Spirit. Lindars attempts through an approach based on tradition history to get behind the extant text of Acts 2 and to discover the redactional elements which can be attributed to Luke. He sees a relationship between Ps. 68:19 and the texts explicitly cited in Acts 2:25-28 and 2:34b-35, Ps. 16:8-11 and Ps. 110:1. These form part of an argument intended to prove that Jesus is indeed the Messiah: Ps. 16:10-11, in particular, demands a messianic interpretation; since it cannot be true of David himself, it must refer to the resurrection of Jesus, who is therefore the Christ. Following the repetition

⁷⁰C. F. D. Moule, "The Ascension—Acts i. 9", *Expository Times* 68 (1956-57), pp. 205-209.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 206, n. 3.

⁷²R. Le Déaut, "Pentecôte et tradition juive", *Assemblée du Seigneur* 51 (1963), p. 33. This essay originally appeared in *Spiritus* 7 (1961), pp. 127-44.

of Ps. 16:10 in Acts 2:31 there are two comments on the final line of Psalm 16 (quoted in Acts 2:28). One concerns the place of the resurrected Messiah (exalted to God's right hand), preserved in Luke's composition in the quotation of Ps. 110:1 (Acts 2:34b-35). The second comment concerns the Messiah's function: he received the Spirit (in order to dispense it to others) subsequent to his exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33). This, according to Lindars, was probably derived from Ps. 68:19. Although the quotation of Ps. 68:19 has not survived intact in Luke's composition, the words λαβών and perhaps also ὑψωθείς in Acts 2:33 are probably derived from a reference to the psalm.⁷³

Lindars then turns his attention to further instances where a similar use of Ps. 68:19 may be found: Eph. 4:8 and Acts 5:31. The former passage constitutes a midrash peshar on the text of Ps. 68:19, and although this text lies behind Acts 2:33 and Acts 5:31 as well, only in Eph. 4:8 does the explicit quotation of the psalm survive in the present form of the text. In the quotation of Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:8 Lindars notes the changes in wording from the LXX, including the significant change from ἔλαβες to ἔδωκεν.⁷⁴ In his opinion this change does not result from the influence of the Targum to the Psalms (which reads יהבתי in place of לקחתי in the MT) because he sees no other evidence that the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 found in Tg Psalms has had any influence on Eph. 4:8.⁷⁵ It is possible that the author of Tg Psalms and the author of Ephesians independently made use of a Hebrew textual

⁷³B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM, 1961), pp. 42-45.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 52-53. Differences between the text of Ps. 68:19 as found in the LXX and Eph. 4:8 are discussed at length in ch. 3, pp. 136-47.

⁷⁵Again, see ch. 3, pp. 137ff., for a comparison of the MT of Ps. 68:19 with Tg Ps. 68:19, the LXX text, and Eph. 4:8.

tradition which read "gave" (חלקה) for "received" (לקחה).⁷⁶ Lindars thinks it is unlikely, however, that such a variant would yield ἔδωκες in a Greek text and יהבהא in Tg Psalms.⁷⁷ In Eph. 4:8 the modification from "received" to "gave" is probably a case of midrash peshar which involved modification of the text. As such it seems to have an interpretive motive, since the idea of giving dominates the immediate context in Ephesians, although it is probable that the author of Ephesians himself did not make the change, but was familiar with a form of the text of Ps. 68:19 in which the change from "received" to "gave" had already been made.⁷⁸

Lindars specifically rejects any notion that the Moses-typology has had an effect on the use of Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:8, since he does not see any influence of such a typology on the interpretation of the psalm found in the following verses of Ephesians.⁷⁹ We have seen already that the connection between Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah and the feast of Pentecost probably extends back much earlier than this, possibly as early as the second century BCE; Pentecost had already become associated with the celebration of the giving of the Torah long before the epistle to the Ephesians

⁷⁶This suggestion also originated with H. St J. Thackeray, *The Relation of St Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought*, p. 182.

⁷⁷The Greek text of Eph. 4:8 reads ἔδωκεν; the second person singular verb of the Hebrew text has been modified to third person singular. A possibility that Lindars does not discuss, mentioned above in ch. 3, p. 140, n. 106, is that a variant which changed "received" to "gave" was present in a Greek text of Ps. 68:19 known to both the author of Ephesians and the targumist. Greek influence is clearly present in Tg Psalms (see above, ch. 3, pp. 95-108) and it is not inconceivable that the targumist was dependent on a Greek text to some extent for his translation.

⁷⁸Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, pp. 52-53. A theory similar to this, that Eph. 4:8 and Tg Ps. 68:19 both witness to a form of the text in which the change from "received" to "gave" had already occurred, has been advanced by R. Rubinkiewicz, "Psalm LXVIII 19 (= Eph IV 8) Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", *Novum Testamentum* 17 (1975), pp. 219-24. See ch. 3, pp. 148-54 for a discussion of Rubinkiewicz's proposal.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 59, n. 1. Lindars does acknowledge in this note that such a typology might have been "a factor in the wider background of thought", however.

was written. Psalm 68 itself may or may not have become associated with the Jewish celebration of Pentecost at some time prior to the composition of Acts; if Chase, Cadbury, Knox, Kretschmar, Moule, Le Déaut, and others (including Lindars himself, as well as the present writer) are correct in their assertion that the tradition behind Acts 2:33 in its present form has been influenced by Ps. 68:19, then an association of Psalm 68 with Pentecost almost certainly antedates Ephesians in Christian (if not in Jewish) tradition. The one point that cannot be established with absolute certainty is a link between Moses and the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 at such an early period. The influence that such Moses-typology (if present) has had on the author of Ephesians need not be a positive one, in the sense that Christ is presented as a new and greater Moses (as may be the case in the Gospel of John if W. Meeks is correct in his interpretation of the influence of Moses-typology on the author of the Fourth Gospel).⁸⁰ It may instead be more polemical in nature: it was not Moses who ascended to heaven and brought down the Torah as gifts for men, but Christ who ascended to heaven at his exaltation and subsequently descended as the Spirit to give spiritually gifted individuals to the church. If one assumes general familiarity with the traditions of Moses' heavenly ascent in circulation at the time, the author of Ephesians would not necessarily need to make explicit mention of Moses in this context in order for the polemical nature of his use of Ps. 68:19 to be evident.⁸¹

⁸⁰W. A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 14 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), pp. 286-319.

⁸¹Although such mention of Moses elsewhere in Ephesians would obviously strengthen the case for such a polemical reference here. In the final analysis, the motivation of the author of Ephesians with regard to his use of the Moses-traditions associated with Ps. 68:19 must remain the subject of speculation; a polemical interpretation, while possible, cannot be conclusively proven from the evidence at hand.

Lindars observes that all three of the texts which appear to be influenced by Ps. 68:19 (Acts 2:33, 5:31, and Eph. 4:8) are concerned with the idea of the giving of the Spirit. He suggests the possibility that ἐξέχεεν in Acts 2:33 may have been substituted for ἔδωκεν in the original quotation from Ps. 68:19 under the influence of the quotation from Joel 3:1ff. in Acts 2:17. If this is correct it would represent an intermediate stage in the modification of the text of Ps. 68:19, where both the ideas of receiving and of giving are present.⁸² This is a possible but not a necessary inference, and is not subject to verification: the quotation from Joel 3:1ff. is sufficient to explain the presence of ἐξέχεεν in Acts 2:33, so that the existence of a version of Ps. 68:19 which contained a conflate reading is not demanded. In spite of the speculative nature of this last point, Lindars is probably correct to relate the passages in question to the idea of the giving of the Spirit; certainly the following context in Eph. 4:11-16, at least, supports such a connection. Along these lines Lindars sees significance in another modification to the text of Ps. 68:19 found in Eph. 4:8: the words בְּאָדָם and ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ of the MT and LXX⁸³ have become τοῖς ἀνθρώποις in the text of Eph. 4:8.⁸⁴ This modification suggests to Lindars that we have moved, with the quotation of Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:8, to a concrete idea of the Spirit as gift 'to' men.⁸⁵ It is difficult to be sure whether this change carries such far-reaching significance as Lindars suggests, however, since it could be argued that it forms such a

⁸²Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, p. 54.

⁸³The reading of \aleph and the second corrector of B is ἀνθρώποις; however, this may represent a scribal attempt at harmonization with the text of Eph. 4:8. See ch. 3, pp. 138ff.

⁸⁴However, a few manuscripts of the so-called Western text (F, G, and a few others) read ἐν ἀνθρώποις in Eph. 4:8, retaining the preposition ἐν from the text of the LXX, but modifying the singular ending of the LXX (ἀνθρώπῳ) to a plural.

⁸⁵Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, p. 57.

natural corollary to the change from ἔλαβες to ἔδωκεν in the quotation that it was almost unavoidable. Furthermore (to return to the question of whether the citation in Eph. 4:8 has been influenced by a form of the text later attested in Tg Ps. 68:19), this same change appears in Tg Psalms (לבני נשא), a point Lindars neglects to mention. If this change is as significant as Lindars thinks, it might argue more strongly for a relationship between the form of the text of Ps. 68:19 found in Eph. 4:8 and that found in Tg Ps. 68:19. However, as we have already noted, this is not conclusive, because the change of preposition (from the -א of the MT to the -ל of Tg Psalms, or from the ἐν of the LXX to the pure dative τοῖς ἀνθρώποις of Eph. 4:8) follows so naturally from the change of the verbs in the respective texts from "received" to "gave" that it may not have carried a great deal of significance with the author. Lindars finally concedes that it is not possible to determine the exact point at which Ps. 68:19 began to be associated with the giving of the Spirit by the exalted Christ, but suggests that the idea of such a gift of the Spirit was probably a prior concept, and that Ps. 68:19 was subsequently adduced to support it.⁸⁶

The arguments of Lindars as well as those of Kretschmar and Cadbury have been examined in an article by J. Dupont which appeared in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament* in 1973.⁸⁷ Although each of these individuals has followed a different approach in suggesting an allusion to Ps. 68:19 behind Acts 2:33, in Dupont's judgement these approaches are not mutually exclusive but complementary, and all tend to support the pres-

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 58-59.

⁸⁷J. Dupont, "Ascension du Christ et don de l'Esprit d'après Actes 2:33", in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), pp. 219-28.

ence of such an allusion. In fact, Dupont himself goes beyond the literary reconstructions of Lindars to suggest that Luke in Acts does make use of the Moses-typology by a comparison of the language of Acts 5:31 and 7:35. In Acts 5:31 the following terms describe Jesus: τοῦτον ὁ θεὸς ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα ὑψώσεν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ; while in Acts 7:35 Moses is described as follows: τοῦτον τὸν Μωυσῆν οὗ ἠρνήσαντο εἰπόντες· τίς σε κατέστησεν ἄρχοντα καὶ δικαστήν; τοῦτον ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἄρχοντα καὶ λυτρωτὴν ἀπέσταλκεν. Acts 7:25 also states concerning Moses, ἐνόμιζεν δὲ σμιέναι τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὅτι ὁ θεὸς διὰ χειρὸς αὐτοῦ δίδωσιν σωτηρίαν αὐτοῖς. The description of Christ in Acts 5:31 corresponds so closely to that of Moses in 7:25 and 35 that Dupont suggests the Moses-typology is present even in Acts, and nothing prevents us from supposing that it is also behind the interpretation which applies Ps. 68:19 to the ascension of Christ and the giving of the Spirit.⁸⁸

Not everyone, of course, has been convinced by the arguments of Cadbury, Lindars, and Dupont that an allusion to Ps. 68:19 lies in the background of Acts 2:33. P. D. Overfield, in "The Ascension, Pleroma and Ecclesia Concepts in Ephesians" (1976), rejects Lindars' arguments for an allusion to Ps. 68:19 behind Acts 2:33 because he believes Lindars' view necessitates a connection between verses 33 and 34a not only in the text of Acts itself but in the underlying tradition behind it.⁸⁹ It is true that the occurrence of ἀνέβη in Acts 2:34a suggests a connection to the text of Ps. 68:19, and might therefore be considered to strengthen Lindars' case, but Lindars' arguments are primarily centered on the presence of ὑψωθείς and λαβών in 2:33. These point to a tradition behind Acts 2:33 which may be

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 226.

