

CHAPTER SIX

THE TRINITY AND THE INCARNATION AS JEWISH DOCTRINES

In Chapter Five I argued that there is no clear evidence that Christianity ever lacked the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. Nothing in the New Testament excluded either doctrine, and the very manner in which the New Testament writings referred to the Trinity and the Incarnation made it appear that the beliefs were in place already. Far from the experience of meeting Jesus setting off the reflections that led to the beliefs, the beliefs seem to have been there, and the meeting with Jesus was interpreted in accordance with the beliefs. In short, there were Jews before Jesus was born who believed that the One God could also be spoken of as being in three persons and who believed that the Son of God was always destined to be born in order to accomplish the overthrow of evil and to establish the kingdom of God.

The Trinity in Jewish thought

There is no doubt that there were Jews before Christ who recognized that although God was one, he was also three. Philo, a member of a rich royal and perhaps priestly family in Alexandria (c.15-10 BC—c. AD 50), devoted his voluminous writings to preserving Jewish traditions concerning the Law, the first five books of the Bible, in a philosophical framework, on the principle that the best of Greek philosophy was inferior to the teaching of Moses. Among these traditions was the following comment on Genesis 18.2: *And [Abraham on the plains of Mamre] lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him.*

When ... the soul is shone upon by God as if at noonday, ... it then perceives a threefold image of one subject, one image of the living God, and others of the other two, as if they were shadows irradiated by it.

The word *shadow* is not properly applicable to God, but this is a way of speaking to keep as close to the truth as possible. So:

the one in the middle is the Father of the universe, who in the sacred scriptures is called by his proper name, I am that I am; and the beings on each side are those most ancient powers which are always close to the living God, one of which is called his creative power, and the other his royal power. And the

creative power is God, for it is by this that he made and arranged the universe; and the royal power is the Lord, for it is fitting that the Creator should lord it over and govern the creature. Therefore the middle person of the three, being attended by each of his powers as by body-guards, presents to the mind, which is endowed with the faculty of sight, a vision at one time of one being, and at another time of three...¹

In the Questions and Answers on Genesis Philo reports a tradition on the same passage, "it is reasonable for one to be three and for three to be one."² The belief in two powers in heaven is part of a trinitarian doctrine. The two powers are the powers of the Father, namely, the creative power and the kingly power (Quaestiones in Genesin iv.87). The highest Word is accompanied by the kingly and the creative powers (De Fuga et Inventione, 96-98). Many of the passages about the two powers in Philo are to be understood as trinitarian (De Cherubim 27-30; De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini 59-60; De Mutatione Nominum 23-24; 27-30; De Somniis 1.160-165; De Vita Mosis ii.97-100; De Specialibus Legibus i.307; Quaestiones in Genesin ii.16, 51,75; iii.39,42; Quaestiones in Exodum ii.62,64-66).³ Segal, in an important book on the *Two Powers* heresy attacked by the rabbis, does not

discuss the possibility that the heresy was in fact trinitarian.⁴ Yet if the Jews who held it—and Philo reports Jewish traditions—were bound to say the *Shema* every day, as is very likely, they must have been able to reconcile their beliefs with the proclamation of God's Oneness; they did not hold there were two Gods, but two *powers*. The exegesis of the appearance to Abraham on the plain of Mamre is a clear indication that they recognised their problem and had a solution to hand: that God was both One and Three.

These traditions do not stand alone. We are reminded of what Origen's Hebrew master used to say about the two seraphim in Isaiah which are described as having each six wings, and calling to one another, and saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts". He said that they were to be understood of the only-begotten Son of God and of the Holy Spirit (De Principiis i.3.4; GCS v.52.17ff.). I do not think the Hebrew master was a Christian; even if he were, he was not describing a purely Christian traditional interpretation.⁵

¹ Philo, De Abrahamo 119-122, translated by Yonge (1854-5, vol. 2, pp. 420-421).

² Quaestiones in Genesin iv.2, translated by Marcus (1953, vol. 1, p. 270). Cf. Quaestiones in Genesin iv.4.

³ Chadwick (1967, p. 145). Philo reports other traditions, as well. For example Questions in Exodum ii.68 (Aucher, p. 516) gives a tradition where God holds the first place, the Logos the second, the creative power and the royal power the third and fourth, dependent on the third and fourth, beneficence the fifth and punishment the sixth, with the world of ideas as the seventh. This is not trinitarian, and the two powers are not closely linked with God as in the trini-

tarian passages noted in the text.

⁴ Segal (1977).

⁵ See de Lange (1976, p. 43 and p. 171 note 37) and Kretschmar (1956, pp. 62-65).

Baruch 4.22 contains a very easy and natural trinitarian formula. "For I have set hope for your salvation on the Eternal One; and joy has come to me from the Holy One at the mercy which will soon be present for you from your Eternal Saviour."

In the Psalms of Solomon 17 and 18 the Messiah is pure from sin (17.36) and he is not weak all his days because he leans on God. "For God has made him mighty by the Holy Spirit and wise by the counsel of understanding with strength and righteousness" (17.37). The reference is to Isaiah 11.2, an inherently trinitarian passage, like 1 Samuel 16.13 (cf. Isaiah 42.1). In 4QpIs (4Q161) Is 11.1-3 is interpreted with reference to the *Shoot of David* who will arise at the end of days, whom *God* upholds with the *Spirit* of power, who reigns from a throne of glory and will judge the nations.

In Psalm of Solomon 17.32 all manuscripts say that the King of the righteous in Jerusalem will be *Christ the Lord*. This is emended by conjecture in Rahlfs's edition of the LXX to read *the Lord's Christ*, following the suggestion of Ewald which has been endorsed by many great scholars, including Wellhausen and Ryle and James. They are relying on the undoubted fact that the royal Messiah of Psalms of Solomon 17; 18 is taught by God (17.32), has the Lord himself as his king (17.34), does not let reliance on his

God grow weak (17.37), has hope in the Lord (17.39), is strong in the fear of God (17.40; 18.7), shepherds the flock of the Lord (17.40), and as King of Israel has a beauty which God knew (17.42).

