Similar to Fee’s previous tome *God’s Empowering Presence*, this book attempts to fill a gap in Pauline scholarship; namely, a full-fledged study of Pauline Christology. The book begins with an introduction into Pauline Christology [Ch. 1], which discusses the difficulty of the task, gives an overview of studies on Christology in the 20th Century, and isolates the primary christological data by briefly considering three key texts – 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:12-17; and Phil. 2:6-11. Part I, “Analysis” [Chs. 2-10], examines the letters of the Pauline corpus in an assumed chronological order to ferret out the Christology of each one. Part II, “Synthesis” [Chs. 11-16], tries to establish from the preceding exegetical data “how to best understand Paul’s understanding of the person of Christ” (482). In the present review, I concentrate on three aspects of this substantial work: 1) Fee’s understanding of Christology; 2) Fee’s exegesis of three critical texts; and 3) the synthetic chapters.

One cannot read Paul without noticing, “devotion to Christ was the foremost reality and passion of his life” (1). Christ is both the beginning and the goal of everything in Paul and is central in all his writing. Thus, to offer a coherent Pauline Christology requires having a clear sense of one’s intention. In this study, “Christology” refers exclusively to the person of Jesus Christ; “Paul’s understanding of who Christ was/is, in distinction to the work of Christ – what Christ did for us as Savior (soteriology)” (1). Fee, however, recognizes that this particular approach causes several difficulties. To analyze Paul in this way is to make a distinction that Paul himself does not make. For Paul, the role of Christ is united to Paul’s understanding of who Christ is (482), and only one passage in the Pauline corpus, Col. 1:15-17, might be described as intentionally christological. Therefore, the methodological dilemma is trying to flush out a coherent Christology from contingent arguments. One must tease out what Paul understood presuppositionally about Christ by examining texts that Paul wrote with different intentions, texts that often explicitly refer to Christ’s work as Savior. A second difficulty, the theological

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1 Fee mentions several works, which do engage Pauline Christology, such as, Werner Kramer’s *Christ, Lord, Son of God* (1966). Fee suggests it is not truly Pauline Christology since it focuses primarily on “The Pre-Pauline Material” and its influence on Paul. He also considers Jennings Reid’s *Jesus: God’s Emptiness, God’s Fullness* (1990), which, according to Fee, is too narrowly focused and written for a popular audience (xxvii).

2 Fee treats all thirteen letters, although he acknowledges the tenuous nature of Paul’s authorship of the three Pastoral Epistles.

3 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Colossians/Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy (6).

4 Each chapter in Part I includes two appendices. Appendix I lists all the christological texts (in Greek) in the letter(s). Appendix II presents a numerical analysis of the usage: comparing the references to θεός and Christ; and the usage of the individual names for Christ.

5 *Fee’s Footnote:* “Except for Rom. 1:16-3:20, which is so remarkably theocentric that Christ is mentioned but once (2:16), and this with reference to Paul’s gospel” (1).

6 Respecting this difficulty, Fee chooses to focus his exegesis on those statements repeated throughout the corpus in a variety of ways. Thus, Fee arranges each exegetical chapter under certain themes. Fee begins these chapters with an explanation of how and why he arranged the chapter a particular way.
dilemma, is to realize how Paul, as an avid monotheist, is able to speak of “the Son of God” as being included in the divine identity. Fee writes, “Even a casual reading of Paul’s letters reveals how christocentric his basically theocentric worldview has become” (9). Accordingly, Fee’s aim in this work is to investigate the explicit and implicit statements about Christ in the Pauline corpus to bring to light what Paul believed about the person of Christ and how Paul viewed the relationship between Christ the Son and God the Father.\(^7\)

**Exegesis**

In the opening chapter, Fee identifies 1 Cor. 8:6, Col. 1:12-17, and Phil. 2:6-11 as the key christological texts in the Pauline corpus. In them, Fee isolates the five categories that he will use to structure his exegetical and synthetic work (20): Christ the Divine Savior [Ch. 11]; Christ the Preexistent and Incarnate Savior [Ch. 12]; Jesus as Second Adam [Ch. 13]; Jesus the Jewish Messiah and Son of God [Ch. 14]; and Jesus the Jewish Messiah and Exalted Lord [Ch. 15]. To appreciate Fee’s understanding of Pauline Christology necessitates examining his exegesis of these three passages.