⁸⁹P. D. Overfield, "The Ascension, Pleroma and Ecclesia Concepts in Ephesians" (Ph.D. thesis, University of St. Andrews, 1976), pp. 97-98.

considered independently of 2:34-35, although it should be noted that even if the traditions behind 2:33 and 2:34f. differ, the general theme which they share in common is that of the exaltation of Jesus as the Messiah, and this may well have led the compiler of Acts to juxtapose them in the present context.

Another interpreter who is not at all persuaded that an allusion to Psalm 68 is to be found in Acts 2 is D. L. Bock in his work on Lucan christology, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern* (1987). He finds in the Lucan material of Acts ^{as a whole} all of the terms and phrases suggested by Lindars as parallels to Ps. 68:19 except for the single participle λαβών, which alone provides an insufficient basis for an allusion to Psalm 68. Bock sees the absence of δόματα (as used in the psalm) from Luke's material as further evidence that such an allusion to Ps. 68:19 by Luke is unlikely. Likewise, Dupont's attempt to relate Ps. 68:19 and Acts 2:33 through the Jewish traditions which associate the psalm with Pentecost and Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the law also fails to persuade Bock that Ps. 68:19 lies behind Acts 2:33. Bock denies any mention of Moses or the law in Acts 2, an omission he regards as fatal for any theory that attempts to connect Moses and the tradition that the law was given on the feast of Pentecost to an allusion to Psalm 68 at this point. He concludes that "for Luke, and probably also for the tradition he communicates in Acts 2, Ps. 68:19 played no significant role".⁹⁰

In response to this several observations are in order: (1) Bock does acknowledge in a note that Psalm 68 did play a role in the earliest church traditions about the gift of the Spirit, although Luke did not make use of

⁹⁰D. L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology*, JSNT Supplement Series 12 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), pp. 181-83.

these ideas in Acts 2.⁹¹ However, Bock asserts, Luke could have mentioned the Mosaic connection (as he does in chapters 3 and 7) if he had wished to do so. Yet if the connection between Ps. 68:19 and the giving of the Spirit goes back to the earliest church traditions, why must it be ruled out that such traditions are behind the source of the account in Acts 2:33, especially as this purports to go back to Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost? (2) Lindars in his *New Testament Apologetic* goes on to argue precisely the point Bock concedes, that it was the early Christian concept of the gift of the Spirit which was related to (or perhaps even inferred from) the language of Ps. 68:19 read in a christological sense. (3) Luke's failure in Acts 2:33 to develop the connection between Moses' ascent of Sinai at the giving of the Torah and Pentecost does not disprove the existence of such a connection in his sources; he simply did not make use of it. Comparisons between Christ and Moses do appear in Acts 7:25 and 35 when read alongside Acts 5:31.

On the whole, in spite of the objections raised by Bock, it seems probable that an allusion to Ps. 68:19 is present in the underlying tradition used by Luke in Acts 2. As we have seen, traces of the psalm appear to remain in the extant text of Acts 2:33, although there has not been a complete consensus on the exact words and phrases which should be attributed to Ps. 68:19. In light of the obviously christological context of Acts 2 (especially the quotation from Ps. 110:1 in the following verse, 2:34) it seems clear that Psalm 68 had assumed a christological interpretation at an early date, and Ps. 68:19 in particular was understood by the early church to refer to the gifts of the Spirit given by the exalted Christ.⁹² Furthermore, it appears

⁹¹Ibid., p. 352, n. 92.

⁹²J. Potin, *La Fête Juive de la Pentecôte: Étude des textes liturgiques*, *Lectio Divina* 65 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971), vol. 1, pp. 300-303, has concluded that Pentecost was consid-

probable that this association of Ps. 68:19 with the distribution of spiritual gifts by the ascended Christ antedates the composition of Acts, since Luke did not make explicit use of such imagery in his reworking of the traditional source describing Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost. Although a specific date for such a Christian interpretation of Ps. 68:19 cannot be assigned, it seems reasonable to assume that this interpretation was in circulation prior to the composition of Ephesians. This would suggest that the christological interpretation of Ps. 68:19 might not have been original with the author of Ephesians himself; instead, he may have merely adopted an interpretation of the psalm already accepted in Christian circles at the time he was writing.

*Conclusions on the Relationship Between Eph. 4:7-11
and the Giving of the Spirit*

So far we have examined a number of aspects of the relationship between Psalm 68, Pentecost, and Eph. 4:7-11 with its emphasis on the distribution of gifts to the church. The association of the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Weeks) and the celebration of the giving of the Torah to Moses can be traced back as early as the Book of Jubilees, a work which should probably

ered a covenant celebration as early as the 2nd (and perhaps the 3rd) century BCE. Although the rabbinic tradition associating Pentecost with the giving of the Torah cannot be dated before 150 CE, it is certainly prior to this date. The actual assignment of the celebration of the giving of the Torah to the feast of Pentecost may have been carried out by the Pharisees in the years immediately following the destruction of the Temple. However, although the later synagogue liturgy was not totally elaborated at the time of the redaction of Acts (which Potin dates ca. 80 CE) the feast of Pentecost was already associated with the salvific event of Sinai in popular tradition by this time. Potin also suggests that texts of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (including Psalm 68) were chosen for inclusion in the synagogue liturgy for Pentecost by the Pharisees after the destruction of the Temple because they had already been associated for some time with the covenant at Sinai as well. Thus the association of Pentecost with the giving of the Torah at Sinai may well have been known and used by Luke in the composition of Acts.

be dated in the second century BCE. The author of Jubilees placed great emphasis upon the idea that the date of the feast of Weeks and the giving of the Torah to Moses coincided. In addition, Psalm 68 may have been associated with Pentecost and the giving of the Torah to Moses in pre-Christian (Jewish) tradition, although this cannot be conclusively proven. It appears almost certain, however, that the association of Psalm 68 with Pentecost antedates the composition of Ephesians because of the christological interpretation of Ps. 68:19 which existed in early Christian tradition. Such an interpretation of Ps. 68:19 appears to lie behind the present text of Acts 2:33, and this would indicate its use to refer to the gift(s) of the Spirit in a layer of tradition which is almost certainly older than the Epistle to the Ephesians. Thus the author of Ephesians was not particularly innovative in his use of Ps. 68:19 to refer to the ascension of Christ and his subsequent distribution of gifts to the church. The innovation on the part of our author lies not in the use of the psalm in a christological sense (an interpretation which he probably inherited from prior Christian tradition) but in its explanation in 4:9-10, where he identifies the ascended Christ with the Spirit who descended to distribute the gifts. We shall now proceed to examine the context of Eph. 4:7-11 closely to see if such a suggestion appears likely as an explanation of the ascent and descent of Christ described in 4:8-10.

Chapter Five

The Descent of Christ as the Descent of the Spirit in Eph. 4:7-11

Background

Thus far we have seen (in chapter 3) that there is substantial evidence concerning the existence of ascent-typology associated with Moses and the giving of the Torah at Sinai prior to the middle of the first century CE. This suggests that the author of Ephesians was aware of such traditions when he quoted Ps. 68:19 with its reference to a heavenly ascent in Eph. 4:8. Knowledge of these Moses-traditions would explain why the author thought it necessary to infer a descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10 from the ascent explicitly stated in the quotation from Ps. 68:19 (Eph. 4:8), since Moses, following his ascent of Mt Sinai to 'capture' the words of Torah, descended to distribute them as 'gifts' to men. But just as for the author of Ephesians it was not Moses but Christ who made the ascent described in the psalm quotation, so also it was Christ who descended (as the Spirit) to distribute gifts (or gifted individuals) to his church. The likelihood that such traditions lie in the background of Eph. 4:7-11 appears even greater when we consider, as we have done in the preceding chapter, that the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Weeks) had almost certainly become associated with the giving of the Torah at Sinai, as a celebration of the giving of the law to Moses, some time prior to the first century CE as well. Furthermore, while it has not been possible to establish with certainty that the association of Psalm 68 with the feast of Pentecost in later Jewish liturgy is as ancient as the first century of the Christian era, it does seem clear that Psalm 68 be-

came associated at a very early date with the Christian celebration of the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost, as a way of expressing the gift of the Spirit by the ascended and exalted Christ. Such a use of Psalm 68 probably lies in the background of Acts 2:33, although the psalm is not explicitly quoted in the existing text.

It appears likely, therefore, that all of the various elements were in place by the time the author of Ephesians wrote his epistle to enable him to represent the ascension of Christ in terms which were already commonly and widely used to describe Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah and distribute it as gifts to men. Such imagery appears to have been used already in the tradition behind Acts 2:33 with its allusion to Ps. 68:19 as a reference to the outpouring of the Spirit by the ascended and exalted Christ. Since the context of Eph. 4:7 and 4:11ff. deals with the giving of spiritual gifts (or gifted individuals) to the church to equip it for ministry, the imagery of the gift of the Spirit (as reflected in the accounts of the first Christian Pentecost in Acts) is not far removed. There is, in fact, only one remaining element in the proposed interpretation of Eph. 4:9-10 as a subsequent descent of Christ as the Spirit which is truly unique to the author of Ephesians. This is the identification he makes in 4:10 between "the one who descended" and "the one who ascended above all the heavens" (ὁ καταβὰς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν), an identification which appears at first unnecessary. As we now proceed to examine the contextual argument in favour of a subsequent descent of Christ as the Spirit in Eph. 4:9-10 in more detail, we shall attempt to show that such an identification is not as superfluous as it might initially appear.

*The Contextual Argument for a Subsequent Descent in
Eph. 4:9-10*

What is perhaps the strongest argument for a subsequent descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10 is to be found in the context of Ephesians 4 itself. After the exhortation to maintain "the unity of the Spirit" in 4:3, the writer gives the basis for that unity in verses 4-6: using an asyndetic construction for added emphasis, he states that everything about the Christian faith is characterized by unity.¹ There is one body of believers and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is father of all.² Yet within this unified framework, there are found diversities of spiritual gifts, which the author introduces in verses 7-8 with the supporting quotation from Ps. 68:19: the one who ascended on high gave gifts to men. The principal assertion is made in verse 7, followed by the quotation from Ps. 68:19 and its subsequent explanation in verses 8-10. These verses appear to be offered as proof of the assertion in verse 7.³ That it is Christ who ascends and who distributes the gifts is made clear by the qualifying phrase τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ in this verse.⁴ Following the psalm quotation in verse 8, the writer of Ephesians engages in a midrashic exegesis of the word ἀναβάς from Ps. 68:19, in which he infers a descent from the stated ascent, and goes on to

¹On the theme of unity in Eph. 4:1-16, see S. Hanson, *The Unity of the Church in the New Testament: Colossians and Ephesians*, Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis 14 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1946).

²Verses 4-6 are understood by many [e.g., M. Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, Anchor Bible 34A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), p. 429] to contain a confession or fragment of hymnic literature quoted by the author of Ephesians. While this may well be true, the source of this material does not affect our present understanding of the place it has in the author's overall argument in its final form.

³As noted by J. Cambier, *Vie Chrétienne en Église: L'Épître aux Éphésiens lue aux chrétiens d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Desclée, 1966), p. 126.