What they miss is that Psalm 110 governs the whole picture, and in Psalm 110 there are two who are named *Lord*, the *Lord* who seats *David's Lord* on the right hand of his throne until he has put all enemies under his feet. There is no reason to doubt the reading by which the Davidic King in Jerusalem is called *Christ the Lord*.⁶ The same title is preserved in other passages: David called Saul *My Lord the Lord's anointed* (1 Samuel 24.6); "I called upon the Lord, Father of my Lord" (Lamentations 4.20 LXX); Psalm of Solomon 18, title; Luke 2.11. The anointing of the Lord meant that the Holy Spirit came upon him so that the picture conveyed by Psalm 110 was inherently trinitarian. Besides being trinitarian, Psalm 110 also conveyed a trinitarian drama. The seating of David's Lord at the right hand of the Lord almost certainly implied a previous humiliation and descent, for no enthronement could have been given by God to one who did not have the royal dignity from the beginning. The command to remain on that throne until all enemies were put under his feet implied a second coming to earth in open glory. This second coming was referred to in the famous words in Psalm of Solomon 18.5: "May God cleanse Israel with blessing on the day of mercy, with the bringing again of his Messiah on the day he appoints". This day was the subject of the prayer in Psalm of Solomon 17.21: "Behold, Lord,

⁶ As argued by R.B. Wright (Charlesworth: 1985, vol. 2, pp. 667-668, note z).

and raise up for them their King, the Son of David, at the time which you, O God, know, to rule over Israel your servant." The bringing again of the Messiah reminds us of the passage in 2 Enoch 30.1 which speaks of the return in glory of the Messiah (cf. 29.3).⁷ There are other passages that state or imply a return to earth of the Messiah: Testament of Levi 16.3,5; Testament of Reuben 6.10-12; Sibylline Oracles 3.95,283-284; 5.256-259; Life of Adam and Eve, Latin 42.3-5; 11QMelchizedek lines 10-12 (based on Psalm 7.7-8); Targum of Jonathan the Prophet on Micah 4.8; 1 Enoch 62.5-7; 2 Esdras (4 Ezra) 13.1-4,8-13,21-40,52-56, especially 13.52; Wisdom of Solomon 3.1-9; and Justin Martyr's report of Jewish opinion, Dialogue 8.4; 49.⁸

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs contain at least two trinitarian passages. I hold that the complete Testaments are substantially Jewish, written and rewritten to allow for new positions before Jesus was born.⁹ However, there is little need for a large-scale argument about the first passage, Testament of Levi 18.6, because the chapter as it now stands speaks of the Messiah as Son of Levi, and it is unlikely that a Christian would have taken that line. "The heavens shall be opened, and from the temple of glory shall come upon him sanctification, with the Father's voice as from Abraham to

Isaac. And the glory of the Most High shall be uttered over him, and the Spirit of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon him in the water." Father, Son, and Spirit.

The Testament of Benjamin 9.2-5 is a curious passage, and verses 3-5 are normally bracketed off as a Christian interpolation; H.C.Kee said, "perhaps the most explicit of all the Christian interpolations."¹⁰ On closer examination, however, it can scarcely be Christian in origin, although at one or two points Christian scribes have made unconscious changes that betray

⁷ Note, however, that R.H. Charles interpreted 2 Baruch 30.1 as implying a return to heaven rather than a return to earth (Charles: 1913, vol. 2, p. 498), and L.H. Brockington followed Charles, whose translation he revised, by inserting words to make this interpretation explicit: he will return in glory to the heavens (Sparks: 1984, p. 857).

⁸ I have been greatly helped in compiling this list by David Mitchell, research student in Old Testament, New College, Edinburgh.

⁹ O'Neill (1979). Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln 1235-1253, who brought the ms. *b* to Britain and deposited it in the Cambridge University Library, thought that the testaments were the genuine works of Jacob's twelve sons. The first modern editor, J.E. Grabe (1698) believed it to be Jewish with Christian interpolations. See a partial bibliography with notes in O'Neill (1979, pp. 24-25) and the thorough discussion by G. Vermes (New Schürer, vol. 3, pp. 767-781). Marinus de Jonge still insists that "the Testament received (more or less) their present form some time during the second half of the second century in Christian circles" and that "it is practically impossible to answer the question whether there ever existed Jewish Testa-

ments in some form." (Hollander and de Jonge, 1985, p. 85). See the discussion below.

¹⁰ Kee in Charlesworth (1983, vol. 1, p. 827, note c). I discussed this passage briefly in Chapter Four when discussing evidence for the crucifixion of eminent religious figures.

them as Christians—but in one place other (Christian) manuscripts retain the true text. Here is a literal translation.

²Only, the Temple of God shall be for your portion, and the last Temple will be more glorious than the first [*or former*] one. And the twelve tribes will be gathered there, and all the Gentiles, while the Most High shall send his salvation in the visitation of the Only-begotten Prophet [*the Only-begotten*, b k; *his Only-begotten Son*, c]. ³And he shall enter into the former Temple and there the Lord will be humbled and despised and he will be lifted up on a tree. ⁴And the expanse of the temple [*of the temple* a Christian gloss?] will be torn and the Spirit of God will descend on the Gentiles [= b d k; Christian corruption in a c e f g l; *pass to the Gentiles*] as poured out fire. ⁵And having come up from Hades he will be ascending from earth to heaven. And he had known [b; rest of mss.: *I knew*] how humble he would be on earth and how glorious in heaven.

The order of events needs sorting out first. In verse 2 the contrast between the glorious Temple and, literally, the *first* Temple cannot be between a contrast between what we call *The Second Temple* and Solomon's Temple, which was the first in time; in this context the *last* Temple must be the Temple that will come at the end of the age (Testament of Levi 5.1; 18.6; cf.

Rev 16.17). The word *first* can also be translated *former*, and that would suit the context better. It follows that verse 2, where it speaks of the sending of salvation to the gathering of the twelve tribes and the Gentiles, must refer to the end of the age, and verse 3, where it speaks of the coming of *the Only-begotten Prophet* to the *former Temple*, must refer to an earlier time. The patriarch Benjamin is envisaged throughout as prophesying to his sons about the future, and, in particular about the end of the age. He spoke, then, about the final visitation (verse 2) and then about the preliminary visitation (verse 3) when the *Prophet* entered the *former Temple* and was badly treated and crucified. After his death and the descent of his soul into *Hades* he ascended to heaven; he knew that he would be humbled on earth and he knew that he would be glorified.

This can scarcely have been a Christian passage. The word I have translated as *expanse* cannot easily refer to the veil of the Temple whose splitting from top to bottom is mentioned in the Gospels (in Matthew 27.51 and Mark 15.38 after Jesus' death; in Luke 23.45, before); it is more likely to refer to the expanse of the heavens. The words *of the temple* look like a Christian gloss to make the prophecy fit the New Testament better. The Spirit in Acts, in particular, descended on both Jews and Gentiles. If we accept the text of manuscripts b d k in verse 4, above, the reference is more likely to have been to the punitive Spirit sent to purge the Gentiles (cf. 2 Esdras [4 Ezra] 13.36-38), for the Gentiles will also be gathered with the twelve tribes to

receive God's salvation. There is no reference to the resurrection.