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**1 Cor. 8:6**

According to Fee, 1 Cor. 8:6 is a remarkable christological statement, in which Paul offers a calculated Christian interpretation of the Shema (89). Fee’s diagrams the verse as follows (89):

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(A) But for us
    one God
    the father,
    from whom
    all things
    we
    for him.

(B) and
    one Lord
    Jesus Christ
    through whom
    all things
    through him.
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Paul, in this passage, uses the central affirmation of the Shema to assert that there is only one God over against the many pagan gods in Corinth. But, he has divided the Shema into two parts, with \(\theta\epsilon\omicron\omicron\) God referencing the Father and \(\kappa\upsilon\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\) Lord referring to Jesus Christ the Son. The first matter of christological importance is Paul’s use of \(\kappa\upsilon\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\) – the language for the Divine Name of the one God in the Septuagint – for Jesus Christ.\(^8\) Here, Fee asserts Paul embraced the Son as Divine, along with the Father, indicating a presupposition of the divinity of Christ by both Paul and the Corinthians. The passage also encloses the work of the Son within that of the Father.\(^9\)

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\(^7\) Fee is explicit that his goal is not to test the veracity of Paul’s statements, but to elucidate what Paul believed about Christ. This chapter also includes a brief summary of Christology in the 20\(^{th}\) Century. Fee acknowledges being indebted to two works: Larry Hurtado’s *Lord Jesus Christ* (2003) and Richard Bauckham’s *God Crucified* (1999). He also points out that the majority of the polemical texts in this book are aimed at J.D.G Dunn’s works *Christology in the Making* (1989) and *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (1998). Interestingly, he takes the time to apologize to him in the preface. Fee writes, “I apologize in advance to Jimmy himself if my rhetoric is too much…” (xxix).

\(^8\) According to Fee, Paul exclusively uses \(\kappa\upsilon\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\) of Christ, except when citing passages from the Septuagint where the title refers to God (see pgs. 637-639 for list). Additionally, Paul exclusively reserves \(\theta\epsilon\omicron\omicron\) for God, including in the three most debated passages: Rom. 9:5, Titus 2:13, and 2 Thes. 1:12.

\(^9\) The two \(\delta\alpha\omicron\) phrases that refer to Christ as the agent of creation and redemption are framed by the \(\iota\kappa\) and \(\epsilon\omicron\omicron\) phrases regarding the Father (91).
The Son is the agent of creation and redemption and the Father is the ultimate source and goal of creation and redemption. Second, Fee writes, “The second line [line B] is a plain, undeniable expression of Paul’s presuppositional conviction about Christ’s preexistence as the Son of God: preexistence, because of the assertion that ‘through him are tà πάντα,’ with creation in view; the Son of God, because of Paul’s identity of the ‘one God’ as ‘the Father’” (91). Thus, this passage exposes three fundamental categories of Paul’s Christology: Christ the Divine Savior; Christ the Preexistent and Incarnate Savior; and Jesus the Jewish Messiah and Son of God.

Col. 1:12-17
Colossians, in Fee’s judgment, is unique in the Pauline corpus because Christology is a significant concern of the letter. The situation in Colossae – the church’s fascination with, or anxiety over, “the powers” and magic – causes Paul’s “Christ devotion” (290) to emerge in a marked way. Fee writes, “As long as they are enamored in any way with ‘the powers,’ they are in danger of missing out on what God has done in sending his Son” (290). Paul therefore persistently emphasizes that Christ is none other than the eternal Son of God who has redeemed them and negated the strength of “the powers.” Col. 1:12-17 is the most overtly christological passage in Paul, and Paul clearly merges the messianic Son (v. 13) with the eternal Son (v. 15). Fee makes this connection based on the qualifier, “the Son of his love,” at the end of v. 13. This statement echoes 2 Sam. 7:14, 18 in the Septuagint and signals the Davidic character of God’s sonship. In the rest of the narrative, Fee reads “the Son of his love” as the antecedent for all the subsequent pronouns. Fee writes, “Thus, the messianic Son is now set forth as the eternal Son, obviously preexistent and both the agent of and Lord over the whole created order, including the powers” (298). In other words, the kingly Lord (vs. 15-17) and the redeemer (vs. 18-20) are connected to Jesus Christ as representing both the messianic Son and the eternal Son. The passage therefore presents the fundamental categories of 1 Cor. 8:6 in greater detail, and “Paul quite matter-of-factly puts that Christology in the context of his Son of God Christology as well” (18). Furthermore, Paul’s use of εἰκόνων introduces Jesus as the Second Adam.10