⁴J. D. G. Dunn, in "A Note on δωρεά", *Expository Times* 81 (1969-70), pp. 349-51, takes δωρεά here to refer to the gift of the Spirit, so that ἡ δωρεά τοῦ Χριστοῦ = τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

assert in verse 10 that the one who descended is himself the one who ascended above all the heavens, in order that (ἵνα) he might fill all things.⁵

Up to this point it is clear that the one who both ascends and descends, the one who gives the gifts and fills the universe, is Christ (cf. v. 7). Furthermore (in keeping with the quotation from Psalm 68), it is apparently Christ (the referent of the pronoun αὐτός in the phrase καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν) who distributes the gifts (now described further as gifted individuals or offices)⁶ to the church at large (v. 11) for the equipping of the saints (i.e., the church at large) for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of believers, until collective maturity (on the part of the church as a whole) is finally achieved (vv. 12-16).⁷ Thus far there is nothing new or

⁵Concerning the midrashic nature of the author's exegesis of Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:9-10, cf. the comment of M. Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, who states: "Without detriment to its substance and quality Paul's interpretation can be called a midrash" (p. 476; cf. also p. 432).

⁶These are described by J. Ernst, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an Philemon, an die Kolosser, an die Epheser*, Regensburger Neues Testament (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1974), p. 351, as "verschiedenen Dienstämter".

⁷Two disparate interpretations of v. 12 are possible because of a dispute about the syntax of the three prepositions involved, πρὸς, εἰς, and εἰς, each of which introduces a distinct element concerning the giving of the gifts (or gifted individuals) in relation to the ministry of the church. The shift from πρὸς to εἰς has led some to see different purposes of the gifts in view, the first (πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων) directed to the church at large, and the second (εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομήν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ) to specific leaders or specialized ministers who are to do the work of the ministry. This interpretation is usually indicated by the placement of a comma following the first element, πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων, to indicate its separation from the following εἰς-phrases. The alternative interpretation sees the prepositional phrases as describing a single purpose for the gifts of v. 11, with some degree of progression from one prepositional phrase to the next: thus the gifts (gifted individuals) are given in order to equip the saints (themselves) to do the work of the ministry for the edification of the body of Christ. Since the earliest manuscripts contain no punctuation and either interpretation is syntactically possible, the choice must be made on the basis of contextual emphases and parallels. These seem to favour the second interpretation, since in 4:7 each member (ἐκάστῳ) of the church has been given "grace" (ἡ χάρις) and 4:16 speaks of the contribution of each individual member (ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους). Parallels in 1 Cor. 12:7, 18 also stress that each member of the church is a recipient of "the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (ἐκάστῳ δὲ δίδεται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον) and each one has been placed in the body just as God wished (ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τὰ μέλη, ἐν ἑκάστον αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ σώματι καθὼς ἠθέλησεν). For further discussion of these difficulties see M. Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Com-*

particularly remarkable about our reconstruction of the context of 4:7-11. But such a reconstruction enables us to make a significant observation which seems to have been overlooked by the majority of interpreters: if the writer's intention in quoting Ps. 68:19 is to assert that Christ, upon his victorious ascent, gave gifts (or gifted individuals) to the church, there is no need whatsoever to introduce the midrash of 4:9-10, which infers a descent, because the psalm quotation itself asserts that gifts were given upon (or after) the ascent. Verses 9 and 10 are therefore relegated to the status of a parenthetical (and somewhat extraneous) comment.⁸ This is, in fact, the way the editors of the United Bible Societies' second and third editions have punctuated the text.⁹ As a parenthetical comment, however, the two verses make no contribution to the advancing argument, and the most that can be

mentary on Chapters 4-6, pp. 477-84, and also R. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 10 (Zürich: Benziger Verlag; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), pp. 185-86.

⁸H. Chadwick, "Ephesians", in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, ed. M. Black and H. Rowley (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962), pp. 980-84, asserts: "The parenthesis, a distracting digression, is intended to justify the forced exegesis of the Psalm-text by the Rabbinic (and typically Pauline) argument that an ascent implies a previous descent" (p. 984). F. W. Beare, "The Epistle to the Ephesians", in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 10 (New York: Abingdon, 1953), pp. 597-749, also acknowledges this problem in less forceful terms, but tries to get round it by attributing the apparently illogical inference in 4:9-10 to rabbinic methods of exegesis. We are told that the author "first adopts a form of text which was current among them [the rabbis], and then follows it by an arbitrary midrashic interpretation.... Strange and unconvincing as the argument appears to the modern reader, it is typical midrash" (pp. 688-89). To this the reply of G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", *Studia Evangelica* 2, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), pp. 535-45, is sufficient: "we ought not to resort to unreason until we have exhausted the possibilities of reason" (p. 536). Caird goes on to point out that it is hard to understand why, if verses 9-10 are only the product of irrational rabbinic exegesis, the author should have felt obliged in verse 10 to assert the identity of descender and ascender.

⁹*The Greek New Testament*, ed. K. Aland et al., 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1968); 3rd ed. (1980), ad loc. Further information on how various major translations have punctuated verses 9-10 may be found in the punctuation apparati of both UBS editions. It should also be noted, however, that the 26th edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. E. Nestle and K. Aland (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979), does not punctuate verses 9-10 as a parenthesis.

said of them is that they constitute a rebuttal of some particular (and probably heretical) theological view, such as Docetism.¹⁰

The apparently parenthetical nature of verses 9-10 has even been used on occasion to argue against a subsequent descent of Christ: F. Foulkes, for example, rejects the idea of a subsequent descent on the grounds that the giving of gifts to men is associated in the text with the ascent rather than the descent (thus demonstrating the superfluity of the reference to the descent in 4:9-10).¹¹ It may be true from a structural standpoint that the giving of gifts is connected to the ascent; but one must also consider why, within the given context, the author of Ephesians felt it necessary to introduce a reference to the descent in 4:9-10 at all. Since no descent is explicitly stated in Psalm 68 (although both the ascent and the giving of gifts are mentioned), the descent had to be inferred. Thus it appears that the juxtaposition of the ascent and the distribution of the gifts in these verses is necessitated by the order of the material in Ps. 68:19 as quoted. The author's own introduction of a reference to the descent could hardly have been placed otherwise. Therefore, an association of the giving of gifts with the descent rather than the ascent should not be rejected a priori, as Foulkes appears to do.¹²

¹⁰It is worth pointing out that there are no other indications anywhere in Ephesians (as noted by G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", p. 536) that Docetic tendencies are at large and require refutation, although 1:19-23 might have provided a better place for such a refutation than 4:9-10 supposedly does.

¹¹F. Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (London: Tyndale Press, 1963), p. 117.

¹²It should be noted with regard to the Greek text of Eph. 4:8 that the aorist participle ἀναβὰς may be understood to describe action either contemporaneous with or antecedent to the finite verbs ἠχμαλώτευσεν and ἔδωκεν (i.e., "when he ascended...he gave gifts" or "after he ascended...he gave gifts"). Both of the finite verbs in the quotation are also aorists, and since an aorist participle related to an aorist finite verb may indicate either contemporaneous or antecedent action, the ascension could very legitimately be understood as prior to the distribution of the gifts mentioned again in 4:11ff. E. D. Burton, *Syntax of the Moods*

Another recent attempt to deal with the problems of Eph. 4:8-10 is found in P. D. Overfield's doctoral thesis, "The Ascension, Pleroma and Ecclesia Concepts in Ephesians" (1976). Overfield is concerned primarily with the identification and significance of the ascent mentioned in the passage rather than the descent. He deals with the descent only in so far as it sheds further light on the psalm quotation in 4:8. Overfield understands the descent as a reference to the incarnation, based on the use of καταβαίνειν (the κατάβασις—ἀνάβασις motif) elsewhere in the Pauline corpus (only in Rom. 10:6-8).¹³ Overfield examines Caird's proposals concerning a subsequent descent in 4:9-10 and rejects them because in his opinion they place the emphasis in 4:7-11 not on the ascension per se, but on the 'descent' of Christ, and this is not the primary focus of the passage.¹⁴ While Overfield accepts Caird's grammatical analysis of the phrase τῆς γῆς in Eph. 4:9 as

and Tenses in New Testament Greek, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900), actually states that an aorist participle normally indicates antecedent rather than contemporaneous action: "Among these various relations the case of action antecedent to that of the principal verb furnishes the largest number of instances. It is thus, numerically considered, the leading use of the Aorist Participle, and this fact has even to some extent reacted on the meaning of the tense, so that there is associated with the tense as a secondary, acquired, and wholly subordinate characteristic a certain suggestion of antecedence" (p. 60). Burton's position is somewhat modified by F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. by R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), §339: "...the idea of relative past time became associated to a certain degree with the aorist participle....The notion of relative past time, however, is not at all necessarily inherent in the aorist participle...especially if its action is identical with that of an aorist finite verb" (pp. 174-75). Ultimately the question regarding the time of an action described by an aorist participle relative to the time of an action described by an aorist finite verb must be resolved contextually, as M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), §262, p. 86, points out. All of this merely indicates that an aorist participle may express action either simultaneous with or antecedent to that of an aorist verb. As far as Eph. 4:8 is concerned, ἀναβάς could refer to an action either antecedent to or contemporaneous with the finite verbs ἠχμαλώτευσεν and ἔδωκεν which follow.

¹³P. D. Overfield, "The Ascension, Pleroma and Ecclesia Concepts in Ephesians" (Ph.D. thesis, University of St. Andrews, 1976), pp. 139, 162.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 110. The proposals of G. B. Caird to which Overfield makes reference are found in "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11", *Studia Evangelica* 2, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), pp. 535-45.

an appositive genitive, he rejects the similarity between the ascension theme in Ephesians and the ascension theme in Acts which he believes Caird's view would necessitate, for the following reasons: first, there is no evidence that in the early church Psalm 68 was part of the tradition concerning the gift of the Spirit; and second, the ascension theme in Acts 1-2 is not a unified one; the tradition in Acts 2:14-36 differs from that in 1:9. The tradition in Acts 2:14-36 (a non-Lucan tradition according to Overfield) knows nothing of an ascension of Christ or outpouring of the Spirit as events separate from the resurrection. Overfield links the tradition in Eph. 1:20-23 to that in Acts 2:14-36 and concludes that this speaks decisively against Caird's view of a subsequent descent.¹⁵

With regard to Overfield's first point, we have argued in chapter 4 of the present study that Acts 2:33 does contain traces of the influence of Ps. 68:19.¹⁶ We have also shown, through our discussion of Kretschmar's work, that the early church did (in some instances, at least) associate the ascension with the outpouring of the Spirit, and that this tradition is associated with Pentecost, Moses, and the giving of the Torah.¹⁷ It is difficult to see how such a view of the descent as von Soden, Caird, and others have proposed necessitates a unified ascension motif in Acts 1-2, as Overfield asserts. The author of Luke-Acts may or may not have been aware of conflicting traditions behind his sources, and he certainly did not develop or attempt to reconcile these motifs, but this does not eliminate the possibility that Eph. 4:9-10 refers to a descent of Christ as the Spirit.

¹⁵P. D. Overfield, "The Ascension, Pleroma and Ecclesia Concepts in Ephesians", pp. 158-62.

¹⁶Overfield denies that Acts 2:33 contains any allusion to Ps. 68:19 (pp. 97-98); his arguments are discussed in ch. 4, pp. 239-40.

¹⁷See ch. 4, pp. 203-11.

Finally, with regard to Overfield's point about the relative emphasis placed upon the ascension versus the descent, it is hard to see how the theory of a subsequent descent contradicts Overfield's own analysis, which relates the exaltation theology of Eph. 1:20-23 to that of 4:8-10.¹⁸ It seems obvious that the author of Ephesians quoted Ps. 68:19 because it contained a reference to a victorious ascent followed by the distribution of gifts. If we understand the descent as a reference to Christ's descent as the Spirit to distribute spiritual gifts (or spiritually gifted individuals) to his church, the passage in question then serves as a transition linking the exaltation christology of 1:20-23 (which depicts Christ exalted over all things and given as 'Head' to the church) with the emphasis on the activity of the Spirit in the life and conduct of the church described in 5:15-6:9. In the final analysis what Overfield fails to explain adequately is why a parenthetical reference to the descent, which in his opinion contributes nothing to the argument, needed to be inferred by the author of Ephesians following the mention of the ascent which he found in the psalm quotation and obviously understood as referring to Christ.

