

RESURRECTED AS MESSIAH: THE RISEN CHRIST AS PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

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I. INTRODUCTION

On pages 232–34 of his influential book *The Cross of Christ*, evangelical pastor and author John Stott, referencing a recent emphasis on the resurrection by Michael Green, poses the question: “[D]oes not this book’s whole emphasis lie too heavily on the cross, and insufficiently on the resurrection?”¹ Stott acknowledges that the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ belong together, and that the resurrection is essential to the gospel message. Yet, for Stott, the cross and the empty tomb do not seem to stand together *as saving deeds*,² and while the resurrection is included in the gospel message, “the gospel emphasizes the cross, *since it was there that the victory was accomplished*.”³ Ultimately, the resurrection seems to be reduced to the role of attesting to the significance of Christ’s death: “the resurrection was essential to confirm the efficacy of his death, as the incarnation had been to prepare for its possibility.”⁴ For Stott, the resurrection confirms, rather than contributes to, Christ’s redeeming work; it is proof of salvation, not part of salvation.

Earlier Reformed thought placed greater weight on the soteriological significance of the resurrection. Both the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Heidelberg Catechism*, for example, citing Rom 4:25,⁵ drew a connection between Christ’s resurrection and believers’ justification.⁶ Jonathan Edwards made the same connection: “the justification believers have at their conversion

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¹ John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986) 232. The book he is referring to is Michael Green’s *The Empty Cross of Jesus* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1984).

² Stott, *Cross of Christ* 233.

³ *Ibid.* 234 (emphasis mine).

⁴ *Ibid.* 233.

⁵ For a helpful analysis of this verse, which is of great importance for the soteriological significance of the resurrection, see C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975) 1:251–52). Cranfield’s interpretation, and particularly his discussion of the different senses of $\delta\iota\alpha$, steers between two opposite errors: (1) denying any causal link between Christ’s resurrection and believers’ justification; and (2) identifying Christ’s resurrection as the *exclusive* causative agent of believers’ justification. Richard B. Gaffin Jr., *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul’s Soteriology* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1987) 122–24, demonstrates how this more complicated understanding of the relative roles of Christ’s death and resurrection coheres with Paul’s doctrine of believers’ union with Christ.

⁶ See question 52 of the *Westminster Larger Catechism* and question 45 of the *Heidelberg Catechism*.

is as partaking of the justification that Christ had in his resurrection."⁷ John Calvin also emphasized that the cross and resurrection stood together *as saving deeds*, carefully delineating their distinct soteriological contributions.⁸ Nevertheless, Stott is not alone among more recent Reformed and evangelical theologians in downplaying the soteriological significance of the resurrection.⁹ While often referenced for its apologetic value, the soteriological significance of the resurrection, as well as its more general theological meaning and practical use, are less frequently explored. Many have quoted Paul's assertion that "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile" (1 Cor 15:17); fewer have asked, as Susan Pevensie asks of Aslan's resurrection, "What does it mean?"¹⁰

Two forceful counter-balances to neglect of the resurrection in recent years include: (1) Richard Gaffin, who, drawing from the theological and exegetical insights of Herman Ridderbos and Geerhardus Vos, has demonstrated the organizing centrality of union with Christ in his death and resurrection for Paul's soteriology;¹¹ and (2) N. T. Wright, who has emphasized the historical uniqueness of first century Christian belief in the resurrection and drawn implications from Christ's resurrection for eschatology and the church's mission.¹² Through the influence of Gaffin, Wright, and others, the redemptive-historical significance of Easter morning has become more widely recognized. From Paul's language of "first fruits" for the resurrection in 1 Cor 15:20, and the cosmic scope of redemption in Rom 8:19–21, the resurrection has been called "the beginning of the new creation";¹³ "the emergence within history of the life of the world to come";¹⁴ the "embryonic principle of cosmic transformation";¹⁵ "the womb of the new aeon";¹⁶ and "the beginning of the new and final world-order."¹⁷ As the firstfruits, however, the resurrection does

⁷ Quoted in Adrian Warnock, *Raised with Christ: How the Resurrection Changes Everything* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010) 140.

⁸ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles; 2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006) 2.16.3, 521: "[W]e divide the substance of our salvation between Christ's death and resurrection as follows: through his death, sin was wiped out and death extinguished; through his resurrection, righteousness was restored and life raised up, so that—thanks to his resurrection—his death manifested its power and efficacy in us."

⁹ As an example, consider Millard Erickson's *Christian Theology* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), which in four chapters on Christ's saving work, spends three chapters on the atonement and barely over a page on the resurrection (pp. 794–96).

¹⁰ C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* (New York: Scholastic, 1995) 162.

¹¹ Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption*. Compare a sample statement from p. 66: "[T]he resurrection of Jesus is just as thoroughly messianic and adamic as are his sufferings and death. His resurrection is as equally representative and vicarious as his death."

¹² See especially N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 3; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); and idem, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008).

¹³ G. K. Beale, "The Eschatological Conception of New Testament Theology" (July 1997 Tyndale Lecture) 10.

¹⁴ George Eldon Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 12.

¹⁵ Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Contours of Christian Theology; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997) 254.

¹⁶ Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1994) 156.

¹⁷ Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption* 89–90.

not merely inaugurate redemption—it also clarifies the trajectory and goal of redemption. Specifically, as an event which is both bodily and heavenly, both material and eschatological, a sort of spiritual-physical hybrid, the resurrection signifies God’s concern for material reality in redemption. Jesus’ resurrection body is a fundamentally new kind of reality, without precedent in history or eternity—and what happened to Jesus’ body on Easter morning is what God will do to the whole universe. As Williams puts it, “biblically, the single best term to catch the nature of redemption and the character of the Christian hope is resurrection.”¹⁸

In this article, I hope to further extend reflection on the soteriological significance of the resurrection by considering it in relation to Christ’s messianic offices of prophet, priest, and king.¹⁹ This focus is not intended to downplay the significance of Jesus’ earthly life and death, and in particular the cross, for it is at the cross and nowhere else that our sin is atoned for and the Father’s wrath propitiated. Nevertheless, in the NT, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus stand together at the center of Jesus’ great saving work. While they can be distinguished (for they each play distinct roles), they cannot be finally separated (for neither has any saving power or intelligibility apart from the other).²⁰ Our salvation consists of both a bloody cross and an empty tomb, both a Friday afternoon’s agony and a Sunday morning’s vindication—and the latter is not merely proof of the gospel, but part of the gospel.

II. THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTABLE LIFE: THE RISEN CHRIST AS PRIEST

While a focus on the cross at the expense of the resurrection often corresponds to an emphasis on Christ’s priestly office at the expense of his prophetic and kingly offices, it also tends to obscure the nature of his priestly office, for it tends to emphasize his priestly work of atonement on at the expense of his priestly work of intercession in heaven. The great Puritan theologian John Owen noted that Christ’s priestly office, like that of OT priests, consists in two components: oblation (or atonement) and intercession. Though fighting against the Socinian error of locating the priestly ministry of Christ exclusively in

¹⁸ Michael D. Williams, *Far as the Curse is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2005) 15.

¹⁹ This three-pronged approach to understanding Christ’s messianic work became standardized after Calvin (though one can find it as far back as Eusebius). Prophets, priests, and kings were the anointed leaders among God’s people in the OT; it is fitting, therefore, that the Messiah (literally, the “Anointed One”) should embrace all of these offices in his person. These offices are often called Christ’s *triplex munus* and sometimes teased out in terms of Christ’s work as mediator.

²⁰ Cf. Calvin’s point about synecdoche: “[W]henever mention is made of his death alone, we are to understand at the same time what belongs to his resurrection. Also, the synecdoche applies to the word ‘resurrection’: whenever it is mentioned separately from death, we are to understand it as including what had to do with especially with his death” (*Institutes* 2.16.13; 521). Many scriptural assertions regarding the saving efficacy of Christ’s resurrection (e.g. 1 Pet 1:3, 3:21) must be understood in this light.

heaven,²¹ Owen also insisted that Christ's priestly ministry is not completed during Christ's earthly life, but continues in its intercessory and representative functions in heaven after his ascension.²² As he put it:

Although (Christ) ascended not into heaven *to be made a priest, but as a priest*, yet, his ascension, exaltation, and glorious immortality, or the 'power of an indestructible life,' were antecedently necessary to the actual discharge of some duties belonging unto that office, as his intercession and the continual application of the fruits and benefits of his oblation.²³

In this section, I will argue that not only is Christ's risen and exalted life in heaven necessary for some of his priestly duties, but that it is portrayed in Heb 5:5–10 and 7:16 as the occasion for his appointment to a specific priestly office, namely, the everlasting, intercessory priesthood typified by Melchizedek, in which office he continually applies the saving benefits of his atoning sacrifice to his people.

1. *Hebrews 5:5–10.* Hebrews 5:1–10 is an important transition passage in Hebrews, launching the primary argument of the middle section of the book concerning Christ's priestly ministry.²⁴ After establishing the distinguishing characteristics of old covenant (Levitical) high priests in Heb 5:1–4 (solidarity with the people they represent, Heb 5:1–3; and calling from God, Heb 5:4), the author moves on in Heb 5:5–10 to establish that Jesus' appointment to priesthood shares these same characteristics (divine calling in Heb 5:5–6, and human solidarity in Heb 5:7–8). In Heb 5:9–10, the saving significance of Christ's priestly appointment is emphasized and more clearly identified with the priestly order of Melchizedek.²⁵

The author's language here demonstrates that he understands Jesus to have been appointed to this priestly role at a particular moment in history: "was appointed" (v. 5); "he became" (v. 9); "being designated" (v. 10). This is in keeping with his emphasis on continuity between Jesus and OT priests, who were also historically called and appointed ("so also Christ . . .," Heb 5:5). When does this historical appointment take place? Several factors indicate that Christ's appointment to this office should be seen as coinciding with the event of his exaltation/ascension/enthronement,²⁶ one of the book's most recurrent themes.²⁷

²¹ John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, vol. 2 (8 vols.; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1991) 3.259.

²² Cf. Rom 8:34, 1 John 2:1, Heb 6:19–20, 7:25, 9:24.

²³ Owen, *Hebrews* 2.199 (emphasis his).

²⁴ Peter T. O'Brien, following George Guthrie's structure, calls Heb 5:1–10:18 "the central theological argument of Hebrews" (*The Letter to the Hebrews* [PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010] 187).

²⁵ All translations ESV unless otherwise noted.

²⁶ The fact that already within Hebrews Christ's status as ἀρχιερεὺς (high priest) has been associated with his sacrificial offering on the cross (Heb 2:17, cf. 9:11–12) is not at odds with this interpretation, for the priesthood to which Jesus is appointed here is not priesthood generally but a specific priestly office associated with particular priestly duties, patterned after Melchizedek (Heb 5:6, 10; cf. 6:20–7:28).

²⁷ Cf. Heb 1:3–4, 5–6, 13, 2:8–9, 3:6, 4:14, 5:5–10, 6:19–20, 7:16–17, 21–28, 8:1–4, 6, 9:24, 10:12–13, 21, 12:2.

First, the author establishes the divine origins of Jesus' priestly appointment by appealing to Psalms 2 and 110, texts which are interpreted in the NT as referring to Jesus' glorification, particularly his resurrection and ascension.²⁸ Peter, for example, in his speech at Pentecost, interprets Psalm 110 as foretelling Jesus' resurrection and exaltation (Acts 2:30–35), and Paul claims that the resurrection is the fulfillment of Psalm 2:7 in his speech at Antioch (Acts 13:32–34). Psalms 2 and 110 have already been quoted in Hebrews to establish Jesus' exaltation (Heb 1:5–1:13; cf. 7:17, 21, to be discussed below).²⁹ Phillips's conclusion is representative of most commentators: "the resurrection and ascension were the fulfillment of this Old Testament citation and the occasion of his appointment to enter heaven as Son, heir, and high priest."³⁰

Second, in verses 9–10 Jesus' appointment to priesthood follows from his earthly suffering. That τελειωθείς (being/having been perfected) in Heb 5:9 refers to Christ's submission to the sufferings and agonies of his earthly life (culminating in the cross) is probable from the immediate context of Heb 5:8, as well as the earlier connection between suffering and "perfection" (τελειῶσαι) in Heb 2:10. As a result of this perfection, Jesus enters into a saving, priestly office: "being made perfect, he became . . . being designated" (Heb 5:9–10). In other words, his "perfection" is vocational: by suffering he is "perfected" unto priestly ministry, for only by suffering would he would be able to deal gently with the weak, as every priest must (Heb 4:15; 5:2, 7–8).