The passage is another example of a trinitarian way of speaking about *God*, who sent the *Prophet*, after whose death on a cross the Temple will be desecrated and *the Spirit* will descend like fire on the Gentiles to destroy. But, of course, the passage also seems to offer evidence of Jewish belief in two comings of the Messiah, one in humility and the second in glory, and to that we must return later.¹¹

The Ascension of Isaiah, which has close affinities with the Qumran documents,¹² opens with words of Isaiah to Hezekiah containing a trinitarian formula (1.7). "As the *Lord* lives whose name has not been transmitted to the world, and as the *Beloved* of my Lord lives, and as the *Spirit* which speaks in me lives..."¹³ In the sixth heaven they are all named: *the primal Father* and *his Beloved the Christ*, and *the Holy Spirit*; all with one voice (8.18; cf. 7.23; 10.6).

Ethiopian Enoch (1 Enoch), chapters 45—71, is pervasively trinitarian. The writer speaks of *the Lord of Spirits*, of *my Elect One* who is also known as *that Man (that Son of Man)* and of the *Spirit of power* that comes upon Enoch (71.11). In 62.1-2 there is a particularly clear trinitarian passage.

Thus the Lord commanded the kings, and the mighty and the exalted, and those who dwell upon the earth, and said, Open your eyes, and raise your horns, if you are able to acknowledge the Chosen One. And the Lord of Spirits sat on the throne of his glory and the spirit of righteousness was poured out on him and the word of his mouth kills all the sinners and all the lawless, and they are destroyed before him.¹⁴

The *Chosen One* is the *Lord of Spirits* who sat on the throne of his glory; he is later called the *Son of Man* (62.5; cf. 62.3) and he receives *the Spirit of Righteousness* to install him in his office of destroyer of the all sinners.

The romance of Joseph and Aseneth is another example. The author tells how Aseneth, daughter of the priest of On, abandoned idolatry and became the bride fit for Joseph. Aseneth is really the daughter of Dinah, "tall like Sarah, and favoured like Rebecca, and beautiful like Rachel" (1.5). She stood for apostate Israel, and when she repented her name was changed from Aseneth to Haseneth, city of refuge and treasure-house, in which all God's sons and the repentent Gentiles would dwell.¹⁵ She was the true Jerusalem which became the bride of the Lamb (19.8). Joseph, in the story, is called

¹¹ See O'Neill (1991, pp. 99-100) for an earlier attempt to unravel this difficult passage. Whatever the solution, the passage can scarcely contain a two-verse Christian interpolation.

¹² See Flusser (1953).

¹³ Translated by Knibb (Charlesworth: 1985, vol. 2, p. 157).

¹⁴ Translated by Charles (Charles: 1913, vol. 2, p. 227). Compare Knibb (Sparks: 1984, p. 242).

¹⁵ This is the brilliant conjecture of Aptowitzer (1924, pp. 280-281); he argued that the change was from *יְרוּשָׁלַיִם* to *יְרוּשָׁתָא*.

the Son of God and he looks like the Archangel Michael (6.2,6 &c.; 14.9). When he kissed Asenath he bestowed on her *the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Wisdom, and the Spirit of Truth* (19.11). Again we have a simple unforced trinitarian scheme: *God the Father, Joseph as the Son of God, bestowing the Spirit*. The coming of *the Son of God* led to the repentance of his predestined Bride who became the city of refuge for all who repent.¹⁶

Finally, the Odes of Solomon contain a number of trinitarian formulas. The Odes of Solomon are commonly regarded as Christian, but they contain neither the name of Jesus nor anything else distinctively Christian; and there are positive indications they could not have been written by a Christian, such as the statement that the Messiah is not their brother (28.17; 41.8; cf. 42.17).¹⁷ In Ode 32 the self-originate *Truth* is strengthened by *the Holy Power*, and the Holy Power comes from *the Most High*.

To the blessed, the joy is from their hearts,
And light from him who dwells in them,
And the words from the Truth who is self-originate.
For he has been strengthened by the Holy Power of the Most High,
And he is unshaken for ever and ever. Hallelujah.

In 19.2 *the Son* is the cup, and he who was milked is *the Father* and he who milked him is *the Holy Spirit*. In 23.21-22:

The [heavenly] letter became a great tablet
Which was wholly written by the finger of God;
And the name of the Father was upon it,
And the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
To rule for ever and ever.

In 36.3 *the Man* speaks:

She [the Spirit, 36.1] brought me forth before the Lord's face,
And although I was a son of man
I was named the Light-giver, the Son of God (cf.3.8).

All these trinitarian passages I have cited or referred to are commonly discounted. If the trinitarianism is too explicit, it is ascribed to a Christian interpolator. The underlying assumption is that Judaism could have nothing to do with trinitarian thought and that trinitarianism is a Christian idea. This

¹⁶ Stauffer (1933, end). See further O'Neill (1994c).

¹⁷ One of the earliest commentators, Harnack (1910), argued that they were a Jewish-Christian psalm book behind which lay a Jewish work. He later abandoned that hypothesis in favour of Harris and Mingana's view that it was Christian (Lattke, referred to by Charlesworth: 1985, p. 726, note 16). See Charlesworth (Charlesworth: 1985, vol. 2, pp. 725-771). Menzies (1910) and Bacon (1911-12) make a powerful case for Jewish, with Christian interpolations.

assumption is now open to challenge, and all the relevant passages must be looked at again. Independent evidence, beyond the mere fact that they are trinitarian, needs to be found that they are due to Christian interpolation, and independent evidence needs to be found that the meaning of the passage excludes a trinitarian interpretation. Unless independent evidence is forthcoming, they should be allowed to bear their natural sense. On a natural reading there are plenty of examples in Jewish literature of trinitarian expressions.

The Incarnation in Judaism

The case for saying that Judaism also expected an incarnation of the eternal Son of God is equally clear from the texts, even though there is an even greater reluctance among scholars to read them in this sense. My case hinges on the argument that some parts, at least, of Judaism read all references to God's visiting earth to rescue his people as references to the incarnation of the eternal Son of God.