Thus the major contextual issue which we are attempting to address at this point in the present study is why the author of Ephesians, if all he wanted to do was to assert that upon his victorious ascension Christ distributed spiritual gifts to the church, felt compelled to add verses 9 and 10 as a midrashic interpretation of Ps. 68:19 (which he had quoted already in 4:8). The quotation from Ps. 68:19 itself introduces the idea of gifts distributed to men at or subsequent to the ascent, and if all the author wanted to do was establish the giving of the gifts, the psalm quotation itself asserts that. It

¹⁸P. D. Overfield, "The Ascension, Pleroma and Ecclesia Concepts in Ephesians", pp. 170-71.

seems the author could have proceeded with his argument in 4:11-16 without introducing the complicating factor of a reference to the descent at all, unless there were something about the nature or time of the descent which he believed to be crucial to his argument. Yet if verses 9-10 are understood to refer either to the incarnation or to a descent into the underworld (or to Sheol or simply the grave), they do nothing whatsoever to advance the argument concerning the distribution of spiritual gifts.¹⁹ On the contrary, they add an apparently superfluous note which gives the impression of theological pedantry.

But these two verses need not be relegated to a parenthesis; they can be explained perfectly well within the argument of Ephesians 4. If 4:9-10 are not understood as parenthetical, then a descent inferred by the writer from the victorious ascent of Psalm 68 would be understood most naturally as subsequent to the ascent from which it was derived.²⁰ Such an impression is further strengthened by the presence of the *καί* which precedes *κατέβη*

¹⁹The interpretive options mentioned here have been discussed in chapter 1 of the present study as part of the survey of the history of interpretation of Eph. 4:7-11. Although there are disparate interpretations involved (incarnation vs. descent to the underworld, Sheol, or the grave), either approach produces the same result: the reference to the descent inferred by the author in 4:9-10 appears unnecessary and contributes nothing to the argument. This point has been made emphatically by G. B. Caird, who notes the failure of interpretations involving a descent to the underworld or at the incarnation to explain *why* it was necessary for the author of Ephesians to infer a descent from the ascent stated in the quotation from Ps. 68:19 and to affirm the identity of the one who ascended with the one who descended in 4:10, in *Paul's Letters from Prison*, New Clarendon Bible (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 73-75.

²⁰This much, at least, is conceded by C. L. Mitton, *Ephesians*, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1976), p. 148, although he views the descent as a reference to the incarnation. The probability that a subsequent descent would be inferred from the quotation from Ps. 68:19 is even greater if the author of Ephesians was aware of the tradition behind the targumic interpretation of Ps. 68:19, which referred the ascent mentioned in the Psalm to Moses and his ascent of Mt. Sinai to bring down the Torah. For an extensive examination of this possibility, and of the relationship of such Moses-typology to Ephesians, see chapter 3 of the present work.

in verse 9.²¹ A subsequent descent is also permitted (if not implied outright) by the sequence of tenses (aorist—aorist) represented by ἀνέβη—κατέβη (aorist—pluperfect, on the other hand, would be needed to determine conclusively a prior descent by tense sequence alone). Yet the same line of reasoning with regard to the most natural order of events cannot be applied to 4:10 in order to claim a prior descent for at least three reasons: (1) the switch from aorist finite verbs (ἀνέβη and κατέβη, verse 9) to aorist participles (ὁ καταβάς and ὁ ἀναβάς, verse 10) suggests that verse 10 is not intended to reflect the actual sequence of events, but rather to assert the identity of the one who descended with the one who ascended;²² (2) the pronoun αὐτός, which follows καταβάς in verse 10, is repeated in verse 11, and since it carries emphatic (adjunctive) force in both instances, it suggests the connection of the *descent* (i.e., the one who descended, ὁ καταβάς) with the giving of the gifts mentioned in verse 11 (καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν κ.τ.λ.); and (3) there is a

²¹This observation was originally made by H. von Soden, ed., *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 3: *Die Briefe an die Kolosser, Epheser, Philemon; die Pastoralbriefe*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg and Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1893), when he first proposed the view that the descent was subsequent to the ascent: "Vielmehr lässt die Wortfolge vermuthen, dass das καὶ κατέβη als auf das ἀναβῆναι gefolgt gedacht sei" (p. 136). It is repeated by E. D. Roels in *God's Mission: The Epistle to the Ephesians in Mission Perspective* (Franeker: T. Wever, 1962), p. 163, n. 18.

²²M. Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, Anchor Bible 34A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), p. 434, n. 51, contends that the phrase ὁ καταβάς αὐτὸς ἔστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς κ.τ.λ. cannot emphasize "exclusively personal identity" (as understood, e.g., by Aquinas et al.) because αὐτός, since it is anarthrous, cannot be translated "he is the same as he who...". It is true that αὐτός cannot be rendered "the same as" without the definite article in this context, but this observation alone does not negate an assertion of identity between "the one who descended" and "the one who ascended". This is implicit in the adjunctive use of καὶ in v. 10: "the one who descended [himself (αὐτός)] is *also* the one who ascended...". In context this amounts to an identification of the person who descended with the person who ascended, no matter how αὐτός is understood. In addition, other modern interpreters have affirmed the identity of ὁ καταβάς and ὁ ἀναβάς in 4:10, among them N. A. Dahl, *Kurze Auslegung des Epheserbriefes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), p. 51, who states: "Aber in den V. 9-10 heißt es, daß Christus, der heruntergefahren ist, derselbe ist, der aufgefahren ist"; and A. Lindemann, *Der Epheserbrief*, Zürcher Bibelkommentare (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1985), p. 77, who states: "Jedenfalls betont V. 10, daß der Hinabgestiegene identisch ist mit dem Hinaufgestiegenen".

fairly complex chiastic structure present within the section. As it stands, the entire section under consideration (4:7-11) is bracketed by references to the giving of spiritual gifts (or gifted individuals) by the exalted Christ.²³ The section is introduced by the statement ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις in 4:7, a reference to the giftedness of each individual member of the church, and closed by the assertion καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους in 4:11, which refers to the gifts (or gifted individuals) given by Christ to the church as a corporate entity. Within this framework stands the quotation from Ps. 68:19 (4:8), followed by the midrashic explanation (4:9-10) provided by the author. The midrash itself contains references to both ascent and descent, arranged in chiastic order (here represented by the key word in each phrase): ἀνέβη (4:9a), κατέβη (4:9b), ὁ καταβάς (4:10a), and ὁ ἀναβάς (4:10b). In verse 9 the order is ascent—descent, while in verse 10 it is descent—ascent. This might at first appear to be completely non-prejudicial in terms of the actual order of events as understood by the author of Ephesians. In fact, however, since verse 9 constitutes a question regarding the implications of the term ἀναβάς in the quotation from Ps. 68:19 (τὸ δὲ ἀνέβη, according to the midrashic formula employed by the author), the order of ascent—descent is necessitated, because it is the descent which is not explicitly mentioned in the quotation from Ps. 68:19, but has to be inferred by the author of Ephesians. In light of this, one might expect verse 10 to reflect, in the order of descent—ascent, the actual sequence of events involved (which would argue

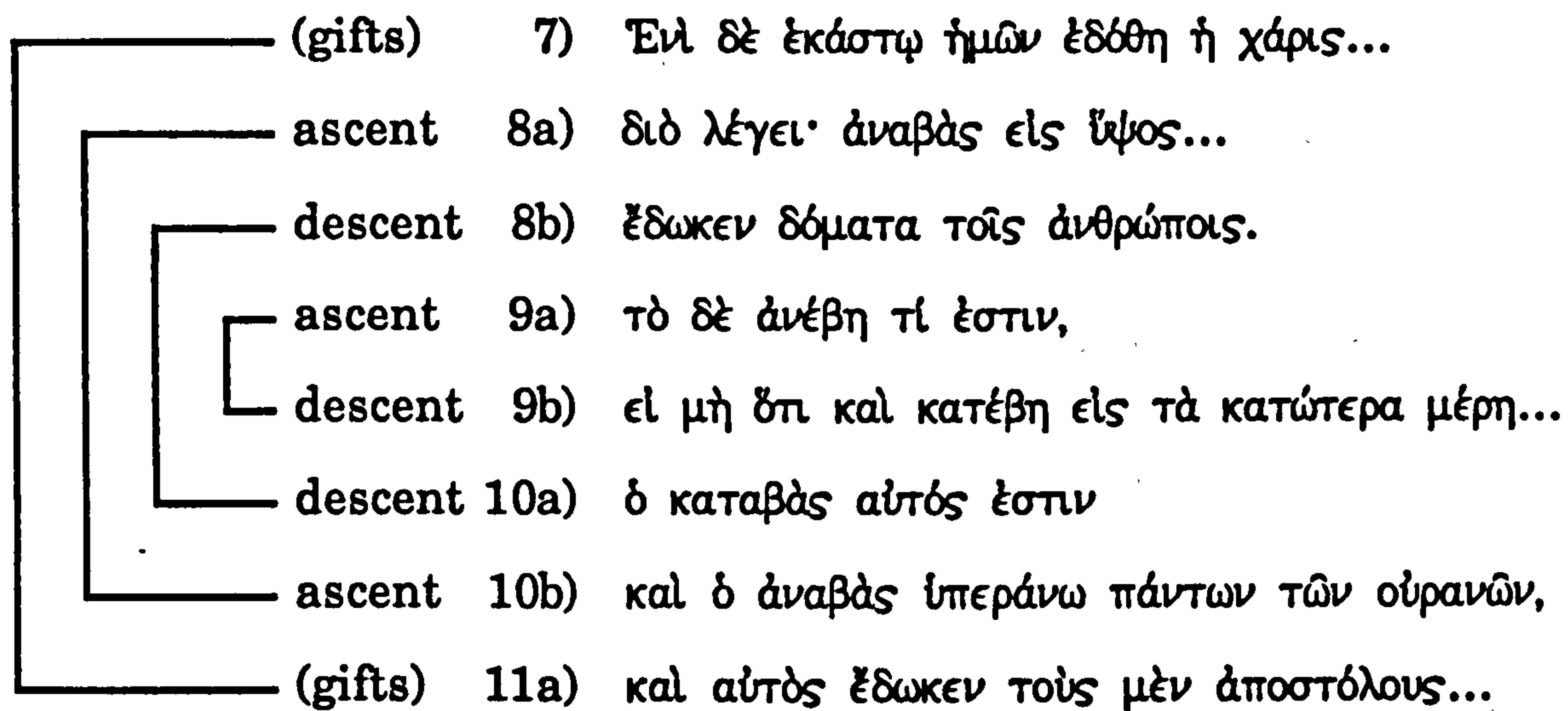
²³For a discussion of the nature of these gifts and a comparison with other passages in the Pauline corpus which describe similar gifts, see H. Schürmann, *Ursprung und Gestalt: Erörterungen und Besinnungen zum Neuen Testament* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1970), pp. 236-267. Concerning the assertion that the main point of 4:7 and 4:11 is that gifts were given to the church by the exalted Christ, see S. D. Clark, "La Enseñanza Paulina sobre los Dones y los Ministerios: Un estudio exegético de Efesios 4,7-16", *Revista Bíblica* 41 (1979), pp. 141-53.

against a subsequent descent). But the point of the assertion made by the author in verse 10 is not the chronological order of events, but rather the identification of "the one who descended" as "the one who ascended". For emphasis ὁ καταβάς is placed at the beginning of the sentence, which produces a chiasm with the ascent and descent mentioned in verse 9.²⁴ It is probable, however, that the reference in verse 10a to "the one who descended" relates back not so much to verse 9b as to verse 8b, the giving of gifts mentioned in the quotation from Ps. 68:19, since this is the point of departure from which the idea of a descent was originally inferred by the author of Ephesians. In this case, the final reference to the ascent (verse 10b) would parallel not verse 9a, but the quotation from Ps. 68:19 in verse 8a instead. Thus the qualifying phrase in verse 10b, ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, would correspond to the phrase εἰς ὕψος in verse 8a (and possibly to ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλώσιαν in the same verse as well, if an allusion to Christ's victory over the 'powers' is implied by the phrase ὑπεράνω...τῶν οὐρανῶν).²⁵ Final emphasis would then be returned to the descent by verse 11a, καὶ

²⁴According to F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. by R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 248, "Any emphasis on an element in the sentence causes that element to be moved forward".