Third, the author's assertion that Jesus' earthly prayers were "heard" in verse 7 is difficult to understand without reference to his resurrection and exaltation. Whether the prayers in view here are those of Jesus' entire earthly life, or his anguish in Gethsemane before crucifixion, the reference to the Father as "[he] who was able to save him from death," the importance of the exaltation in Heb 5:5–6 and 5:9–10, and the reference to Christ's suffering and perfection in Heb 5:8–9 all make it likely that the author understands Jesus' prayers to be heard because he is delivered from death. God "hears" Jesus' "loud cries and tears" by rescuing him, not from the experience of death, but from its realm and power.³¹

Fourth, Christ's priestly office is referred to as the source of eternal salvation (Heb 5:9) and belonging to the "order to Melchizedek" (Heb 5:10), which, as chapter 7 will repeatedly declare, is a perpetual priesthood (Heb 7:17, 21, 24–25, 28; cf. Ps 110:4). Only an endless, heavenly life, achieved by resurrection and exaltation, can result in perpetual priestly ministry and thus "eternal salvation."

²⁸ That the author can quote from the Davidic coronation declaration in Ps 2:7 and the priestly declaration in Ps 110:4 in close succession and without explanatory comment demonstrates the extent to which the author associates the kingly and priestly offices of Christ, a point already implicit in Psalm 110, the person of Melchizedek (a priest-king), and earlier passages of Hebrews (e.g. 1:3).

²⁹ On the prominence of the exaltation in Hebrews 1, particularly 1:5 and 1:13, see Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 113–14, 129–32.

³⁰ Richard D. Phillips, *Hebrews* (REC; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2006) 161. So also William L. Lane, *Hebrews: A Call to Commitment* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1995) 80; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 123; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews* 282, who simply notes that Christ's suffering is included with his exaltation by implication; and O'Brien, *Letter to the Hebrews* 195.

³¹ Cf. O'Brien, *Letter to the Hebrews* 199.

Fifth, related to this, the particular priestly duties associated with Jesus' Melchizedekian office, such as representation (Heb 6:19–20, 9:24) and intercession (Heb 7:25), are duties realized in heaven alone. In Heb 6:19–20, the next reference to Jesus' Melchizedekian priesthood, the author asserts that Jesus has entered "the inner place behind the curtain . . . having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." The inner place behind the curtain, drawing from the tabernacle imagery of the Holy of Holies, refers to God's immediate presence in heaven (cf. Heb 9:24). Christ is therefore a "minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man" (Heb 8:2), where he enters as a "forerunner on our behalf" (Heb 6:19–20), making intercession for us (Heb 7:25), and representing us to the Father (Heb 9:24). As Bavinck puts it, "to be truly a priest, he had to be a priest in heaven, not on earth, not in man-made temple, but in heaven, on the throne of the universe."³²

To sum up: Jesus' appointment to the priestly office typified by Melchizedek in Heb 5:5–10 coincides with his exaltation to heaven because it is seen in terms of the fulfillment of Psalms 2 and 110; because it follows from his earthly suffering; because it is in consequence to his answered prayers for deliverance from death; because it is an *everlasting* priestly office; and because it is a heavenly priestly office.

2. *Hebrews 7:16*. The larger context of chapter 7 is a sustained contrast between two different orders of priesthood, the Levitical and the Melchizedekian. The author demonstrates that the Melchizedekian order of priesthood surpasses the Levitical order in its greatness (Heb 7:1–10); necessity (Heb 7:11–19); basis (Heb 7:20–22); permanence (Heb 7:23–25); and perfection (Heb 7:26–28). In Heb 7:11–16, the author argues that the basis for the Levitical order of priesthood was the Mosaic law; in Heb 7:16 the superior basis of Jesus' Melchizedekian priesthood is stated: "Jesus has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life."

Some older commentators tended to interpret "the power of an indestructible life" in terms of the Son's eternal, divine life,³³ but the majority of more recent commentators, recognizing the prominence of Christ's exaltation throughout Hebrews, and noting that the author's language requires some kind of historical transition, identify this life as the Son's resurrected and exalted life.³⁴ If "the power of an indestructible life" is Christ's eternal life as God the Son, it is not clear how Christ "has become" a high priest on the basis of it. Here and throughout Hebrews, the author is concerned with how Jesus' earthly suffering and exaltation have qualified and appointed him to a new priestly office (Heb 2:17; 3:2; 5:5, 9, 10; 6:20).

³² Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3: *Sin and Salvation in Christ* (4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006) 478. Cf. Heb 7:26.

³³ E.g. Owen, *Hebrews* 5.452–53.

³⁴ E.g. Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews* 379, Lane, *Hebrews* 109, Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (NLT; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006) 188.