Much energy has been spent in the search for the Jewish roots of the doctrine of the Incarnation in identifying the various mediatorial figures that (it is alleged) Christianity was able to transmute into sources for a full doctrine of the Incarnation, principally either angels who were spoken of in such exalted terms that they might be imagined to have joined God as a companion, or human figures who had been elevated to the divine.¹⁸ Judaism, however, made a strict distinction between the heavenly being who could be worshipped and heavenly beings who could not be worshipped (Judges 13.16; Apocalypse of Zephaniah 6.15; Rev 19.9,10; 22.8-9). If there is a Jewish origin to the doctrine of the Incarnation, that origin cannot be found in any of the host of angels whom it is forbidden to worship, let alone human beings who had undergone apotheosis. Men like Jacob or the rulers at Qumran may appear on earth like the angels (Prayer of Joseph; 1QSb 4.25), but these men are no more to be worshipped than the angels they represent.

¹⁸ For the theory that angelic figures are ripe for elevation to close association with God, see Rowland (1980; 1982) and Hurtado (1988), and for the theory that the apotheosis of human figures is the beginning of the sort of process that produced the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation see Hurtado, Casey (1991, chapter 6), Dunn (1991, p. 186). Stuckenbruck (1995) does great service in emphasizing that there was a strong tradition in Judaism against worshipping angels. The Apocalypse of John particularly asserts the preeminence of both God and Christ over angels (1995, pp. 261-265, 271). Stuckenbruck still wants tentatively to posit a continuity between veneration of angels and a worship of Christ alongside God, without a breach of monotheism. Such continuity is impossible. The seers were tempted to worship angels because they expected an incarnation; the tradition is perfectly clear that the incarnate Son must be worshipped and angels must not be worshipped. The Two Powers Heresy was monotheistic and trinitarian.

There does exist, I believe, a genuine pre-Christian Jewish doctrine of the Incarnation, but to find it we need to look for passages which speak of a mediator who is both God, in that he deserves full worship, and man, in that he is born as a man and lives on earth. The existence of a doctrine of the trinity in Judaism makes such a doctrine possible; I now turn to texts which seem to show that the doctrine of the Incarnation was in fact formulated as a clear expectation before Jesus was born.

Good examples occur in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. In the Testament of Dan 5.10 the Messiah of Judah and Levi is foretold, who will fight against Beliar and conquer him and bring the people back into Eden and the new Jerusalem.

And there shall arise for you from the tribe of Judah and Levi the Saviour of the Lord. And he will make battle with Beliar, and he will give the vengeance of victory to your fathers. And he will take the captivity from Beliar, the souls of the saints, and he will turn the disobedient hearts to the Lord and he will give to those who call on him eternal peace. And the saints shall rest in Eden and the righteous shall rejoice in the new Jerusalem which will be for the glory of God for ever: And no longer shall Jerusalem remain desolate, neither shall Israel be taken captive, for the Lord will be in the midst of Jerusalem living

with men, and the Holy One of Israel will reign over them in humility and in poverty. And whoever believes in him will reign in truth in heaven. (T Dan 5.10-13)

Note that the battle with Beliar is waged by the *Messiah of Judah and Levi*. He is the single Messiah of Aaron and Israel found in the Damascus Document and at Qumran, and can hardly be the creation of a Christian scribe. There is little doubt that he is the Lord who will reign in the new Jerusalem, and this *Lord* lives among men. He reigns in humility and poverty, like the one who Zechariah prophesied would enter Jerusalem lowly and riding on an ass (Zech 9.9). The crucial fact is that the battle has to be fought against Beliar on earth, where he has raised an army and taken captives, and the Lord has to come as a *man of war* (Exod 15.3; 1QM 12.7-15; Midrash Ps 21.3 (4)). The *king of glory* in Psalm 24 is taken to be the Messiah whom God crowned with his own crown (Shemoth Rabba 8). The Lord comes as the Messiah. The close connection between the imagery of the war against Beliar in the Testament of Dan 5 and the Testament of Levi 18 raises the probability that we are not dealing with a Christian set of ideas cunningly grafted onto a Jewish text but with an integral Jewish text. In that text the Messiah appears as the Son, the eternal second person of the Trinity, made man.

The Testament of Levi 18, to which I have just referred, is a passage about the new priest, son of Levi, and so can scarcely be the work of a Christian scribe. He will judge the earth. His star shines in heaven as the

star of a king. The angels of the presence rejoice in him. He is, however, a man.

The heavens will be opened and from the temple of glory will be present upon him sanctification with the voice of the Father as from Abraham the father of Isaac. And the glory of the Most High will be spoken over him and the Spirit of knowledge and holiness will rest on him in the water. (TLevi 18.6-7)

(This is a passage I have already quoted to show that there existed a Jewish doctrine of the Trinity.) He will never have a successor. Through him the Gentiles will receive knowledge and enlightenment. Sin will come to an end. Paradise will be reopened. He will bind Beliar (18.12). This judging, this opening of paradise, this binding of Beliar gives us the clue to the full significance of the new Priest. He is higher than the angels. Although a priest, his star shines in heaven as the star of a king, to show that he is the Davidic Messiah, the Son of God (TLevi 18.3).

Six other passages from the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs speak explicitly of a doctrine of the Incarnation: Testament of Simeon 6.5-7.2; Testament of Judah 22.2-3; Testament of Zebulun 9.8; Testament of Naphtali 8.3; Testament of Asher 7.2-3; Testament of Benjamin 10.7-9.

The Testament of Simeon 6.5-7.2 describes the coming of the one figure descended from Levi and Judah who will save Israel and the Gentiles. The one figure is also described as *God taking a body and eating with men*, someone who is both God and man. The concept of the Messiah who is descended from both the priestly tribe as well as from the royal tribe is not likely to have originated with a Christian author, since Jesus' lineage was always stated to be from Judah alone. The passage reads:

Then Shem will be glorified, for God is Lord, great towards Israel, appearing on earth as a man and by him saving Adam. Then all the spirits of deceit will be given over to being trampled on, and men will rule over the evil spirits. Then I will arise in gladness and bless the Most High for his wonders because God has taken a body and eaten with men to save men. So now, my children, obey Levi and you will be redeemed by Judah; and do not be lifted up against these two tribes because from them will arise for you the salvation of God. For the Lord will arise from Levi as high priest and from Judah as king, God and man. So he will save all the Gentiles and the people of Israel. (TSim 6.5-7.2)

In the Testament of Judah 22.2-3 the God of righteousness appears and is identified with the Davidic Messiah.