²⁵Whatever may be said about other NT writers and their placement of the evil spiritual 'powers' in the regions under the earth, the author of Ephesians makes no explicit reference to such a locus for the powers. Instead, he repeatedly locates the evil spiritual powers "in the heavenlies" (ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις) in 1:20, 3:10, and 6:12. What would therefore be required for Christ to achieve victory over the powers would not be a descent to the underworld, but a victorious ascent, and this is reflected in Eph. 4:8 in the author's quotation of Ps. 68:19. Although there may be a hint of Christ's victory over the powers in the phrase ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλώσιαν quoted from Ps. 68, the writer draws no such direct inference from the psalm, and does not discuss the identity of the 'captives' further. Although the early church understood the 'captives' to refer either to redeemed saints who had been imprisoned in the underworld awaiting the salvation of Christ, or to condemned spirits awaiting punishment, the author of Ephesians demonstrates no further interest in such identifications, since no further mention is made of the 'captives'. See the history of the traditional interpretation of Eph. 4:7-11 outlined in ch. 1, pp. 5-18, and also R. Yates, "Principalities and Powers in Ephesians", *New Blackfriars* 58 (1977), pp. 516-21.

αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, κ.τ.λ., which (as mentioned earlier) corresponds to verse 7, Ἐνὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Thus the references to the descent and the ascent throughout the section 4:7-11 would appear as follows within the framework consisting of the reference to gifts mentioned in 4:7 and repeated in 4:11:



Seeing the gifts as given in conjunction with a descent of Christ as the Spirit would extend this pattern one step further, since the references in 4:7 and 4:11a would be implicitly related to the descent. Again, it should be emphasized that the part of the sequence represented in 4:9a-9b alone (i.e., ascent—descent) does not conclusively prove that a subsequent descent is in view, because mention of the descent would necessarily follow the reference to the ascent due to its implicit nature (it is not explicitly mentioned in Ps. 68:19 but inferred by the writer from the ascent introduced in the quotation). In such a sequence, however, it is still probably more natural to understand the element which is inferred (in this case the descent) to follow the element which is explicitly mentioned (here the ascent). What is also indicated by the complete sequence as illustrated above is the close parallel between the

descent (10a) and the distribution of the gifts (8b), a parallelism which suggests that the distribution of the gifts is closely connected in the mind of the author with the descent.

Thus it was not sufficient for the author to quote Ps. 68:19 with its reference only to an ascent; he had to infer from this a corresponding descent, which for him represented the distribution of the gifts. If, as we have previously argued, the writer were aware of the Moses-traditions which associated Pentecost (and perhaps by this time Psalm 68 as well) with the celebration of the giving of the Torah at Sinai, he would have been predisposed to understand that the distribution of gifts took place following a subsequent descent, since Moses distributed the Torah as gifts to men following his descent from Mt Sinai. Thus the author of Ephesians probably saw in Ps. 68:19, connected as it was in early Christian tradition with the victorious ascent of Christ, a reference to Christ's exaltation and distribution of gifts. But he could find in the psalm no corresponding reference to a descent at which those gifts were to be distributed, and thus was obliged to infer one in his midrashic interpretation of Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:9-10.²⁶

²⁶R. Schnackenburg, "Christus, Geist und Gemeinde (Eph. 4:1-16)", in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), pp. 287ff., concludes that an allusion to the (Christian celebration of) Pentecost is unlikely in Eph. 4:7-11, because while the quotation from Ps. 68:19 may be suitable to Pentecost, such a connection appears improbable because the Spirit is not explicitly mentioned in Eph. 4:9-10. In reply it may be noted that while the Spirit is not explicitly mentioned in 4:9-10, in the immediate context (4:11ff.) gifts similar to those attributed elsewhere by Paul to the Spirit are enumerated (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7, 11), and the Spirit is mentioned in the preceding context in 4:3, 4 and frequently throughout Ephesians. Some of Schnackenburg's points regarding the passage lead to helpful and significant observations, however: (1) whatever the background of the ascent-descent motif and Ps. 68:19, it is clear that the author of Ephesians interprets the quotation as a reference to Christ. We must then go on to decide if the writer could have referred to Christ and the Spirit in terms that are (functionally at least) interchangeable (see the following section of the present chapter). (2) It is possible that the author of Ephesians was aware of the Jewish exegetical tradition linking Moses to Ps. 68:19, and was deliberately opposing it by applying Ps. 68:19 instead to Christ. Such a polemical reinterpretation of the Moses-typology surrounding

Such an understanding of the structure of 4:7-11 suggests a similarity to at least one other passage in Ephesians. In 1:20-21 the ascent of the exalted Christ (καθίσας ἐν δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ὑπεράνω πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ κυριότητος καὶ παντὸς δυνάματος ὀνομαζομένου κ.τ.λ.) precedes his being given as 'Head' over all things to the church which is his 'Body' (καὶ πάντα ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἣτις ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ) in 1:22-23.²⁷ In the case of the latter phrase, the 'giving' of Christ himself might be a particularly appropriate way of describing something that took place at Pentecost, when the ascended Christ was 'given' to his church in the person of the Spirit.²⁸ We may go on to ask what the significance of such an in-

Psalm 68, while conceivable, is difficult to prove, especially in light of the absence of other references to Moses in Ephesians.

²⁷Eph. 1:20-23 with its references to τὸ πλήρωμα presents notoriously difficult lexical problems for the interpretation of Ephesians, most of which are beyond the scope of the present investigation. Some have suggested that the concept of πλήρωμα demonstrates the presence of Gnostic thought within Ephesians, a suggestion which would have implications for the dating of the letter, given the current understanding of the development of Gnosticism. For a survey of the meaning of the term πλήρωμα in Nag Hammadi and other literatures, see in particular C. A. Evans, "The Meaning of πλήρωμα in Nag Hammadi", *Biblica* 65 (1984), pp. 259-65. The most comprehensive study of πλήρωμα in recent times is J. Ernst, *Pleroma und Pleroma Christi: Geschichte und Deutung eines Begriffs der paulinischen Antilegomena* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1970), although other significant contributions to the discussion (listed chronologically) have been made by S. Aalen, "Begrepet πλήρωμα i Kolosser- og Efeserbrevet", *Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke* 23 (1952), pp. 49-67; P. Benoit, "Corps, tête et plérôme dans les Épîtres de la captivité", *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956), pp. 5-44; M. Bogdasavich, "The Idea of Pleroma in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians", *Downside Review* 83 (1965), pp. 118-30; P. D. Overfield, "Pleroma: A Study in Content and Context", *New Testament Studies* 25 (1979), pp. 384-96; and P. Benoit, "The 'plērōma' in the Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians", *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 49 (1984), pp. 136-58. This is by no means a complete list of the literature on the subject.

²⁸Such a correspondence is suggestive since Pentecost is generally regarded as the point at which the NT church, as such, came into existence. A NT origin for the church is suggested by Eph. 2:20, which describes the apostles and prophets as the foundation upon which the church is built, members of the "Gründergeneration". For further discussion, see F. Mußner, "Was ist die Kirche?", in *"Diener in Eurer Mitte": Festschrift für Dr. Antonius Hofmann Bischof von Passau zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. R. Beer et al., Schriften der Universität Passau: Reihe Katholische Theologie 5 (Passau: Passavia Universitätsverlag, 1984), pp. 82-89. H. Schlier, *Die Zeit der Kirche: Exegetische Aufsätze und Vorträge* (Freiburg: Herder, 1956), in his discussion of the "mystery" described in Eph. 3:6, also suggests that

terpretation, which sees Eph. 4:7-11 as a description of the exalted Christ's return to his church to distribute gifts, would have been for the readers of the letter. For them, it would have been a powerful argument that the one who had ascended and now ruled over all the universe from the right hand of the Father, Christ, had not abandoned his followers who were left behind on earth. Instead of observing their struggles and shortcomings from a distance, their exalted Lord had returned, in the person of the Spirit, to bestow gifts upon his church which would equip it for ministry and help it toward maturity. He ascended "above all the heavens in order that he might fill all things" (4:10); but part of what it meant for him to 'fill all things' was the distribution of the spiritual gifts which would bring his church to completion.²⁹

Implications of Identifying the Ascended Christ as the Spirit who Descended to the Church at Pentecost

We must now examine some of the theological implications of an asserted identity between Christ as "the one who ascended above all the heavens" (ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν) in Eph. 4:10 and the Spirit as the one who "descended to this lower earth" (κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς) in Eph. 4:9. We have seen that the reference to "the gift of Christ" (τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ) in 4:7 and the restatement that "he gave some apostles, some prophets, etc." (καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, κ.τ.λ.) in 4:11ff. makes it clear that the author of Ephesians views Christ as the giver of the gifts described in 4:11-16, which are de-

the church as described by the author of Ephesians was an entity that originated in the NT period (pp. 159-60).

²⁹For further discussion see D. E. Garland, "A Life Worthy of the Calling: Unity and Holiness, Ephesians 4:1-24", *Review and Expositor* 76 (1979), pp. 517-27, esp. pp. 522-23.

signed to promote the growth of Christians from an immature state to a state of relative maturity (4:13). We have also seen that the author has applied the quotation from Ps. 68:19 (which was most likely understood in Jewish circles at the time as a reference to Moses and his ascent of Mt Sinai to bring down the Torah) to the triumphal ascent of the victorious Christ. We have noted that an interpretation of Ps. 68:19 in terms of Christ's victorious ascent was probably not original with the author of Ephesians.³⁰ Contextually there is good reason to believe (as we have attempted to show in the preceding section) that the author's introduction of a reference to a descent "to this lower earth" (εἰς τὸ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς) in 4:9 was not a superfluous theological assertion, but an attempt to relate the one who ascended victoriously (Christ) to the one who returned with power to distribute the gifts to the Church at Pentecost. This appears to be a somewhat radical theological assertion at first. We must now consider whether such a relationship between the exalted Christ and the Spirit of God lies within the range of possibilities open to the author of Ephesians by examining some of the other formulations of this relationship in the remaining literature of the NT.