It is significant that the author does not consider this point to originate with him, but appeals to Ps 110:4 for support: “for it is witnessed of him” (Heb 7:17). Christ’s “indestructible life” (Heb 7:16) is the basis for his priesthood because in that life he can be the “priest forever” (Heb 7:17) who is typified by Melchizedek and portrayed in Psalm 110. This is arguably the very purpose of the Aaron-Melchizedek contrast: to establish the permanence of Jesus’ priestly ministry. This accords with the (otherwise perplexing) focus on such a little-known figure as Melchizedek, the way this figure is introduced in Heb 7:3, the importance of Psalm 110 throughout Hebrews, and the frequency with which the permanence and endlessness of Jesus’ priestly office is reiterated throughout the book:

- “You are a priest *forever*, after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb 5:6);
- “where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest *forever* after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb 6:20);
- “resembling the Son of God he continues a priest *forever*” (Heb 7:3);
- “you are a priest *forever*, after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb 7:17);
- “but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘you are a priest *forever*’” (Heb 7:21);
- “but he holds his priesthood *permanently*, because he continues *forever*” (Heb 7:24);
- “since he *always* lives to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25);
- “for the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect *forever*” (Heb 7:28; emphases mine).

3. *Resurrection* → *ascension*. The focus of Hebrews is on the exalted life of Christ in heaven, not the resurrection event, which is referenced directly only in Heb 13:20. Strictly speaking, Jesus’ exaltation to the right hand of God occurred at his ascension into heaven, forty days after his resurrection (Acts 1:3, 9–11). Nevertheless, whatever significance we may attach to the ascension, it is the resurrection that is presented in the NT as the crucial transformation from one kind of existence to another.³⁵ What Christ is in heaven, he was for forty days on earth: his ascended life is an extension of his resurrected life.³⁶ As Gaffin puts it, “what Christ is and continues to be he became at the resurrection and at no other point. . . . Ascension and heavenly session are exponential of resurrection.”³⁷ For this reason, wherever the ascension/exaltation of Jesus is mentioned in Hebrews, his resurrection is presupposed—not

³⁵ Cf., e.g., 1 Cor 15:42–44.

³⁶ This explains some of the strange features of Jesus’ post-resurrection earthly life, in which he is able to vanish (Luke 24:31) and pass through walls (John 20:26).

³⁷ Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption* 92. Cf. William Milligan, *The Resurrection of our Lord* (New York: Macmillan, 1927) 27, and 129: “[W]hat He is now in his glorified state, He was during the forty days when He showed Himself from time to time to His disciples.” Cf. Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus* 127–29. Alternative views include Erickson (*Christian Theology* 796) who sees the ascension as “the remainder of the metamorphosis begun with the resurrection” and Bavinck (*Reformed Dogmatics* 3.443), who sees the 40-day period between the two events as a kind of “transitional period” in which Jesus may have gradually transformed.

only because only a living Christ can ascend to heaven, but more basically because Christ's exaltation is the natural outworking of his resurrection. Jesus obtained the "power of an indestructible life" on Easter morning.

4. *Atonement* → *intercession*. How then should we best construe the relation between these two complementary aspects of Christ's priestly ministry, atonement (earthly) and intercession (heavenly)?³⁸ William Symington helpfully compares the relation of intercession to atonement to the relation of providence to creation: the former continuously sustains the effects of the latter.³⁹ Thus, at the cross, Christ accomplishes perfect atonement; in his heavenly intercession, Christ sustains the effects of that accomplishment by continually applying its benefits to believers. Says Owen: "[T]he intercession of Christ as a priest is ordained of God as a means of making his sacrifice and oblation effectual, by the application of its virtue and efficacy to us."⁴⁰ Bavinck also states, similarly, "[I]n his intercession his sacrifice continues to be operative and effective."⁴¹

III. SON OF GOD, SON OF DAVID: THE RISEN CHRIST AS KING

Hope in a coming offspring is a macro-theme throughout the OT.⁴² A cursory sketch will be made before connecting this hope with Christ's resurrection.⁴³ The offspring hope is introduced all the way back in Gen 3:15 with God's promise of a descendent who will crush the Serpent. A focus on future offspring is also a major component of the Abrahamic covenant, though it is not initially clear whether the heart of this covenant, God's promise to bless the nations in Abraham,⁴⁴ concerns the nation collectively or some group or

³⁸ Some would be unhappy with a correlation between the word "atonement" and Christ's earthly work as priest. William Milligan, for example, argues that Christ's heavenly intercession constitutes the completion of his atoning work, just as the sprinkling of the animal blood on the mercy seat (not the killing of the animal) constituted the completion of the Day of Atonement sacrifice in Leviticus 16 (*Resurrection of Our Lord* 137–42). See a similar, more recent view in I. Howard Marshall, "Soteriology in Hebrews," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology* (ed. Richard Bauckham, Daniel R. Driver, et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 271. But we must not stretch the continuities of type/anti-type relationships too far, and in the NT Christ's death is everywhere spoken of as a completed work of atonement. In Rom 5:10, for example, though we are saved by Christ's life as well as by his death, already on the basis of his death we stand reconciled to God. Moreover, in Heb 9:12, an important verse for Milligan, Christ enters heaven by his blood, not with it. While he retains forever the scars by which he pleads for us (Rev 5:6), there is no blood in heaven.

³⁹ William Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* (Pittsburgh: United Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1864) 256–57.

⁴⁰ Owen, *Hebrews* 2.177.

⁴¹ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* 3.478.

⁴² Stephen Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (NSBT 15; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), summarizes the entire OT in terms of the expectations for land and offspring, or geography (dominion) and genealogy (dynasty).

⁴³ For much of what follows I am indebted to Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

⁴⁴ Kaiser, *Messiah* 46–47, notes that this aspect of the Abrahamic covenant is in the climactic position when it is repeated three times to Abraham and once to Isaac and Jacob (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14).

individual within that nation (or both). Among other “offspring texts” in the Pentateuch,⁴⁵ Jacob’s blessing to Judah in Gen 49:10 and Balaam’s fourth oracle in Num 24:17–19 stand out as especially significant, for they clarify the offspring hope as a specifically royal hope (note the scepter imagery and the dominion of this figure over the nations), and more specifically as a royal hope within the nation of Israel, among the tribe of Judah. The offspring hope thus progresses from Eve à Noah à Abraham à Isaac à Jacob à Judah.