And my kingdom will be brought to an end among those of other races until the salvation of Israel shall come, until the appearing of the God of righteousness so that Jacob and all the Gentiles may be at rest. And he [the God of

righteousness] will guard the strength of my kingdom for ever, for the Lord swore with an oath [Psalm 110.4] that my rule should not fail from my seed all the days for ever. (TJud 22.2-3)

Note the distinction between *the Lord* and *the God of righteousness*, corresponding to two of the names for God in the Old Testament: *Elohim* and *YHWH*. Philo sometimes reports traditions according to which *God* is the beneficent power and *Lord* the punishing power (e.g. *de specialibus legibus* 1.307), as the rabbis sometimes referred the name *God* to his benevolence and the name *Lord* to his justice (cf. Midrash on Psalm 50.1, Mid.Ps. 139b, 1).¹⁹

The Testament of Zebulun 9.8-9 is preserved in two versions, a shorter and a longer. Both speak of the epiphany of God. The shorter (acefhij) reads,

And after these things the Lord himself, the light of righteousness, will arise and you will return into your land and you will see him in Jerusalem because of his holy name. And again you will enrage him with the wickedness of your words and you will be rejected until the time of consummation. (TZeb 9.8-9)

The longer text (bdglm) is far more explicit.

And after these things the Lord himself will arise, the light of righteousness, and healing and compassion will be on his wings [Mal 4.2 (3.20; cf. LXX); cf. TLevi 18.4; TJud 24.1]. He will redeem all the captivity of the sons of men from Beliar, and every spirit of deceit will be trodden under foot. And all the Gentiles will return to zeal for him. And you will see God in the form of a man whom the Lord has chosen; Jerusalem will be his name [or: And you will see the Lord in Jerusalem in the form of a man and his name will be called Messenger (Angel, Apostle; cf. Heb 3.1) of the Great Will, dm; cf. l]. And again you will enrage him with the wickedness of your words and you will be rejected until the time of consummation. (TZeb 9.8-9)

Note the absence of any reference to the resurrection, which counts against a Christian origin for the passage.

Testament of Naphtali 8.2-3 is another passage about the Messiah from Levi and Judah. It, too, speaks of God's dwelling with men.

And you, therefore, command your children to be united under Levi and Judah. Through Judah salvation will be accomplished for Israel and by him Jacob will be blessed. For through his sceptre [or: tribe] God will be seen dwelling among men on earth to save the race of Israel and to gather the righteous from the Gentiles. (TNaph 8.2-3)

¹⁹ Conveniently available in English in Montefiore and Loewe (1938, no. 17).

Testament of Asher 7.2-3 is in many ways the most remarkable of these passages. Far from looking like a prophecy based on the New Testament, it provides the background against which the stilling of the storm and the walking on the water in the Gospels may be better understood.

For I know that you will sin and will be delivered into the hands of your enemies and your land will be laid waste and your holy places will be destroyed and you will be scattered to the four corners of the earth. And you will be despised as waste water until the Most High will visit the earth. And he coming as a man, eating and drinking with men, and in peace [or: stillness] breaking the head of the dragon in the water shall thus save Israel and all the Gentiles, God giving his answer to man [sc: as man cries for deliverance; Psalm 27.7; 102.2; 108.6; 143.1 &c.]. (TAsH 7.2-3)

In Testament of Benjamin 10 the dying patriarch recommends that each exercise truth and righteousness towards his neighbour, and the keeping of the law of the Lord and his commandments, citing the example of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. The patriarch says:

Keep the commandments of God until the Lord shall reveal his salvation to all the Gentiles. Then you will see Enoch, Noah and Shem and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob rising at the right hand with rejoicing. Then we too will arise, each worshipping over our staff [or: each at the head of our tribe worshipping] the King of Heaven who appeared on earth in the form of a man of humility. And whoever believed in him on earth will rejoice with him. Then all will arise, some to glory and some to dishonour. And the Lord will first judge Israel concerning their unrighteousness against him, because when God came in the flesh as deliverer they did not believe. And then he will judge all the Gentiles who did not believe in him manifest on earth. And he will convict Israel by the elect of the Gentiles as he convicted Esau by the Midianites...[an unknown Midrash]. (TBen 10.5-10a).

Five further passages refer to the appearance of God among men, without stating explicitly that he comes in the form of a man. It is very likely, however, that that is implied. They are: Testament of Levi 2.11; 5.2; 8.11; Testament of Issachar 7.7; Testament of Dan 6.9.

Most scholars argue that the Testaments contain Christian interpolations, and the passages I have cited or referred to would be among them. Vermes has put forward good arguments for reducing the number of supposed Christian interpolations in the Testaments to the bare minimum, and I note that he does not bracket off as Christian quite all of the passages I have mentioned.²⁰ However, I wish to argue that the required excision is still on

²⁰ See New Schürer (1987, vol. 3, pp. 767-781 at p. 771, note 16). The full list of Vermes's passages that contain at least parts that are unquestionably Christian passages is: TSim 6.5,7;

too large a scale. The argument is as follows. There is no doubt that we can identify recensions of the Testaments when we pay close attention to the history of the Greek text, and these recensions seem to consist of three stages: first, a text incorporating prophecies about the Messiah of Judah; secondly, a text in which the prophecies of the Messiah of Judah have been overlaid with the idea that the Messiah would also be from Levi.²¹ As well as that, at a third stage, we have numerous marginal notes to the effect that this passage or that is *about Christ*.²² The scribes who inserted the marginal notes thought that they were annotating a Jewish prophecy. And they were right; leaving aside the marginal notes, we have a Jewish text. The second version could not have been made by Christian editors, since it adds to Davidic prophecies the information that the Messiah would also be of Levi. The fact that we have preserved for us in manuscripts made by Christian copyists enough evidence to reconstruct two Jewish recensions, the earlier of which corresponded more closely to Christian beliefs than the later one, raises the probability that the Christian scribes were preserving a Jewish book which they did not attempt to edit in the light of the Christian faith.²³ It seems to be simply the dogmatic belief that Jewish writings could not have talked about God's Incarnation which led scholars to bracket these passages as Christian glosses; there is no very convincing independent evidence that

they disturbed the flow of the text. Further, there are other passages in Jewish writings that bear witness to the same set of beliefs, and to these we must turn.

In the first chapter of the Book Jubilees the Lord tells Moses to write down what was at the beginning and what would be at the end and all that would happen in the divisions of the days and throughout the weeks "until I shall descend and dwell with them [Israel] in all the ages of eternity" (1.26). He said to the angel of the presence,

Write for Moses from the first creation until my sanctuary is built in their midst forever and ever. And the Lord will appear in the sight of all. And everyone will know that I am the God of Israel and the Father of all the children of Jacob and King upon Mount Zion for ever and ever. And Zion and Jerusalem will be holy. (Jub 1.27-28)²⁴

7.2; TLevi 4.4; 10.2; 14.2; 18.7; TZeb 9.8; TNapht 8.3; TAsh7.3; TJos 19.6; TBen 3.8; 9.3-5; 10.7; 11.1.