Although the Pauline corpus might seem to be the logical starting-point, we should briefly examine a few non-Pauline passages first, notably in Luke-Acts and the Fourth Gospel. In these passages the exalted Christ is portrayed as the one who dispenses the Spirit. In Acts 2:33, for example, when Jesus was exalted to God's right hand (a theme which also occurs in Ephesians in 1:20-23 and 4:8-10) it was given to him to pour out the Spirit

³⁰See ch. 4, p. 234.

upon others.³¹ Likewise in the Gospel of John the glorified Jesus is portrayed as the one from whom the Spirit will come (7:39), the one who will send the Paraclete (15:26), and the one who bestows the Spirit (19:30, 20:22). At the same time in the Johannine material, however, the Father is also said to be the one who will send the Spirit (14:17, 26), and even in 15:26 Jesus promises to send the Spirit from the Father. Yet Jesus' words to the disciples in 14:18 (οὐκ ἀφήσω ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς, ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς) have frequently been understood by commentators as a reference to the coming of the Spirit, and this would seem to open the door for an identification of the resurrected, exalted Jesus with the Johannine Paraclete.³² Obviously the Lucan and Johannine formulations have no direct bearing on the relationship between Christ and the Spirit described in Ephesians. Yet they do demonstrate that the description of this relationship was not fixed or static, but was subject to a variety of expressions in the early church.³³

Much more likely to bear on the relationship between the exaltation of Christ and his descent as the Spirit in the Epistle to the Ephesians are the

³¹We should note, however, that at this point Jesus is in reality only the intermediary who sends the Spirit, receiving (λαβών) the promise of the Spirit "from the Father" (παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς) and passing this along to the disciples. The problems concerning this passage and whether it contains an allusion to Ps. 68:19 are discussed at considerable length in ch. 4, pp. 219-33.

³²This verse was generally understood by the Western [Latin] Fathers to refer to Jesus' return at the parousia. The Eastern Fathers limited it to the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, although in Johannine circles it appears that the saying was not limited only to the post-resurrection appearances (which were of short duration), but was understood to refer to a more permanent presence of Jesus in the person of the Spirit. See R. Brown, *The Gospel According to John, xiii-xxi*, Anchor Bible 29A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 645-46. The latter interpretation is also supported by E. Haenchen, *John 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of John Chapters 7-21*, trans. R. W. Funk (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), p. 126.

³³No attempt is being made to suggest any sort of literary dependence or other relationship between the Fourth Gospel and Ephesians. The problems of relative dating of the material alone are so complex as to render any attempt to relate the two purely hypothetical. The Johannine statements regarding Jesus' relationship to the Spirit are mentioned only to demonstrate the range of possibilities open to a NT writer.

Pauline passages which deal with the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit.³⁴ A preliminary examination of the evidence from the Pauline corpus seems to suggest that Paul was not only capable of, but predisposed to, an identification of the exalted Christ with the Spirit of God: Paul's description of the Spirit as the "Spirit of Christ" (Rom. 8:9), the "Spirit of God's Son" (Gal. 4:6), and the "Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:19) are familiar to students of the NT.³⁵ Unlike the Lucan and Johannine authors Paul never actually describes Christ as the one who bestows the Spirit on others. For Paul, it is always God who dispenses the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12; 2 Cor. 1:21-22, 5:5; Gal. 3:5, 4:6; Eph. 1:17; and 1 Thess. 4:8). Although Luke and John are capable of attributing the gift of the Spirit equally to God and to the exalted Christ, Paul attributes the gift of the Spirit only to God.

This prepares the way, at least, for the Pauline midrash on Ex. 34:29-35 found in 2 Cor. 3:7-18. The assertion in 2 Cor. 3:17, ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν, has often been understood as Paul identifying the exalted Christ with the Spirit.³⁶ We should beware of an over-simplification, however, in understanding a simple assertion of identity between Christ and the Spirit here. A thoroughly researched attempt to argue for such an identity was put forward in 1961 by I. Hermann in *Kyrios und Pneuma: Studien zur*

³⁴The reader is reminded at this point that, while the author of the present work subscribes to Pauline authorship of Ephesians, such a view is not necessary in order for the following arguments to be valid. Those who deny Pauline authorship of Ephesians would acknowledge it to be deutero-Pauline, that is, written by a disciple of the Apostle Paul or by someone within the Pauline school in deliberate imitation of Paul and with considerable dependence on Pauline theology. In such a case perspectives from genuine Pauline material would have almost certainly influenced the author of Ephesians had he been aware of their existence.

³⁵See, for example, J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980), p. 142-43.

³⁶A comprehensive survey of the many interpretations given to this phrase is to be found in E. B. Allo, *Saint Paul: Seconde Épitre aux Corinthiens*, 2nd ed. (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956), pp. 94-111.

Christologie der paulinischen Hauptbriefe.³⁷ Hermann denied any personal understanding of the Spirit in Paul, and attempted to explain all the remaining references to the Spirit in the Pauline *Hauptbriefe* in a non-personal sense. His approach to the problem of 2 Cor. 3:17 has not been followed by all NT scholars, however. Many still believe, as C. K. Barrett and others have pointed out, that the definite article used with κύριος is anaphoric and points back to the previous verse.³⁸ Since this is virtually a direct OT quotation it appears more likely that κύριος should be identified with Yahweh than directly with the exalted Christ. Barrett and a number of other recent interpreters (e.g., R. P. Martin, V. P. Furnish, and J. D. G. Dunn) have understood the assertion ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν in 2 Cor. 3:17 to mean that, for Christians today, "the Lord" of the OT quotation (i.e., Yahweh) is represented by the Spirit.³⁹ In other words, for the readers of the epistle, that presence of Yahweh which Moses experienced in the account in Ex. 34:29-35 is equivalent to the Spirit in their present experience.

A different approach to 2 Cor. 3:17 taken by some interpreters has involved redefining the referent of τὸ πνεῦμα in this particular context (unlike Hermann,⁴⁰ who redefined τὸ πνεῦμα in the entire Pauline corpus):

³⁷I. Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma: Studien zur Christologie der paulinischen Hauptbriefe*, Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 2 (Munich: Kösel, 1961).

³⁸C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973), pp. 122-23. The article used with κύριος in this verse is also considered anaphoric by N. Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965), pp. 126-27.

³⁹C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 123; R. P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, Word Biblical Commentary 40 (Waco, TX: Word, 1986), pp. 73-74; V. P. Furnish, *II Corinthians: Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 32A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), p. 236; and J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, pp. 143-44.

⁴⁰See n. 37 above.

P. E. Hughes, for example, holds that there is no direct reference to the Spirit of God present in these verses. He understands the assertion to be similar to that in 2 Cor. 3:6, where the phrase "the spirit gives life" (τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζῶοποιεῖ) is contrasted to "the letter kills" (τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτείνει). In addition Hughes understands ὁ κύριος in 3:17 as a reference to Christ, with the resultant meaning, "the Lord (Christ) is the spirit" (i. e., of liberty), relating this to the second half of 3:17, οὐ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία. Having said this, Hughes goes on to state, however,

Although...there is in our judgment no *direct* reference to the Holy Spirit here, yet there can be no doubt that the operation of the Holy Spirit is implicit in Paul's argument, especially in view of his plain teaching elsewhere that it is the Holy Spirit's office to apply the work of Christ to the believing heart.⁴¹

Hughes' understanding of the assertion in 3:17 appears to say two things at once: while τὸ πνεῦμα is not a direct reference to the Spirit of God, a reference to the Spirit working in the believer is nevertheless implicit here. This represents a minority opinion; it seems easier to see the reference to τὸ πνεῦμα in 2 Cor. 3:17 as a direct reference to the Spirit, particularly in light of the phrase τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου in 3:17b.

Yet another approach has been that of J. Schildenberger, who has continued to argue that κύριος is used as a christological title in 3:17a, in spite of the OT associations related to its previous use in 3:16.⁴² Schildenberger's approach is to redefine τὸ πνεῦμα in 3:17 so that it has a qualitative aspect much as it does in reference to the Father in GJohn 4:24. Thus the assertion Paul is making in 2 Cor. 3:17, according to Schildenberger, is that

⁴¹P. E. Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 116.

⁴²J. Schildenberger, "2 Kor. 3,17a: «Der Herr aber ist der Geist» im Zusammenhang des Textes und der Theologie des hl. Paulus", in *Studiorum Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicus, 1961*, *Analecta Biblica* 17-18, vol. 1 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), pp. 451-60.

Christ is 'spirit', i.e., now exists in a spiritual mode, similar to Paul's formulation in 1 Cor. 15:45, where πνεῦμα is anarthrous. This, too, represents a minority opinion among modern interpreters, many of whom would identify the κύριος of 3:17a with Yahweh in the OT allusion in 3:16.

More recently there has been a return to the view that the references to κύριος in 2 Cor. 3:16-18 are best taken as referring to Christ, including the enigmatic one at the end of 3:18, καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος. A. T. Hanson understands Paul to be asserting that when Moses went into the tabernacle to converse with God, he saw the glory of the pre-existent Christ and his face shone with the reflection of that glory. When Moses went out to convey the revelations he had received to the Israelites, he covered his face to hide the glory of the pre-existent Christ whom he had seen in the sanctuary. This is in contrast with what Paul and his companions are doing in proclaiming the glory of Christ (3:12-13). But when a Jew in Paul's day turns to Christ, the veil (now figurative) is lifted from his mind, and he too beholds the glory of Christ. Hanson observes (citing 1 Cor. 15:45) that Christ is now known to us as the Spirit, and endorses what he calls an "economic" identity between Christ and the Spirit, an identity of experience but not of essence. According to Hanson all interpreters who understand ὁ δὲ κύριος in 3:17 to refer to Christ accept such an "economic" identity of Christ and Spirit in some form or other.⁴³

Another recent interpretation of 2 Cor. 3:12-18 which sees in 3:17 a reference to Christ is that of M. D. Hooker. Although she notes that Paul does not explain whether ὁ κύριος in verse 17 means Yahweh (as in Exodus) or Christ (as is normal in Paul), she finds a solution to the problem in the

⁴³A. T. Hanson, "The Midrash in II Corinthians 3: A Reconsideration", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 9 (1980), pp. 2-28.

close parallelism of verses 14 and 16. While "the Lord" must refer to Yahweh insofar as the words apply to Moses, Paul is applying the passage to the present situation, and in this case when the veil is taken away and a Jew turns to "the Lord" it must refer to Christ, with whom the veil is abolished. Thus, while Hooker does not consider Moses to have seen the pre-existent Christ in the tabernacle, she nevertheless understands the contemporary application of the text to refer to Christ, in what amounts to an experiential identification of Christ and Spirit.⁴⁴

In summary, we have seen that while the assertion made by Paul in 2 Cor. 3:17 appears at first glance to identify the exalted Christ with the Spirit, there is no consensus among interpreters that this is in fact what is being asserted in the context of 2 Corinthians 3. It may be, as some have proposed, that the author of 2 Corinthians is making no christological statement at all, particularly if κύριος can be understood as a reference to Yahweh as alluded to in 3:16. Such a connection, however probable, would not negate the observation that Paul in this case would still have viewed the Spirit as God's own power reaching out to interact with Christians and have its effect on them, becoming the means by which believers in the present age may have direct experience of God, just as Moses experienced the presence of Yahweh in the tabernacle.⁴⁵ However, it appears somewhat more probable that Paul did intend a reference to Christ, at least in 3:17-18, and that this involves some sort of economic or experiential identification of Christ and Spirit.

⁴⁴M. D. Hooker, "Beyond the Things That Are Written? St Paul's Use of Scripture", *New Testament Studies* 27 (1981), pp. 295-309.

⁴⁵See, e. g., J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, p. 144.

Before we discuss this theme as it occurs in Ephesians, there are two other Pauline passages which warrant examination because they appear to contribute to our understanding of Paul's concept of the relationship between the exalted Christ and the Spirit of God. These now need to be examined briefly. The first is a statement made by Paul in 1 Cor. 6:17, "the one who is joined to the Lord is one S/spirit" (ὁ δὲ κολλώμενος τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν πνεύμα ἔστιν).⁴⁶ Paul has been engaged in a debate with some in the Corinthian church who have argued that it is permissible for Christians to continue to engage in sexual relations with temple prostitutes.⁴⁷ Paul's reply to this position, beginning in verse 15, attempts to show how unthinkable it is for the Christian, whose very 'members' are members of the body of Christ, to take away these members and make them members of a prostitute's body. In the parallel clause in 6:17, Paul contrasts this joining of one's members to a prostitute with the believer's union with the exalted Christ. The reference to πνεῦμα in 6:17 may be understood as a reference either to the believer's (human) spirit or as a direct reference to the Spirit of God. In either case, it is probable in light of the following statements in verses 18-19 that Paul is alluding to the work of the Spirit in 6:17, through which the believer's spirit has become one with Christ (or perhaps, one with Christ's

⁴⁶The use of both upper and lower case [S/spirit] in the English translation indicates two interpretive options which will be explained in the following discussion.