As God’s people languish for lack of godly leadership in the earlier historical books, this growing royal offspring hope grows and finds expression in Hannah’s prophecy in (significant in that it predates the monarchy): “the Lord will give strength to his king and exalt the power of his anointed” (1 Sam 2:10). In 2 Samuel 7, the offspring hope crystallizes into the Davidic covenant: “when your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom” (1 Sam 2:12). As the offspring hope continues to gain momentum in the Psalms⁴⁶ and Prophets,⁴⁷ it is the Davidic covenant which features prominently.

The coming Davidic figure is gradually revealed to be more than just a king. From early on, God’s people also anticipated the coming of a prophet like Moses who would speak God’s words (Deut 18:15–22) and a faithful priest who would do according to God’s heart (1 Sam 2:35).⁴⁸ While it is not initially clear that the coming Davidic king is to be identified with the coming prophet and coming priest, in later passages of the OT the kingly and priestly expectations begin to merge (Psalm 110; Zech 6:13;⁴⁹ Jer 33:17–18; 30:21; Ezek 21:26–27; Dan 9:24–27). That prophetic responsibilities also belong to this offspring is apparent from his role in spreading the knowledge of God throughout the earth (Isa 11:9; 49:6), and of course the connection is made more explicitly in the NT (Acts 3:21–23). The offspring hope thus becomes a Davidic hope; the Davidic hope, a full-orbed messianic hope.

As it develops in its own turn, the messianic hope intersects with the whole range of OT eschatology. For example, in Ps 72:17 the promise of blessing to all nations in Abraham becomes channeled through the Davidic ruler.⁵⁰ Similar connections are made with the return to the land (Amos 9:11–15; Ezek 37:25), the reunification and peace of God’s people (Isa 11:3; Mic 5:4–5), multiplication of offspring (Jer 33:17–22; Ezek 37:26), the cessation of sacrifice (Dan 9:26), and deliverance from foreign powers (Isa 11:1–10; Jer 30:8–9). In short, all of God’s promises from Genesis-Malachi converge upon one person. A thousand

⁴⁵ E.g. Gen 9:25–27 and 24:60.

⁴⁶ See especially Psalm 2, 72, 89, 110, and 132.

⁴⁷ Some of the more prominent passages include Isa 7:14; 9:1–7, 11; Jer 23:5–6; 30:9; 33:17–22; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; Hos 3:5; Amos 9:11–15; Mic 5:2–5; and Zech 9:9–10.

⁴⁸ While the prophecy of 1 Sam 2:35 certainly includes the restoration of the line of Aaron through Zadok and his sons, the language here and the eternality of this priest’s role suggest an ultimate messianic referent. For how the priest and the “anointed” relate, see Kaiser, *Messiah* 76.

⁴⁹ For the defense of a messianic interpretation of the “priest” in this passage, see Kaiser, *Messiah* 213–15.

⁵⁰ Cf. Acts 3:25–26, where Peter not only connects Jesus with Gen 12:1–3, but also highlights the importance of the resurrection for the spreading of the blessing that comes through faith in Jesus.

parallel streams gradually merge into one massive river. And messianic expectation continues to develop throughout the Second Temple period.⁵¹

It is for this reason that at crucial junctures along the biblical story, OT narrative highlights the continuation of the Davidic line. The genealogical ending of the book of Ruth, the survival of Jehoiachin at the conclusion of Kings and Jeremiah, and the appointment of Zerubbabel in the post-exilic literature (divinely endorsed in Hag 2:23) may not seem especially significant in themselves. Jehoiachin especially seems too small of a figure to be an appropriate conclusion to books concerned with the massive tragedy of the exile. But when these particular texts are read in light of the larger biblical hope for a coming ruler from the line of David, they take on new significance, for Ruth is the great-grandmother of David, Jehoiachin is the last Davidic ruler before the disruption of the Judahic monarchy at the exile, and Zerubbabel is the great-grandson of Jehoiachin. The biblical writers are signaling that amidst ebb and flow of Israel's history, and even through the exile, God is preserving the Davidic line; hope endures.

What is the picture that emerges from the OT of this Davidic King's rule? First, his rule is universal:

- Ps 72:8: "May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!";
- Isa 9:7: "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end";
- Zech 9:10: "His rule shall be from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth."

Second, his rule is everlasting:

- 2 Sam 7:16: "Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever";
- Ps 21:4: "He asked life of you; you gave it to him, length of days forever and ever";
- Ps 72:17: "May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun!";
- Ps 89:36–37: "His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies";
- Jer 33:17: "David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel."

Third, God's enemies are subdued and destroyed during his rule:

- Num: 24:19: "One from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of cities";

⁵¹ For a good sample of messianic expectation from the first century BC, see *Pss. Sol.* 17:21–51. For an overview of messianic expectation in the Second Temple period, see M. L. Strauss, "David," in *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, et al.; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000) 440–41.

- Ps 2:9: “You shall break [the nations] with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel”;
- Ps 89:22–23: “The enemy shall not outwit him; the wicked shall not humble him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him”;
- Ps 110:1–2: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’ The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!”;
- Ps 132:18: “His enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will shine.”

Fourth, God’s people are delivered and protected under his rule:

- Ps 72:12–14: “For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight”;
- Isa 11:4: “With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth”;
- Isa 42:3: “A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice”;
- Jer 23:5–6: “He shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness’”;
- Ezek 34:23: “He shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd”;
- Mic 5:4–5: “They shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace.”

Fifth, righteousness and peace and saving knowledge of God is spread to all nations during his rule:

- Gen 49:10: “To him shall be the obedience of the peoples”;
- Ps 72:16–17: “May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed”;
- Zech 9:10: “He shall speak peace to the nations”;
- Isa 11:20: “Of him shall the nations inquire”;
- Isa 42:1: “He will bring forth justice to the nations”;
- Isa 42:4: “The coastlands wait for his law”;
- Isa 49:6: “I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

Basic to the NT is the identification of Jesus Christ as this Davidic ruler and the fulfillment of all OT hopes. In Luke 1:32–33, for example, the angel Gabriel tells Mary concerning her son: “the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” With the references to Christ as the “son of David” in Matt 1:1 and “the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star” in Rev 22:16, one could even see this identification as

bracketing the NT. The question may be asked, however: At what point does Jesus enter into his Davidic kingship? When does he actually sit down on his throne and begin his rule? It may be tempting to answer this question with the incarnation, and indeed, Jesus is perceived as a king both by others (Matt 2:2) and himself (John 18:36) during his earthly life. In the letters and preaching of the apostles, however, it is not the incarnation but the resurrection that marks the inauguration of Christ's Davidic rule. Though always a king, Jesus enters into the full operation of his kingly office and authority at his resurrection and subsequent ascension into heaven.⁵² Easter morning is a sort of royal coronation service, at which point Christ sits down upon the throne; he takes up his scepter; he marshals his troops; the great conquest begins.