Phil. 2:6-11
This is the principal passage in Paul’s writings that requires one to take seriously both Christ’s divinity and Christ’s full humanity. The first half of the passage, vs. 6-8, depicts that “Christ was both in the ‘form’ of God and equal with God, and therefore personally preexistent, when he chose to ‘empty himself’ by taking the ‘form’ of a slave; he took the ‘form’ of a slave by coming to be in the ‘likeness’ of human being” (388). Consequently, the one who is fully God became fully human when he “poured himself out” in order to redeem humanity. In the second half of the passage, vs. 9-11, God bestowing on Christ “the Name above every name” vindicates the humbled one. Fee writes, “This passage thus serves as a classic example of this transfer of every kind of divine privilege to the risen Lord” (565). As a result, this passage not only confirms the categories presented in 1 Cor. 8:6 and Col. 1:12-17, excluding Jesus as Second Adam, the passage also identifies the final category, Jesus as Jewish Messiah and Exalted Lord.

10 See section of review on Ch. 13 for details.
11 Fee refutes the viewpoint that Paul uses μορφή as a synonym for εἰκόνων. Thus, he rejects the association of this passage with Adam Christology.
Synthesis
With all the categories now exemplified in Fee’s exegesis, I turn to Fee’s synthesis of the five key categories of Paul’s Christology. Where applicable I included references to the passages that best illustrate Fee’s statement.

Christ, the Divine Savior
Fee starts his synthesis with Christ as Savior “since that is clearly the central feature of Pauline theology” (481). The chapter begins with a four-fold explanation of what “salvation in Christ” meant for Paul. The first point examines Paul’s grammar of salvation where Fee expresses that Paul consistently refers to salvation as predicated on the love of the Father, affected through the death and resurrection of the Son, and made effective through the Spirit of God, who is also the Spirit of the Son. Second, the goal of salvation is the creation of a people for God’s name who in their own life “reflect God’s own character; otherwise there has been no salvation at all” (487). Third, the framework is eschatological. Namely, Christ’s death, resurrection and the gift of the Spirit mark the turning of the ages. Fourth, in Christ’s death and resurrection, people are redeemed from enslavement and death is defeated. In this language, Fee finds the intersection of Christology and soteriology because in all of the soteriological language Paul presupposes both the preexistence and incarnation of the Son. Fee writes, “His beginnings were not when he was ‘born of woman’; rather, he was eternally the Son, whom the Father sent into the world, both to bear the image and to restore the image to us” (488). Fee also uses the intersection of Paul’s Christology and soteriology to explain Paul’s worship of Jesus Christ – his Christ devotion. Fee illustrates how Paul and his communities directed worship to God in their singing, prayer and partaking in the Lord’s table. According to Fee, Christ is worshipped not simply for what he does but who he is as Divine Savior.

Christ, the Preexistent and Incarnate Savior
In this chapter, Fee focuses on three main categories that illustrate Paul’s belief in Christ as the preexistent Son of God who became incarnate in order to redeem humanity. First, Christ is the agent of creation and redemption [1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-20]. It is one thing for Christ to be the means of redemption, but Paul’s inclusion of the preexistent Son as the agent of creation includes Christ in the divine identity as its most fundamental point.12 Paul is intent to emphasize that Christ is “the beginning point of both the old and new creations” (504). Second, Christ is the impoverished Redeemer [2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:6-8]. The incarnation of the one who was preexistent as God only makes sense when expressed in terms of becoming poor. Fee states, “One who is already only and merely human does not ‘become human’!” (507). Thus, Christ at one point in human history became incarnate in order to redeem. Third, the Son as the sent one [Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 8:3] calls for an incarnational interpretation. These three examples all depict that for Paul “in Christ, one who was truly God was living a truly human life” (512).

Jesus the Second Adam
Fee takes a cautious, but not minimalist, view on Paul’s Adam Christology. In so doing, he employs not only the three explicit texts [1 Cor. 15:21-22; 44b-49; Rom. 5:12-21], but also other passages where Paul uses εἰκόνα with reference to Christ. The beginning point for Adam Christology, according to Fee, is new creation theology. Namely, God inaugurated a new

12 The God of the Jews was recognized as the Creator and Ruler of things. This was a fundamental difference between Israel’s God and other pagan gods (503).
creation in the death and resurrection of Christ and Christ as the divine image bearer is restoring the divine image in God’s new people. In this regard, the three explicit passages highlight the inauguration, contrasting Christ and Adam where Christ is the new progenitor of the new creation. The ἐκκόσιν passages emphasize the restoration, “where the incarnate Christ is seen as the true bearer of the divine image, who is also re-creating a people who bear that image with him” (523).