⁴⁷For a discussion of the development of Paul's argument within the context, as well as particulars of the statement of Paul's position, see G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 250-66; W. F. Orr and J. A. Walther, *I Corinthians*, Anchor Bible 32 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 201-203; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 144-153; and H. Conzelmann, *I Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. J. W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), pp. 108-13.

Spirit).⁴⁸ Thus the Spirit, in 1 Cor. 6:17, is represented as the medium through which the Christian is united to the exalted Christ.⁴⁹ An alternative explanation of 1 Cor. 6:17 also exists, which would take πνεῦμα as the human spirit, contrasted with the physical body (which has been the subject of Paul's discussion up to this point). This interpretation, however, has been refuted at some length by R. H. Gundry.⁵⁰

Another passage in the Pauline corpus which appears to present an unequivocal relationship between the exalted Christ and the Spirit is 1 Cor. 15:45, "the last Adam [became] life-giving Spirit" (ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν). Paul in his arguments for the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 has already asserted that "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (15:21-22). In 15:45a, Adam is described as one who became a living ψυχή, while in 15:45b Christ likewise became a life-giving πνεῦμα. Since Paul in verse 44 had contrasted two types of bodies, one of them ψυχικός and the other πνευματικός, it would appear from the linguistic similarity of the terms ψυχικός and πνευματικός to ψυχή and πνεῦμα that he viewed the original bearers of each of these categories of bodies as Adam and Christ respectively.⁵¹ With the additional term ζωοποιοῦν predicated of Christ as the last Adam, however, Paul emphasizes not the mode of the resurrected Christ's existence so much as his function: the exalted Christ

⁴⁸See, e. g., J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in relation to Pentecostalism today* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), pp. 123-24.

⁴⁹J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, p. 145-46.

⁵⁰R. H. Gundry, *SOMA in Biblical Theology with emphasis on Pauline Anthropology*, SNTS Monograph Series 29 (Cambridge: University Press, 1976), pp. 65-69.

⁵¹See J. D. G. Dunn, "I Corinthians 15:45—last Adam, life-giving Spirit", in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), p. 130.

has now become the giver of life to all those who follow after.⁵² This is the point of the statement in 15:45 as far as Paul's argument is concerned: he wishes to demonstrate how it is that Christ's own resurrection becomes the basis for Christians receiving resurrection bodies, a point the Corinthians have apparently ignored or disputed. G. D. Fee is correct when he asserts that the concern of 1 Cor. 15:45b is not christological (to assert the interchangeability of the terms 'Christ' and 'Spirit' for Paul), but soteriological and eschatological.⁵³ Thus it may be pressing Paul's language too far to say, as J. Ruef has said, that Paul "does not draw any hard and fast line between the Spirit and Christ".⁵⁴ We must conclude that 1 Cor. 15:45, while appearing to equate the exalted Christ with the Spirit (or perhaps to imply some transformation of the one into the other), does not really constitute, in Paul's argument, an identification of the two in essence, any more than 2 Cor. 3:17 does. The most that can be said is that Paul is probably operating here on an 'experiential' or 'economic' level, as we saw in 2 Cor. 3:17, where there is a sense in which the believer's present experience of the exalted Christ comes through the Spirit: the activity of Christ in making others alive (at the resurrection, which is the point of Paul's argument in context) will be mediated through the Spirit.

At this point we may now turn to an examination of the Spirit as the mediator of God's power to the believer in Ephesians. Throughout the epistle there are significant indications that the author viewed the Spirit as the

⁵²Cf. A. T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to his Eschatology*, SNTS Monograph Series 43 (Cambridge: University Press, 1981), pp. 43-44.

⁵³G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 790.

⁵⁴J. Ruef, *Paul's First Letter to Corinth*, Westminster Pelican Commentaries (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), p. 173.

agency through which the power of God is to be mediated to the individual believer. In the initial blessing which constitutes the prologue (1:3-14) God is said to have blessed believers with "every spiritual blessing" (πάση εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ), a non-personal reference which nevertheless sets the tone for the remainder of the letter: the blessings God wishes to bestow are spiritual ones (that is, they are bound up with and mediated through the Spirit).⁵⁵ In view of the importance of the prologue in the structure of Ephesians—both J. T. Sanders and M. Barth see it as a summary of the entire letter—such an allusion must be significant for the author's concept of the relationship of the Spirit to the believer as developed in the remainder of Ephesians.⁵⁶

Twice in Ephesians (1:13 and 4:30) believers are said to be sealed with the Spirit; the second instance is a parenthetical reference which looks back to 1:13 where the concept is introduced in the letter. According to J. Adai, the sealing of the Spirit in 1:13, the climax of the entire prologue, constitutes the direct application and actualization of the blessing (1:3ff.) to the individual believer.⁵⁷ Since the sealing is carried out "in Christ" (ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ· ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς...ἐσφραγίσθητε), in 1:13 the inseparable relationship

⁵⁵From a stylistic viewpoint the prologue (1:3-14) appears hymnic in character; almost all scholars would see some relationship to hymnic literature in these verses, whether or not they originated with or were adapted by the author of Ephesians. See G. Schille, *Frühchristliche Hymnen* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965), p. 22, and J. T. Sanders, "Hymnic Elements in Eph. 1-3", *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 56 (1965), pp. 214-32.

⁵⁶J. T. Sanders, "Hymnic Elements in Eph. 1-3", pp. 214-15; M. Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1-3*, Anchor Bible 34 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), p. 78. Concerning the connection between the Spirit and the phrase εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ in 1:3, see J. Adai, *Der Heilige Geist als Gegenwart Gottes in den einzelnen Christen, in der Kirche, und in der Welt: Studien zur Pneumatologie des Epheserbriefes*, Regensburger Studien zur Theologie 31 (Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Lang, 1985), pp. 53-60.

⁵⁷J. Adai, *Der Heilige Geist als Gegenwart Gottes in den einzelnen Christen, in der Kirche, und in der Welt*, p. 62. The reference to 'sealing' is understood by many scholars to refer to refer to Christian baptism, although this is a debated point.

between Christ and Spirit is clearly visible; the Spirit has become accessible for the believer in and through Christ ("Der Geist ist in und durch Christus für die Gläubigen zugänglich geworden").⁵⁸ It might be equally accurate to say the opposite (although Adai does not do so), that the exalted Christ has become accessible to the believer in and through the Spirit as well.

Thus it is not inherently improbable, if Paul's concept of the Spirit as the means by which God's own power interacts with believers in the present age—by which an individual Christian may directly experience the exalted Christ—is present elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, that the writer of Ephesians could develop the implications of this concept somewhat further to include the distribution of the gifts (or gifted individuals) named in Eph. 4:11ff. to the church. Ephesians does, in fact, contain a number of assertions regarding God's power at work in the life of the believer. This appears as the ultimate object of the author's prayer in 1:16-23: that the recipients of the letter may know "what is the surpassing greatness of his [God's] power toward us who believe" (τί τὸ ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ εἰς ἡμᾶς τοὺς πιστεύοντας). The connection between the believer's experience of God's power in his or her personal experience is even more clearly expressed in the second prayer of the writer in 3:14-21. This section of the third chapter of Ephesians is often considered to show traces of a liturgical form: the formalities expressed at the beginning of the prayer (3:14) and the benediction in 3:20-21 are considered to constitute elements of a more or less formal liturgical prayer.⁵⁹ Whether these verses also contain hymnic elements is a related question which is not as easily answered;

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 76.

⁵⁹See, e. g., G. Schille, *Frühchristliche Hymnen*, p. 22, and J. T. Sanders, "Hymnic Elements in Ephesians 1-3", p. 214.

J. T. Sanders has attempted to isolate parallels to what he considers the hymnic elements present in 3:14-21.⁶⁰ At this point we may probably speak of either liturgical or hymnic characteristics in the material, since it appears to reflect some qualities of both forms.

The content of this second prayer (understanding the *ἵνα*-clause of 3:16 to express the content of the prayer) is "that he [God] may grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power by means of (*διὰ*) his Spirit in the inner man" (*ἵνα δῶ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον*). Here the writer explicitly states that the Spirit is the means by which believers are to experience God's power in their own lives. Furthermore, since verse 17 goes on to state the result of this inner strengthening by the Spirit (using an infinitive, *κατοικῆσαι*, which we would understand to express the result of the preceding clause) in terms of Christ dwelling in the hearts of the readers through faith (*κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν*), a connection between the exalted Christ and the Spirit as they are both experienced by believers in the present age appears to be implied. According to J. Adai, the relationship between *δύναμις* and *πνεῦμα* reflected in Eph. 3:16 does not differ greatly from that found between the same two terms in Rom. 15:13-19: the 'power' at work here is the power of the Spirit; the Spirit appears as the mediator of God's power to the believer.⁶¹ This is completely consistent with the interpretation of Eph. 4:7-

⁶⁰J. T. Sanders, "Hymnic Elements in Ephesians 1-3", p. 216. He lists, among others, 3:15 with 1:10, 3:16 with 1:7, and 3:17 with 1:5.

⁶¹J. Adai, *Der Heilige Geist als Gegenwart Gottes in den einzelnen Christen, in der Kirche, und in der Welt*, pp. 93-94. Adai considers Ephesians to be deutero-Pauline, while he considers Romans to be genuine Pauline material. This does not affect the validity of his observation on the similarities in terminology, however.

11 put forward in the present study, in which the descent introduced in 4:9-10 is understood as the descent of Christ as the Spirit at Pentecost, distributing spiritual gifts (that is, gifted individuals) to the church so that it might be equipped to grow to maturity.

But if it is the Spirit which has become operative in and for the believer as a result of the sealing which takes place "in Christ" at the time of the believer's conversion (1:13), and is the means by which believers are to experience God's power in their own lives (3:16-17), it is also the Spirit which has become the means by which believers actually live out the Christian life (5:18-6:9). Although it is beyond the scope of the present study to investigate the numerous problems surrounding the meaning of the command in Eph. 5:18 to "be filled with the Spirit" (πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι) and its outworking in the remainder of the *Haustafel* (5:22-6:9), M. Barth has suggested that the formula ἐν πνεύματι may correspond to the formula ἐν Χριστῷ which dominates the didactic section of the letter (chapters 1-3) and especially the prologue (1:3-14).⁶² Such a correspondence would imply a functional relationship amounting to experiential identity (from the viewpoint of the Christian) between the exalted Christ on the one hand and the Spirit by which he interacts with individual believers on the other. It should also be noted with regard to this passage that M. Barth has raised the question whether the author of Eph. 5:18, with its reference to drunkenness as the alternative to the filling of the Spirit, was aware of the account of the first Christian Pentecost in Acts 2.⁶³

⁶²M. Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, Anchor Bible 34A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), p. 582, n. 117.

⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 582.

Summary and Final Conclusions

We have now come to the end of our study. As we have noted in our brief examination of the doctrine of the *descensus ad inferos* the belief that Christ, in the three days between his burial and resurrection, descended to the underworld and participated in various activities there, was well established in the early church. It was natural—indeed almost inevitable—that the early Fathers understood Eph. 4:7-11 in this light, particularly because it seemed to describe the same events discussed in 1 Pet. 3:19-22, a passage which appears to give an even more detailed account of the *descensus* than the present one. Thus it is not surprising that the early interpreters were almost unanimous in their understanding of the descent in Eph. 4:9-10 (with the exception of Theodore of Mopsuestia, who held that the descent referred to Christ's incarnation rather than a descent to the underworld).