Space does not allow an examination of all the passages in the NT that identify Christ's resurrection as the inauguration of his kingly rule. Romans 1:3–4 is a particularly relevant passage we must pass over.⁵³ Two statements from early apostolic sermons in the book of Acts will suffice.

1. *Acts 2:30–32*. In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter unpacks the meaning of Ps 16:10 (“You will not let your holy one see corruption”) by drawing a connection between the resurrection and the Davidic covenant. He declares, “Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, David foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses” (Acts 2:30–32). According to Peter, David foresaw that the Messiah would be a specifically resurrected Messiah, because he knew of God's promise to set one of his descendants on an everlasting throne. In other words, for David the reign of the Messiah and the resurrection of the Messiah stood together. Peter then moves on to announce from Psalm 110 the exaltation of Christ to God's right hand, the seat of divine authority and rule (Acts 2:33–36; cf. Eph 1:20–23).

2. *Acts 13:30–35*. Paul's speech at Antioch similarly associates the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant with Christ's resurrection. He declares,

We bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.” And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.” Therefore he says also in another psalm, “You will not let your Holy One see corruption.” (Acts 13:32–35)

It is significant that in finding Christ's resurrection to be the fulfillment of OT Scripture, Paul turns to three texts all concerned with God's promises David.

⁵² Cf. Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1994) 155.

⁵³ In any case, Gaffin's treatment (*Resurrection and Redemption* 98–113) could not be improved upon.

That this suggests an association in his thought between Christ's resurrection and the Davidic covenant is most clear from the Ps 2:7 quote.⁵⁴

Psalm 2 is a royal Psalm, and the "decree" cited in verse 7 is God's declaration to the King of Israel during a coronation service. It would be an error to interpret this declaration in terms of the trinitarian relationships within the Godhead. In context, "today" is associated with the anointed ruler's installation on Zion (Ps 2:6) in response to the opposition of the nations (Ps 2:1–5). The declaration of fatherhood here has a messianic, not an ontological thrust, for it draws from the messianic connotations of the title "son of God" throughout the OT.⁵⁵ In ancient Canaanite and Near Eastern thought, as well as in ancient Israelite thought, "the king was regarded as a sacral person, the representative or 'son' of God through whom the blessings of the divine order were mediated to society."⁵⁶ This explains much of what we see in the NT. In John's Gospel, for example, the title "Son of God" is often coupled with "Christ" and "King of Israel" (e.g. John 1:49; 11:27; 20:31).

Thus when Paul quotes Ps 2:7 in relation to Christ's resurrection, he is following Peter in identifying the resurrection with the royal coronation of the true Davidic King. It was natural for the apostles to associate God's vindication of his anointed one in Ps 2:7 with Christ's resurrection, since they also took the opposition of the earth's kings to the anointed one in Ps 2:1–2 as referring to Christ's crucifixion (Acts 4:25–28). As Wright puts it, "the resurrection means that Jesus is the messianic 'son of God'; that Israel's eschatological hope has been fulfilled; that it is time for the nations to be brought into submission to Israel's god."⁵⁷

IV. THE LAST ADAM BECAME A LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT: THE RISEN CHRIST AS PROPHET

In treating the relationship of Christ's prophetic office to his resurrection, it is tempting to follow Berkouwer in pointing to the revelatory nature of the event itself.⁵⁸ As a supernatural working of God's mighty power, the resurrection publicly vindicates Jesus' divine identity and demonstrates the efficacy of his saving work on the cross.⁵⁹ As such, it vindicates the whole gospel message. So Paul, for example, can speak of the resurrection as "assurance to all"

⁵⁴ I am indebted to Jack Collins (ESV Study Bible, Psalms notes, and class lectures) for much of what follows.

⁵⁵ N. T. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God* 724, notes that in the first century the title "son of God" referred to Israel as a whole (Exod 4:22; Ps 80:15; Jer 31:9; Hos 11:1; 13:13; Mal 1:6) and the king of Israel as their representative (2 Sam 7:14; 1 Chr 17:13; Ps 2:7; 89:26–27).

⁵⁶ Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, (2d ed.; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1975) 187.

⁵⁷ Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God* 726.

⁵⁸ G. C. Berkouwer, *Studies in Dogmatics: The Work of Christ* (14 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 58–87.

⁵⁹ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* 3.442, calls the resurrection "the 'Amen' of the Father to the 'It is finished' of the Son."

concerning the reality of future judgment (Acts 17:31).⁶⁰ In this most basic sense, the resurrection is prophetic. In fact, one could assert that a Christ who stays dead is a false prophet, since a central part of his teaching (e.g. John 10:17–18) would be proven false. It is necessary to go beyond this, however, for our concern is with the person of Christ as prophetic throughout his risen life, not the prophetic revelation of the one-time resurrection event.

It may be helpful to begin by showing the incompleteness of the prophetic revelation of Jesus' earthly ministry considered in separation from his resurrection. Throughout his earthly life, Jesus is frequently misunderstood, even by those closest to him, and he at times deliberately guards the full revelation of his identity and mission until his resurrection. For example, immediately after the revelation of Jesus' divine glory at his transfiguration, Jesus commands his disciples, "tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead" (Matt 17:9). If we take our definition of Christ's prophetic office from the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, then it is obvious that a permanently dead Jesus falls woefully short in his prophetic office, for he cannot "[reveal] to the church, in *all* ages by his Spirit and Word, in divers ways of administration, the *whole* will of God, in *all* things concerning their edification and salvation."⁶¹ Because of its very nature as a perpetual office throughout the church age, and in light of the incompleteness of his earthly revelation, Christ's prophetic office can only be executed by a *risen* Christ.