Origins of Paul’s Thought
The final two synthetic chapters turn to Paul’s primary categories for understanding the person of Christ: Son of God and Exalted Lord. Both terms have deep roots in Jewish messianism, based on Davidic kinship, but in both cases, Paul revises the traditional Jewish interpretation. One of the major scholarly endeavors is to explain the origins of Paul’s thought. Fee believes that both of Paul’s categories were already at work in the Aramaic-speaking Jewish community that preceded Paul. He uses two transliterated Aramaic terms, which he believes were passed down to Paul from the first Christians, to demonstrate their existence. First, Ἁββα [Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15] shows early acceptance of Jesus as Son of God. Second, Μαραναται [1 Cor. 16:22] exemplifies the early acceptance of Jesus as Lord. Fee concludes, “Thus, however Paul may have been affected by other factors, the basic ‘origins’ of these two primary christological motifs were deeply rooted in the believing community that preceded him” (531).

Jesus, the Jewish Messiah and Son of God
According to Fee, one has to reflect on the relationship of Jesus to Israel’s primary story in order to understand Paul’s connection of Jesus as the Son of God to Jewish messianism. Fee examines the role of Christ in the basic Jewish story, which he presents in six stages (536-543):

1. Creation – Jesus is the divine agent of creation [1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-16].
2. Abraham – With Jesus’ coming, the promise to Abraham that all the nations will be blessed found its fulfillment [Gal. 3; Rom. 4].
3. Exodus – Christ rescued/delivered from dominion of darkness and ushered in the kingdom [Col. 1:12-16].
4. The Law – Christ’s coming fulfilled the Law [Rom. 10:4].
5. Davidic Kingship – Jesus is recognized as the “seed of David” who was God’s anointed One, “his ‘son’ par excellence, whose progeny would sit on his throne forever” (530) [Rom. 1:2-4].
6. Exile and Promised Redemption – Jesus is God’s Son whom the Father sent to earth to redeem and give adoption as sons (eschatological deliverance) [Rom. 1:2-4].

For Paul, the story itself incorporates Christ crucified, resurrected and exalted. Fee writes, “All of this, then, is to say that Paul’s Son of God Christology is his way of expressing not only the relationship of Christ to God the Father, but also his eternal preexistence, including his role in both the original creation and the new creation” (552).

Jesus, the Jewish Messiah and Exalted Lord
For Fee, Jesus as Exalted Lord is the absolute heart of Pauline Christology. The title-turned-name (κύριος) is Paul’s way, as an avid monotheist, to include Christ in the divine identity. The divine Lord (Jesus) shares every kind of divine prerogative and action, except for initiating the
saving event itself. Additionally, confessing the name of the Lord (Jesus) serves as the entry point for all who embrace Christ as Savior and thus become part of the newly formed people of God [Rom. 10:9-13], and calling on the name of the Lord is a common way to identify God’s newly formed people [1 Cor. 1:2]. Fee states, “The point to make again, by way of conclusion, is that in every one of these instances where Paul uses the OT term ‘the name of the Lord,’ the Divine Name is now ‘the Name’ that was bestowed on Christ at his exaltation. Thus all of these passages reflect various ways whereby the Divine Name that belonged to God alone in ancient Israel has now been transferred across the board to the One to whom that Name has now been given in its Greek form, μεγαληκύριο (568).

Discussion Questions:
1. Fee understands Paul’s Christology to be very similar (High Christology) to that found in Hebrews and John. Is this a fair representation of Paul’s thought?

2. I left it out of the review (for space purposes), but there are several lengthy sections, footnotes, and a final appendix criticizing the view that Paul’s Christology “is to be understood at least in part in terms of personified wisdom” (595). The two related problems, according to Fee, are being able to corroborate the idea of preexistence in Paul and to find a precedent for Paul believing that Christ was the agent of creation. Thus, many turn to Christ as personified wisdom, as the background for Paul’s ideas. Fee, however, gives an alternative account to each of these issues tying them to Christ as the Lord and Divine Son. Is Wisdom Christology necessary for substantiating these ideas in Paul’s thought?

3. Key Text: 1 Cor. 8:6.