Modern interpreters who have attempted to address the question of the meaning of the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10 have not been nearly as unanimous in their conclusions, however. With regard to the locus of the descent most have seen it either as a descent from earth to the underworld (or to the grave) or as a descent from heaven to earth at the incarnation. In the present study we have proposed that the explanation originally put forward by H. von Soden and T. K. Abbott at the end of the nineteenth century and espoused more recently by G. B. Caird, A. T. Lincoln, and others is to be preferred. This approach sees the descent occurring after the ascent and exaltation of Eph. 4:8 and referring to the descent of Christ as the Spirit who distributes gifts to his church.

The major textual problem in Eph. 4:9, the omission of *πρῶτον* following *κατέβη*, is of crucial importance for the proposed exegesis. If the word is

genuine and should be included, it would rule out the possibility of a subsequent descent. This would limit the possibilities for meaning to a descent to the underworld or the grave—the traditional view—or to a descent from heaven to earth at the incarnation. Our examination of the manuscript evidence and the transcriptional probabilities has shown that the original text of Eph. 4:9 almost certainly did not contain *πρῶτον*. It appears that a later copyist added the word, perhaps accidentally incorporating a marginal gloss intended to elucidate the meaning of the descent into the text itself. Most modern textual authorities endorse the shorter reading (without *πρῶτον*), and we have proceeded in our study on the basis of the omission. The original text of Eph. 4:9-10 gave no explicit indication of the time of the descent; this must be determined from the context and therefore cannot be separated from the question of the meaning of the descent itself.

A major grammatical problem in the passage is the use of the genitive construction *τῆς γῆς* in Eph. 4:9. Various classifications for the phrase have been suggested; the most frequent proposals are partitive, comparative, or appositive genitive. An understanding of the genitive as partitive or comparative would support the traditional view of the descent in the passage as a descent of Christ from the earth to the underworld or to the grave. Both those who hold that the descent refers to the incarnation and those who understand it as a reference to the subsequent descent of Christ as the Spirit have (*de necessitate*) preferred to see *τῆς γῆς* as a genitive of apposition (sometimes called an epexegetic genitive). This understanding seems preferable, not only because of contextual factors which favour a subsequent descent, but because appositive genitives appear characteristic of the style of Ephesians, as E. Percy in his stylistic analysis of Colossians and Ephesians

concluded.⁶⁴ Certainly this stylistic feature alone does not prove the existence of a subsequent descent in the passage, but it does offer corroborative evidence for a descent from heaven to earth, either prior to the ascent (at Christ's incarnation) or subsequent to the ascent (at Pentecost).

Next we turned our attention to the use of descent imagery in the NT and the LXX. In particular we examined the possibility that the author of Ephesians was influenced by the *descensus* imagery of Jonah 2 LXX and Matt. 12:40. We concluded that such influence cannot be excluded absolutely, but similarities in terminology do not prove borrowing has occurred. In light of the ascent imagery associated with Psalm 68 and Moses found in a broad variety of contexts at the same time as (or prior to) the composition of Ephesians, it appears much more likely that any conceptual influence on Ephesians 4:7-11 would have come from this direction.

Thus we began our examination of the ascent-descent imagery associating Ps. 68:19 and Moses with an investigation of Targum Psalms and the later rabbinic literature. Tg Ps. 68:19 is an appropriate starting-point because it bears striking similarity to the quotation from Ps. 68:19 in Eph. 4:8—both Targum Psalms and Ephesians read "gave gifts" in place of the phrase "received gifts" found in the MT and LXX. This has led to the frequent suggestion (or assumption) that the author of Ephesians was aware of the targumic interpretation of Ps. 68:19 as a reference to Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah followed by his distribution of it as 'gifts' to men. These Moses-traditions associated with Ps. 68:19 are extremely important to a proper understanding of the descent of Christ in Eph. 4:9-10. If the author of Ephesians had at his disposal the traditions associating Psalm 68

⁶⁴See ch. 2, pp. 76-78. The contextual factors which favour a subsequent descent are discussed at some length in the first half of the present chapter.

with Moses, he was in all probability influenced by them in his inclusion of a reference to Christ's descent. No descent per se is mentioned in the psalm quotation (Eph. 4:8), but a descent is nevertheless inferred by the author of Ephesians (4:9-10). Knowledge of Moses-traditions involving a heavenly ascent, especially one associated with Psalm 68:19, would provide a reasonable explanation why the author of Ephesians thought it necessary to infer a subsequent descent of Christ from the ascent mentioned in the psalm, since Moses' ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah was followed by a descent, implicit in Ps. 68:19, to distribute it as 'gifts' to men. The 'giving of gifts' which is attributed to Moses in the ascent-tradition related to Ps. 68:19 necessarily implies a corresponding descent, and if the author of Ephesians made use of this tradition his reference to a descent of Christ would naturally be subsequent to the ascent as well. Thus a considerable amount of space in the present study has been devoted to the investigation of these Moses-traditions as found in Tg Psalms and other early non-rabbinic sources.

Targum Psalms as a written composition is undoubtedly much later than Ephesians (probably third or fourth century CE), so that there can be no question of the literary dependence of Ephesians on a written Targum Psalms. Nevertheless, as often noted, the tradition found in Tg Ps. 68:19 is surely much older than the written form of the Targum, and may well reach back into the first century CE or earlier. We have attempted to corroborate the dating of this tradition through an examination of rabbinic texts and other early literature (both within and outside the canonical materials) which suggest or explicitly state an association of Moses, Psalm 68:19, and an ascent of Mt Sinai to receive the Torah.

Although it is clear that the rabbinic literature which associates Moses' ascent of Sinai with Ps. 68:19 is later than Ephesians, every time Ps. 68:19 is mentioned in this literature it is always interpreted of Moses and his ascent to heaven to receive the Torah. As far as the other elements of Ps. 68:19 are concerned, there is some variation. This has led us to propose that the basic elements of the tradition, which are common to all rabbinic interpretations of Ps. 68:19, are that (a) Moses ascended to heaven to receive the Torah, and (b) while there he took the words of Torah 'captive'. Later additions to the tradition introduced other elements involving angels, other gifts besides the Torah itself, and even elements of *merkabah* mysticism. The two basic elements common to all the rabbinic interpretations of Ps. 68:19 are also found in Tg Ps. 68:19 and thus these elements of the tradition would appear to be quite ancient.

However, it is not clear whether the tradition of Moses' ascent to heaven to receive the Torah can be associated with Ps. 68:19 as early as the first century CE. Attempts to verify such a connection by examining non-rabbinic sources such as the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Book of Jubilees, and the writings of the early Fathers have proven inconclusive. This led us to turn to other early sources not related to Psalm 68 to see if the tradition of Moses' ascent to heaven to receive the Torah can be dated as early as the first century CE independently of Ps. 68:19.

An examination of these sources revealed that the tradition of Moses' ascent to heaven to receive the Torah can be given an approximate date with a reasonable degree of certainty. In particular, the drama about the Exodus known as the *Ἐξάγωγη*, which may be as old as the second century BCE, appears to bear the influence of such traditions. Furthermore, such traditions have almost certainly influenced the writings of Philo of Alexandria.

Philo uses similar terminology to describe Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah and his supposed ascension to heaven at the end of his life, and this suggests that Philo was aware of Moses-traditions which related a heavenly ascent at Sinai when the Torah was given. This would confirm the existence of such traditions prior to the middle of the first century CE, and thus they would have been available to the author of Ephesians. Had he been aware of such traditions, as we are suggesting, he would have been predisposed to think in terms of a subsequent descent of Christ to distribute gifts to his church.

Another document which also dates from approximately the same era, the *Biblical Antiquities* of Pseudo-Philo, indicates that traditions concerning a heavenly ascent of Moses were circulating in the first century CE. Evidence from other early sources such as the *Antiquities* of Josephus and the document known either as the Testament of Moses or the Assumption of Moses does not apply to an ascent of Moses to receive the Torah at Sinai, but alludes to traditions concerning Moses' assumption to heaven at his death. The same is true of somewhat later evidence from 2 Baruch and the writings of Clement of Alexandria, which refers to Moses' assumption to heaven and not to his ascent at Sinai.

While we have discovered sufficient evidence in the writings from the first century CE or earlier to warrant the conclusion that Moses-traditions concerning a heavenly ascent at Sinai are early enough to have influenced the author of Ephesians to think in terms of a subsequent descent and widespread enough that he was probably aware of them, we have as yet related no specific evidence linking such traditions to the interpretation of Ps. 68:19 earlier than Tg Ps. 68:19 and the rabbinic writings of the Amoraic and Tannaitic periods. It appears that such a connection exists through

the associations of Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah and the celebration of the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Weeks) on the one hand, and the Christian use of Psalm 68 in connection with the first Christian Pentecost (as described in Acts 2) on the other.

The association of the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Weeks) with the celebration of the giving of the Torah to Moses at Sinai can be found at least as early as the Book of Jubilees, which should probably be dated in the second century BCE. Psalm 68 may have been associated with Pentecost and the giving of the Torah to Moses in pre-Christian Jewish tradition as well, although conclusive evidence on this point is still lacking. Nevertheless, the association of Psalm 68 with Pentecost in Christian tradition almost certainly antedates the composition of Ephesians, because a christological interpretation of the psalm appears to lie behind the present text of Acts 2:33. This would indicate that Psalm 68 was already understood to refer to the victorious ascent of Christ and the gift(s) of the Spirit in a layer of tradition almost certainly older than Ephesians. Thus the innovation which the author of Ephesians brought to the use of Psalm 68:19 in Eph. 4:8 did not lie in the use of the psalm in a christological sense. This he probably inherited from established Christian tradition. Nor did the author's innovation lie in the introduction of a subsequent descent of Christ inferred from the ascent mentioned in Ps. 68:19. If, as we have suggested, the Moses-traditions referring to a heavenly ascent at Sinai to receive the Torah have influenced the author of Ephesians, he would already have been predisposed to think in terms of a subsequent descent, since Moses subsequently descended to distribute to men the 'gifts' of the Torah. Rather, the unique contribution made by the author of Ephesians lies in his identification of the ascended Christ as the Spirit who descended at

Pentecost to distribute gifts (or gifted individuals) to his church. Such an understanding of the descent in Eph. 4:9-10 fits the context of 4:1-16 well, because it establishes the connection between the gifts to individuals which are given through the grace of Christ (4:7) and the gifted leaders given to the church to equip it for ministry and assist its growth towards maturity (4:11-16). This understanding of the descent is also consistent with the Pauline concept of the Spirit as the means/medium/agency through which Christians presently experience God and, in this case, the resurrected and exalted Christ.

Admittedly our conclusion about the nature of the descent inferred by the author in Eph. 4:9-10 cannot claim absolute certainty. But it does appear to offer the best possible explanation at the present time of all available evidence linking Moses-traditions of a heavenly ascent at Sinai with Pentecost and Psalm 68. It is indeed remarkable that H. von Soden and T. K. Abbott argued—in the absence of almost all the evidence discussed in the present study except for the sequence of the argument in the context of Ephesians 4 itself—for a similar understanding of the passage nearly a century ago. Perhaps, as in their case, the final word has not been said, and still further evidence remains to be discovered which will throw additional light on the descent in Eph. 4:9-10. Such evidence may even lead in the direction of a solution different from the one proposed in the present study. However, each additional attempt to evaluate old evidence anew, or to uncover new evidence and new connections concerning this passage, brings us closer to the meaning of the text as understood by the author who wrote it, and it is with this hope that the present study is put forward as a contribution to the continuing discussion and debate.

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