How does Jesus' risen life complete what is lacking in his earthly revelation? A partial answer emerges from the 40-day gap between Christ's resurrection and ascension. Why does Jesus, having received a heavenly body, not immediately enter heaven? To the extent that Jesus' activity during this transitional period helps answer this question, a large part of his purpose concerns teaching his disciples: "(Jesus) presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and *speaking about the kingdom of God*" (Acts 1:3). The contrast between the disciples' ineptitude during Christ's earthly ministry and their courage and power throughout the book of Acts is surely a consequence of the Spirit's work among them (Acts 1:8; 2:1–41), and yet these 40 days of confirmation and instruction (identical in time to Jesus' period of preparation for public ministry) also helps explain the contrast. Bavinck goes so far to assert that the disciples "learned more in those forty days than in the three years they had daily associated with him."⁶²

Another partial answer lies in the activity of the risen Christ in extending the gospel message in and through the church, which the risen Christ inhabits as his chosen redemptive vehicle in the world. His apostolic witnesses perform their evangelistic mandate only through his presence and influence (Matt 28:20; Acts 16:7; 18:9–11). It is the risen Christ himself who commissions

⁶⁰ Though note that the mention of bodily resurrection earns Paul mockery as well as interest (Acts 17:32). Cf. Don Macleod, *The Person of Christ* (Contours of Christian Theology; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998) 91–92: "[T]he resurrection itself was a stumbling block; part of the problem rather than part of the solution."

⁶¹ *Westminster Larger Catechism*, question 43 (emphasis mine).

⁶² Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* 3.444.

the apostle Paul and entrusts the gospel message to him (1 Cor 11:23).⁶³ The letters of Revelation 2–3 portray the risen Christ as intimately involved in local churches, knowing, judging, commending, and strengthening. The church spreads the revelation of the gospel throughout the world only through the presence and power of her head, the risen and living Christ, who actively sustains her by his Word and Spirit (Eph 1:20–23; Col 1:18).

But the most significant way the risen Christ executes his prophetic office is by sending the Holy Spirit throughout the church age to reveal divine truth by enlightening believers and convicting unbelievers. In the upper room discourse of John's Gospel, Jesus himself acknowledges the partiality of his earthly teaching ministry to his disciples, and conceives of the ministry of the coming Spirit as its completion. He declares: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:12–13). Earlier he had said, "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:25–26).

Continuity between Jesus' earthly ministry and the coming Spirit's ministry is a recurrent theme of the discourse, entailed in the very terminology Jesus uses to refer to Spirit: "another Helper" (14:15).⁶⁴ Nor does John conceive of the Spirit's coming for the disciples alone: "and when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8). This, of course, is what happens at Pentecost, where the pouring out of the Spirit results in 3,000 conversions from Peter's sermon (Acts 2:41). The Spirit, then, completes what is lacking in Jesus' earthly revelatory ministry, guiding the disciples into truth and bearing testimony to the truth of the gospel as it is preached among unbelievers (cf. Acts 10:44–48, Heb 2:4).

But how does the Spirit's coming relate to the resurrection? In the NT, the Spirit's work during the church age is a ministry of the risen and exalted Christ. It is Christ, and specifically Christ as risen and exalted, who sends the Spirit into the world after his departure. As Jesus put it in 16:7: "if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you." The departure Jesus speaks of here does not refer to his crucifixion *per se*, but the whole complex of rapidly approaching events (including his crucifixion) which culminate in his ascension. For throughout the Upper Room discourse Jesus has been speaking of his departure not merely as death, but as a departure from the world into heaven to be with the Father in glory (cf. 13:1, 14:28, 16:5). The agency of both the Father and the risen Son in sending the Spirit into the world at Pentecost is emphasized in various ways throughout the discourse. In addition to his own sending of the Spirit in 16:7, Jesus can say that he will send the Spirit from the Father (John 15:26); or that the Father will send the Spirit at his request (John 14:16); or that the Father will send the Spirit in the Son's name (John 14:26). In each case, however, the coming

⁶³ Cf. Donald Macleod, "Resurrection," in *New Dictionary of Theology* (ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988) 584.

⁶⁴ Cf. Ferguson's list of activities which the Son and the Spirit share in *Holy Spirit* 56.

of the Spirit after Jesus' departure results from the transaction between the Father and the Son as risen and exalted at the Father's side. Hence the Heidelberg Catechism, in addressing the question, "of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension into heaven?" lists, among other points, "that he sends us his Spirit as an earnest."⁶⁵

The Luke-Acts narrative also presents the coming of the Spirit as a work of the risen and exalted Christ. In Luke 24:49 Jesus tells his disciples, "I am sending the promise of my Father upon you." In context, the "promise" is the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5), originally "promised" by John the Baptist at the beginning of Luke's gospel (Luke 3:16). Peter's sermon at Pentecost maintains this "promise" language for the coming of the Spirit and clarifies the roles of the Father and Son in this transaction: "being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, (Jesus) has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing" (Acts 2:33). Peter perceives Jesus' reception and subsequent bestowal of the Spirit as a consequence of his exaltation to the Father's right hand in heaven. The Spirit thus comes to us from the Father through the mediation of his Son in consequence of the historical event of the exaltation. As J. C. Ryle puts it, commenting on the similar association between the Spirit's descent and the Son's glorification in John 7:39, "the Holy Ghost's coming down into the world with influence and grace, was a thing dependent on our Lord's dying, rising again, and ascending into heaven."⁶⁶

Moreover, in Paul's epistles it becomes evident that Jesus' possession and pouring of the Spirit is not limited to Pentecost, but continues throughout the church age. For example, in Eph 4:7-11 Paul quotes Ps 68:18 to portray spiritual gifts in the church as workings of the risen Christ in heaven: "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men" (Eph 4:8). For Paul, any time the Spirit is at work in the church, it is a fresh gift, a fresh bestowal, from the risen Christ in heaven. That is why Athanasius, writing in the fourth century, can appeal to the Spirit's work in the church as proof of Jesus' resurrection.⁶⁷ As Ferguson puts it, "[T]he correlation between the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Spirit signals that the gift and gifts of the Spirit serve as the external manifestation of the triumph and enthronement of Christ."⁶⁸ The Spirit comes down only because Jesus has gone up.