²¹ This was discerned by that great scholar, Kaufmann Kohler (1906).

²² See TReub 6.8; TSim 6.5,7; TLevi 2.10; 4.1,4; 10.2; 14.2; 16.3; 18.2; TJud 24.1; TZeb 9.8; TNaph 8.2; TBen 9.2; 10.5,7; 11.2 (about Paul).

²³ See O'Neill (1979).

²⁴ Translated by O.S. Wintermute (Charleworth: 1985, vol. 2, p. 54, my capitals).

In Jubilees 31.18-20, the blessing of Judah, one of his sons is to make the Gentiles tremble and to be the salvation of Israel. This prince is addressed in these words.

And on the day when you sit on your righteous throne of honour, there will be great peace for all the seed of the Beloved's sons. Whoever blesses you will be blessed, and all who hate you and afflict you and curse you will be uprooted and destroyed from the earth and they shall be cursed. (Jub 31.20)²⁵

It seems that the descendant of Judah is call *the Beloved One*. His throne must be set on Mount Zion. But in 1.28 *the King upon Mount Zion for ever is the Lord who appears in the sight of all*. When we return to look closely at 1.27-28 reproduced above, we see that here is another, rather unusual, formula: the one who speaks to Moses is *God of Israel, Father of all the children of Jacob, and King upon Mount Zion. The Lord who will appear in the sight of all is the King upon Mount Zion, the Davidic Messiah* (cf. Jub 23.30; 31.18 and 31.20 [above]).

There is a remarkable apocalypse preserved in many Latin manuscripts of the Life of Adam and Eve, 29.4-15.²⁶ After a period of dispersion that followed the destruction of the temple because God's people provoked him, it

was said that they would be delivered and would build a house of God that would be more highly exalted than before. But again iniquity would exceed righteousness, but then, "God will dwell with men on earth in visible form; and then, righteousness will begin to shine". The impious would be condemned by God their King. This passage is, of course, suspected of being a Christian interpolation, but this supposition is not very likely, given that there is no reference to the crucifixion, let alone the resurrection. If a Christian scribe were adding this passage to the Life of Adam and Eve, would not he have added more?

The Testament (or Assumption) of Moses 10 is a vision of the coming of the Kingdom of God when Satan shall be no more. The Heavenly One on his royal throne goes forth from his holy habitation with wrath on behalf of his sons. The earth trembles, the sun and the moon give no light, the sea will retire. "For God Most High will surge forth, the Eternal One alone. In full view will he come to work vengeance on the nations. Yea, all their idols will he destroy" (TMoses 10.7).²⁷ This is called his *coming* (10.12). Since God himself cannot be seen, his coming in full view must be his coming as Messiah in the flesh.

The Apocalypse of Abraham 29.3-13 is commonly regarded as a Christian interpolation into a Jewish work. It tells of Abraham's vision of a man

²⁵ Translated by Wintermure (Charlesworth: 1985, vol. 2, p.116, my capitals).

²⁶ Now conveniently reproduced in Anderson and Stone (1994).

²⁷ Translated by J.Priest (Charlesworth: 1985, vol. 1, p. 932).

who is worshipped by many of the Gentiles, while some Jews struck him, some insulted him and others worshipped him. What is most remarkable is that Azazel, the Devil, ran and worshipped him, kissed his face, and stood behind him. Abraham asked the Eternal Mighty One for an explanation. He is told that he is a man born from Abraham's tribe who will bring liberation from the Gentiles. This passage can hardly be a Christian invention because a Christian would not have allowed Azazel to show his submission by a copy of Judas's kiss; this scene is not an attack on the Jews as the people of Azazel.²⁸ In 31.1-2, at the end of the ten plagues, the meaning of which the Eternal One explains to Abraham, God says,

And then I will sound the trumpet out of the air, and will send mine Elect One, having in him all my power, one measure; and this one shall summon my despised people from the nations, and I will burn with fire those who have insulted them and have ruled among them in this Age. And I will give those who have covered me with mockery to the scorn of the coming Age.²⁹

The man is the Elect One (Isa 42.1; 1 Enoch 48.9 &c.) who was insulted and is not worshipped.

Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* was brought back to the attention of

scholars after more than three hundred and fifty years of neglect by Leopold Cohn. He found in it frequent reference to belief in the resurrection, the day of judgment, and the advent of the Messiah.³⁰ To my knowledge only five scholars have followed Cohn in finding any messianic references at all in the *Biblical Antiquities*, but surely Cohn is right.³¹ The book begins with Adam and ends with the death of Saul, who says to his slayer, "Go therefore and tell David, I have slain your enemy. And say to him: Thus says Saul: Do not remember my hatred nor my unrighteousness" (65.5). The whole book is designed to prepare later generations for the coming of the prophets (who must, like Elijah, return and face death [48.1 end]), and to prepare them for the resurrection, the day of judgment and the advent of the Messiah, David's son. Within the book there are numerous passages that clearly refer to the coming of the Davidic Messiah. Joshua prays that God will choose as his inheritance a man who will rule over his people, and cites the messianic prophecy of Jacob, Genesis 49.10: "A prince shall not depart from Judah nor a leader from his loins" (LAB 21.4-6). Anna's prayer in 51.3-6 looks beyond the first King David to the end with the resurrection of the just on the day of judgment. "And when the unjust are dead, then they shall perish; and

²⁸ The view of R. Rubinkiewicz (Charlesworth: 1985, vol. 1, page 684).

²⁹ Translated by Box (1919, pp. 84-85).

³⁰ Cohn (1898, pp. 322-323).

³¹ J. Klausner (1956, p. 367); Paul Riessler (1928, pp. 735-861 [translation], 1315-1318 [notes]); Strobel (1961); Philonenko (1961, p. 52; 1962, p. 168); Ferch (1977, p. 149, note 54). See O'Neill (1994a).

when the just are fallen asleep, then they shall be liberated. So, then, shall all judgment endure until he shall be revealed who prevails.”(LAB 51.5) Perrot and Bogaert suggest that the last words, *quo usque reveletur qui tenet*, refer to God, but the passive *reveletur* refers to God and *qui tenet* must be the Messiah: God reveals him who shall prevail.³² In 59.1-3 Samuel visits Jesse and seeks to carry out the Lord’s command to anoint a king. When Jesse’s firstborn, Eliab, approaches, Samuel says, “Behold now the holy Messiah of the Lord.” This is the wrong son, and David is summoned from the field. David’s hymn follows in 59.4. The hymn is not confined to that historic moment; David begins to *give glory from the ends of the earth* and speaks a hymn of *praise unto everlasting days*. He recalls that when Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, his brother became jealous and killed him. God has kept David safe and made the angels his guardians. But his brothers, too, were jealous and his father and mother denigrated him; when he was called *christus domini, the Lord’s Messiah*, they forgot him. God *came near with his right hand and his mercy*; David says he will never cease singing his praises. In chapter 60 we are given the psalm David sang to exorcise the evil spirit that was tormenting Saul. At the end of the psalm David prophesies that from his loins will be born someone who will subdue all the tribe of spirits created after the separation of heaven and earth.

arguet autem te metra noua unde natus sum
de qua nascetur post tempus de lateribus meis qui vos domauit.

