



RCEC discussion meetings are open to all (✓ your calendar):

Mar 15 • Apr 19 • May 31
Sept 6 • Oct 11 • Nov 15

Place: Staff Room in Peda
Time: Thursdays 13:00-14:00
Please join us with your sac lunch

RCEC is designed to encourage research in any area in Early Christianity, and therefore inviting any ETF student who may be interested at whatever stage in this area. Publications, lecture presentations, discussion meetings, and other events will unfold as we are building a base for ongoing research among the ETF student body, alumni, and faculty.

We met for the first time a month ago (Feb 15), on a study day with the topic "Worship and Christology." In this first issue of RCEC, therefore, we printed a brief summary of the presentations esp. for those who missed it.



Christ as priest and object of devotion in 1Clement - Martin Webber

To understand how Christology and worship are related in *First Clement*, one needs to grasp the nature and purpose of the writing. A community document (1, 1), it belongs to the genre of *symbolautikon* (van Unnik) and evokes these two themes to support its main point: resolving the leadership crisis at Corinth (44, 3-4). In that connection its Christology is relatively complete but not fully integrated (Lona). Christ is clearly differentiated from God, but no dominant expression describes him. The clearest expressions of devotion are the two prayers and the ten doxologies found in the writing. They are theocentric, although some doxologies include significant references to Christ (20, 11; 44, 1; 50, 7; 64). These mention the mediating role and status of Christ (*dia* expressions, etc.), a focal point bringing worship and Christology together. Other contextual factors (political terms, rapport between state religion and Christianity) may also have contributed to this development.

"Glory to You, our Head, O Lord Messiah!":

وَجَدَّهٖ سَلَامًا لِّمَنْ تَدْعُو تَحْتَهُ مَعْبُدًا
Worship & Christology in the Odes of Solomon - Gie Vleugels

Because of its early date (perhaps around AD 100) and its focus on worship, this document where Christ is figuring prominently must be taken into account when studying

worship of Christ in early Christianity. The Odes are religious songs, where poetic narration of salvation is alternated with doxology. Both songs and worship are normally addressed to God, the Most High, who is clearly distinguished from Christ, his Son. However, several times it is Christ who is addressed in songs as well as in doxology. One of the central themes in the Odes is love. Many of the songs have love for their subject. This love is interrelated with worship. E.g. Ode 5:1: "I praise You, O Lord, because I love You." This is particularly interesting, because Christ figures as the main recipient of love. The believers are by their love connected with Christ as members with the head of the body. Five passages are discussed in more detail: Odes 7:17-19; 20:7-10; 23:17-22; 39:9-13 and 41:11-16. In each of them it becomes clear that Christ is portrayed as the natural object of worship by believers.

Martyrdom and Schism as Occasions for Ignatius' Christology: Maintain Unity in Worship - Jack Barentsen

What prompted Ignatius' christological descriptions, and what did he aim to accomplish through them? How did he intend to influence their worship through these descriptions? In what sense can this be seen as a development of earlier themes? This paper traces Ignatius' devotion to Christ throughout his letters to discover the various emphases and occasions that prompted his christological sayings and description of worship. This approach allows us to recognize that his Christology serves to legitimate certain attitudes towards schismatics, while it also legitimates his own view of his martyrdom as one of glorious procession and attainment. This is not to say that his christological sayings only have functional value, but it is to demonstrate that – from Ignatius' perspective – only certain connections between schism or martyrdom and devotion to Christ provide sufficient basis for unity in worship and in church order. That is to say, Ignatius' Christology provides the central, unifying factor that connects all his concerns together, not only theologically, but also sociologically.

Worship & Christology in Justin's Dialogue with Trypho - Michael Choi

In the *Dialogue*, a protreptic literature, Justin uses Old Testament prophecies as proof-texts concerning the identity of

Jesus as the pre-existent God who became incarnate as the Messiah, and thereby worthy of worship. Since one of the foundational and unifying pillars of Judaism has been self-consciously monotheistic—as every pious Jew was taught to say the *shema* each day—Justin must also demonstrate that the worship of Christ is compatible to Jewish monotheism. This paper seeks to determine how Justin argues that Jesus Christ is a distinct divine being yet integrally related to the one God Yahweh as revealed in the Jewish Scriptures. He lists in chapters 56-83 alone five such criteria for affirming the deity of Christ (attribution of the divine name; sharing the same divine substance; participation in creation; ascribing worship; and sovereignty over all creation); and in so doing argues that Christ is included in the divine identity of the one God Yahweh.

Why "Jesus Tomb" is another hype:

1. There is no DNA evidence that this is the historical Jesus of Nazareth
 2. The statistical analysis is untrustworthy
 3. The name "Jesus" was a popular name in the first century, appearing in 98 other tombs and on 21 other ossuaries
 4. There is no historical evidence that Jesus was ever married or had a child
 5. The earliest followers of Jesus never called him "Jesus, son of Joseph"
 6. It is highly unlikely that Joseph, who died earlier in Galilee, was buried in Jerusalem, since the historical record connects him only to Nazareth or Bethlehem
 7. Talpiot tomb and ossuaries are such that they would have belonged to a rich family, which does not match the historical record for Jesus
 8. Fourth-century church historian Eusebius makes quite clear that the body of James, the brother of Jesus, was buried alone near the temple mount and that his tomb was visited in the early centuries, making very unlikely that the Talpiot tomb was Jesus' "family tomb"
 9. The two Mary ossuaries do not mention anyone from Migdal, but simply has the name Mary, one of the most common of all ancient Jewish female names
 10. By all ancient accounts, the tomb of Jesus was empty, making it highly unlikely that it was moved to another tomb, decayed for one year's time, and then the bones put in an ossuary.
- Source: Witherington *et al.*
www.christiannewswire.com/news/457272336.html
 See also www.curtisvillechristian.org/TombOne.html
<http://www.christilling.de/blog/2007/03/quest-post-by-richard-bauchham.html>
- **A Conference:** *Matthew, James & the Didache* Tilburg University, on 12-13 Apr 2007
www.tilburguniversity.nl/faculties/tfc/conference2007/
 - **Business mtgs:** 14:00-15:00 (May 31, & in Dec - TBA)
 - **ECL publication:**
 - 1) Guidelines for ECL (19.5.07)
 - 2) Odes Sample (25.5.07)
 - 3) Jewish Christianity ECL (8.6.07)