But we can go still further. Not only does Jesus *receive* the Spirit in the glory of his risen life to pour out on the church, but his very existence becomes a "spiritual" one, that is, an existence determined and dominated by the Holy Spirit. As Vos states, "the Spirit is not only the author of the resurrection-act, but likewise the permanent substratum of the resurrection-life."⁶⁹ A number

⁶⁵ *Heidelberg Catechism*, Question 49.

⁶⁶ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on John* (3 vols.; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1873) 3.154.

⁶⁷ St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (trans. A. Religious of C. S. M. V.; Popular Patristics 3; Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1977) 5.30-61.

⁶⁸ Ferguson, *Holy Spirit* 204.

⁶⁹ Vos, *Pauline Eschatology* 165. The Spirit's significance in the incarnate and risen life of Christ is captured well by Basil the Great in his early classic, *On the Holy Spirit* (trans. David Anderson; Popular Patristics 5; Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1980) 65: "[T]he Lord was anointed

of NT texts suggest the Spirit's agency in Christ's risen life. In 1 Tim 3:16, Christ is said to be "justified in/by the Spirit" (*en pneumati*), probably referring to his resurrection.⁷⁰ In 2 Cor 3:17, Paul asserts that "the Lord is the Spirit," with Christ as the most probable referent of "the Lord."⁷¹ But most important is Paul's assertion in 1 Cor 15:45 that at his resurrection, "Christ became a life-giving Spirit." Space does not permit a full examination of this passage, but it is worth noting that "Spirit" and "spiritual" have nothing to do with immateriality, or else Paul is imperiling the physicality of Jesus' resurrection. Rather, the connotations of "life-giving,"⁷² the semantic associations of "immortality . . . glory . . . power," and Paul's broader usage of πνευματικός (especially his earlier ψυχικός-πνευματικός contrast in 1 Cor 2:13–15) all point to the conclusion that πνεῦμα in verse 45c refers to none other than the Holy Spirit.⁷³

To call Christ "life-giving Spirit" is thus to say that the activity of the risen Christ and the activity of the Spirit are one. So significant is the Spirit's role in Christ's risen life that the two experience a kind of dynamic fusion. Without a blurring of their ontological or personal distinctions, the Son and the Spirit converge in their economic relations to us. As Ferguson puts it, "Christ on his ascension came into such complete possession of the Spirit who had sustained him throughout his ministry that *economically* the resurrected Christ and the Spirit are one to us. He is *alter Christus*, another Christ, to us."⁷⁴

This interpretation is corroborated by Jesus' statement in the Upper Room, immediately after referencing the Spirit's coming: "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18). That he is referring to Pentecost, and not his resurrection appearances, if not already apparent from the context and the brevity of his life among them as resurrected, is confirmed in John 14:28: "You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I." Here Jesus reiterates his earlier statement, this time associated with his departure to the Father, that is, his ascension. But on its face this is an absurd statement. How can Jesus come to his disciples precisely by leaving them? Because he comes to them through His Spirit. He is present among them, influencing, guiding, and instructing them, through the mediation of his Spirit.

To reverse directions, not only is Christ the life-giving Spirit in consequence of his eschatological transformation on Easter morning, but the Spirit who is poured out at Pentecost and throughout the church-age is specifically the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit who indwells and guides us during the church age is the Spirit as mediated through his Christocentric mission, the Spirit by

with the Holy Spirit, who would henceforth be inseparably united to his very flesh. . . . Nor did the Spirit leave him after his resurrection from the dead."

⁷⁰ See Gaffin's characteristically helpful discussion, *Resurrection and Redemption* 119–22.

⁷¹ See *ibid.* 92–97.

⁷² E.g. John 6:63, 2 Cor 3:6.

⁷³ For a fuller case, and helpful treatment of the entire passage, see Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption* 78–92.

⁷⁴ Ferguson, *Holy Spirit* 54.

whom Jesus was raised into eschatological life, the Spirit now sent by Christ as “another helper” to continue his mission. As Abraham Kuyper put it, “what a redeemed soul needs is human holiness. . . . The Holy Spirit finds this holy disposition in its required form, not in the Father, nor in Himself, but in Immanuel, who as the Son of God and the Son of man possesses holiness in that peculiar form.”⁷⁵

V. CONCLUSION

In light of the significance of Christ’s resurrection for his continued messianic work, it must be seen as an integral part of the whole saving ministry of Christ. For Easter morning marks not merely the *continuation* of Christ’s priestly, kingly, and prophetic offices, as though they passed un-interrupted from his earthly to his heavenly state, but the *completion* of the full execution of each office. It is when he is raised up to “the power of an indestructible life” and exalted to heaven that Christ is appointed to his highly priestly office of intercession and is able to apply the benefits of his atoning death to believers continually; it is at his resurrection that Christ assumes the throne of David and begins to subdue the nations under his kingly rule; and it is the risen and exalted Christ who sends his Spirit to complete his revelatory activity by illumining believers and convicting unbelievers in the truth of the gospel. His resurrection was therefore as much a resurrection to messiahship and saving activity as it was a resurrection to life. As Torrance observed, “[W]hen the New Testament speaks of Jesus being raised up, it evidently refers not only to the resurrection of his body from the grave but to his being raised up as the messiah, the anointed prophet, priest, and king.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Quoted in Ferguson, *Holy Spirit* 72.

⁷⁶ Thomas F. Torrance, *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ* (ed. Robert T. Walker; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009) 206. Cf. Kaiser, *Messiah* 145, 195–96.