We should, I think, take the presents as futures, and the pasts as prophetic perfects, the past tense being used to express a solemn promise.

But a new womb shall rebuke you from which I shall be born;
from which womb shall be born after a time from my loins he that will surely
subdue you. (LAB 60.3)

Finally, in 62.9 Jonathan praises David and ends by saying, “For yours is the kingdom in this age, and from you will be the beginning of the kingdom that is to come in the time [to come]”. The references to *this age* and *the time to come* make it clear that Jonathan is looking beyond the reign of David to the reign of David’s greater son, the Messiah.

The reason that most of the excellent scholars who have studied the Biblical Antiquities of Pseudo-Philo since Cohn’s day have discounted the messianic references is that “it is always God, and no subordinate agency, that is to ‘visit the world’ and put all things right”.³³ They are correct in conceding that the Messiah is supposed in Jewish tradition to judge the world at

³² Perrot and Bogaert (1976, p. 219).

³³ James (1917, p. 41); cf. Dietzfelbinger (1979, p. 99).

the end of history (PsSol 17; 2Esd[4Ezra] 11-12; 13.37-38; SibOr 5.108-110, 155-60, 414-433; Targum Pseudo Jonathan Num 24.17-24; Targum Jon Isa 53.9; Targum Ps 72 &c.; Celsus' Jew in Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.49; &c.).³⁴ Their refusal to see the Biblical Antiquities as messianic is because it is always the *Lord* who visits the earth in judgment (19.12,13; 26.13), who speaks of his *advent* (23.10) and his *work of restoration* (23.13; cf. 28.9). In 3.10 those who are saved are justified in *me*, God. The answer must be that the Biblical Antiquities do indeed speak of the coming of the Davidic Messiah and they also speak of the coming of the Lord, and the Lord and the Davidic Messiah are the same person.³⁵

The identification of the coming of the Lord and the coming of the Son of God, the Messiah, is also to be found in 2 Esdras 1-2 (5 Ezra). This can no longer be ascribed to a Jewish-Christian writer; we can tell that it is a genuine pre-Christian Jewish collection because one of the two versions—but not the other—has been glossed in a Christian direction.³⁶ In a vision of the triumph of the righteous at the end, Ezra saw them being crowned by a tall young man who, he was told, was the Son of God (2.47). Those who were crowned were said to have confessed the Son of God in the world and this confession is said to be the same as the confession of the name of God; they “stood valiantly for the name of the Lord” (2.45, 47). Earlier in the same

chapter the Lord addressed Jerusalem as *the Mother of faithful sons*. Jerusalem was told to embrace her children “until I come and preach mercy to them” (2.32). In the next vision Ezra was told to say to those who heard and understood, “Await your shepherd” (2.34; the addition of the word *Gentiles!* is a Christian gloss, not in CM). The shepherd was to be the Davidic Messiah, the Son of God. His coming is spoken of in the same way as the coming of the Lord a few verses earlier.

There is a passage in Philo which assumed the incarnation of the Son of God.³⁷ God is likened to a shepherd and a king who governs the whole of creation, including all living creatures whether mortal or divine.

He leads them with justice and law, appointing his true Word and First-born Son, who will take up the care of this sacred company as would a Viceroy of a Great King; for it was said somewhere, Behold I am; I will send my messenger before your face to keep you in the way [Exod 23.20]. (de agricultura 51)

³⁴ Against Volz (1934, p. 275). See also Reiser (1990, p. 146). For the Targum of the Psalms, see Levey (1974, p. 143).

³⁵ See O'Neill (1994a).

³⁶ See O'Neill (1990).

³⁷ Ernst Bammel in a seminar in Cambridge, before 1970.

God sends someone like Moses to lead his people into the promised land; this messenger is his *Word* and *First-born Son*. This is similar to the passage in the Wisdom of Solomon 18.14-16 (cf. Rev 19.11-16).

Now all was wrapped in peaceful silence
 And night at her own pace was in mid course,
 When descending from the royal thrones your Word leaped down from
 heaven,
 A stern warrior to the midst of the land of destruction,
 Bearing as sharp sword your command that requires unfeigned obedience;
 And standing fast, he filled all things with death—
 He touched heaven while he walked on earth.

Moore and, most recently, Dunn have denied that such “personification” amounts to “personalisation”. They have missed the significance of the plural *thrones*, a reference to Daniel 7.9, a passage interpreted by Rabbi Akiba as meaning “one throne for Him and one for David” (Hagigah 14a; Sanhedrin 38b).³⁸

Another tradition reported by Philo stated that this Son would offer his life as an oblation to the Lord. The passage concerns the chief butler’s dream, which Joseph interprets (Gen 40.9-11). A contrast is drawn between Pharaoh’s chief butler and God’s chief butler.

Who then is God’s chief butler? He is the one who offers libations, the truly great High Priest, who having received first the draughts of the everlasting graces, pours out the libation entirely full of unmixed wine, by offering himself. (de somniis 2.183)

This great High Priest is elsewhere called *the First-born divine Word* (de somniis 1.214-5).

Finally, we must ask where the idea of the Incarnation of God’s Son came from. The scattered and disparate traditions to which I have been referring must have been derived from the Psalms. Worshipping communities of Jews who drew daily strength from singing the Psalms drew also from them a coherent picture of a triune God and of the Son of God’s first coming—hidden from all but those who had eyes to see—which would prepare the faithful for his second coming in glory as judge. They continued the ancient practice of celebrating the enthronement of the Lord by singing the appropriate Psalms. The pioneering work of Gunkel, carried forward by Mowinckel, has led us to distinguish two sets of Psalms, Psalms sung to

³⁸ Moore (1927, vol. 1, p. 415); Dunn (1980, pp. 217-219). For Akiba, Segal (1977, pp. 47-50).

celebrate the annual enthronement of YHWH³⁹ and Psalms celebrating the enthronement of the King.⁴⁰

The Psalms celebrating the enthronement of the King eventually, if not from the start, looked forward to the future King who would come to deliver his people, for they were sung when no actual king of their own was available, in captivity and under foreign rule.⁴¹ Similarly, the enthronement of YHWH also looked forward to his future deliverance.⁴² Perhaps the two celebrations even occurred on the same day, at New Year.⁴³ The worshippers of course knew that the Lord God and the King were separate—the King was God's Son (Ps 2; 89)⁴⁴—but they must have coordinated the two sets of Psalms according to a trinitarian pattern already offered to them in the ancient passages about King David's anointing by Samuel and about the promise later made to King David about his son of whom God would say, "I will be his father and he shall be my son" (1 Sam 16.13; Ps 52.11; 2 Sam 7.14; Ps 89.26-27). The enthroned Messiah was even called *God* (Ps 45.6-7 as interpreted in an ancient tradition, Heb 1.8; cf Targum Ps 45.3). He was to take the throne beside God (Ps 110) and the pattern of his throne was the same as God's (as confirmed by the painting on the wall of the Dura Europos Synagogue). He was covered and overshadowed by God under God's wings (Ps 17.8; 41.12; 61.4; 63.7-8; 91.1,4). He was known before he was

formed in his mother's womb (Ps 139.15-16). He shared God's power not only over earthly rulers but over the powers of chaos in the waters (Ps 72.8; 89.25; 91.13; cf. Targ Song of Songs 8.2: the King Messiah and his beloved share the feast of Leviathan). He bore God's laws and the people were sometimes said to be judged by his righteousness (Ps 35.27; 63.11).⁴⁵

The three Psalms that played such a prominent role in the New Testament must have played a prominent role before the New Testament: Psalm 2; Psalm 8; and Psalm 110. Psalm 2 was taken as messianic by Rashi with

³⁹ Oesterley lists passages that apply the title *King* to YHWH, those that refer to the *throne* of YHWH, and those that say *YHWH is King*: Psalms [Hebrew numbering] 5.2; 9.4,7; 10.16; 11.4; 24.7-10; 29.10; 47.7,8; 48.2; 74.12; 84.3; 89.14; 93.1,2; 95.3; 96.10; 97.1,2; 98.6; 99.1; 103.19; 149.2 (Oesterley: 1939, p. 45).

⁴⁰ Gunkel confined this to a relatively small collection: Psalms 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 89; 101; 110; 132; 144.1-11 (Gunkel: 1926; 1927a). Eaton, following Birkeland and Mowinckel, would add many more—thirty-one clear cases and twenty-one less clear (Eaton: 1976, chap. 2, pp.27-86).

⁴¹ Gunkel, although recognising the ideal character of the king, who would, for example, rule all nations, was reluctant to believe that the royal psalms were not related to actual kings (e.g. Gunkel: 1926, on Psalm 72, especially p. 308). Eaton is more willing to support an eschatological interpretation of the ritual of the royal enthronement, but not entirely (Eaton: 1976, p. 134 and Chapter IV). Johnson saw the ritual of the king's ordeal and re-enthronement as thoroughly eschatological (Johnson: 1955).

⁴² For example, Gunkel's commentary on Psalm 98 (1926, p. 127).

⁴³ For example, Mowinckel (1956, p. 80).

⁴⁴ Eaton (1976, pp. 146-149).

⁴⁵ See Eaton (1976, Chapter IV, pp. 135-197).

reference to David's enquiry of the Lord whether he should go up against the Philistines who sought to kill him after his anointing by the elders, 2 Samuel 5.17-21.⁴⁶ It depicts a coronation at which those who have rebelled against the Son are given the chance to submit to his rule before they are crushed by his irresistible power. This reading is clear, but of course is much strengthened if we take in the traditional reading of the obscure words in Ps 2.12, *Kiss the Son lest he be angry*.

Psalm 8 was possibly given a messianic reading in the Targum. *The Son of Man* is used twice in verse 4, and that seems to be used as a messianic title in Targ Ps 80.18. Hebrews 2.5-8 represents an ancient Jewish tradition in which the *אֲחֵרִית* *a little* is taken to refer to a little time rather than a little space (cf. Job 10.20b). *What is the Son of Man?* then speaks of the coming enthronement of the King who is suffering a temporary humiliation. It is a psalm for worship in which the *babes and sucklings* celebrate the glorious enthronement that is yet to come.

Psalm 110 is labelled *a Psalm of David*. David is singing it. He uses the prophetic perfect: *The Lord said unto my Lord* means the Lord has promised to say unto my Lord (and the Lord's promises do not fail).⁴⁷ David's Lord (who must be his greater son, the Messiah) is told to sit at God's right hand until all enemies are put under his feet. This implies a time before he was

enthroned, and hence also a time when he descended from on high to a lowly position. The LXX rendering of Ps 110.3 makes this explicit by referring to a first coronation *before the morning*; David's Lord was already in existence, to be brought forth and displayed, before the morning star. After all his enemies have been put under his footstool, he will reign unopposed. A similar idea is preserved in the LXX of Ps 84.7: "O God, when you have returned you will make us alive and your people will rejoice because of you." The return of God to make his people alive implies a first coming incognito and a victorious return, and the words must have been applied to the Messiah.

Those ancient worshippers, who used the Psalms to keep alive their hopes for the coming of the Messiah and the universal reign of God, sometimes put Psalms that we would assign to the enthronement of YHWH category into the class of Psalms for the enthronement of the King Messiah. For modern scholars, Psalm 9 is for the enthronement of YHWH, yet verse 8 (Hebrew verse 9) seems to be applied to the Messiah in Acts 17.31 and to the warrior Word in Revelation 19.11. The phrase used of the Messiah, *He that cometh* (Matt 11.3; Luke 7.19; cf. Matt 3.11) is derived from what we call Enthronement of YHWH Psalms (Ps 96.13; 98.9; 24.7-10; cf. 118.26): that is, Psalms we apply to YHWH, they applied to the King Messiah.

⁴⁶ Levey (1974, p. 105).

⁴⁷ See Gibson on the "prophetic perfect" as it is traditionally called (1994, para. 59b).

This trinitarian and incarnational pattern of belief is assumed behind every page of the New Testament. There is no good evidence, as we saw in Chapter One, that it grew up over a long period of time, and the only convincing explanation of this fact is that the pattern was already present in parts of Judaism as a living belief before Jesus was born. The Qumran scrolls confirm this hunch, and now we have seen a large number of scattered references in Jewish writings which presuppose a similar pattern of belief. Scholars have too long taken refuge in the comforting illusion that these must all be Christian interpolations or glosses, an illusion that can be no longer cherished in the absence of independent evidence.