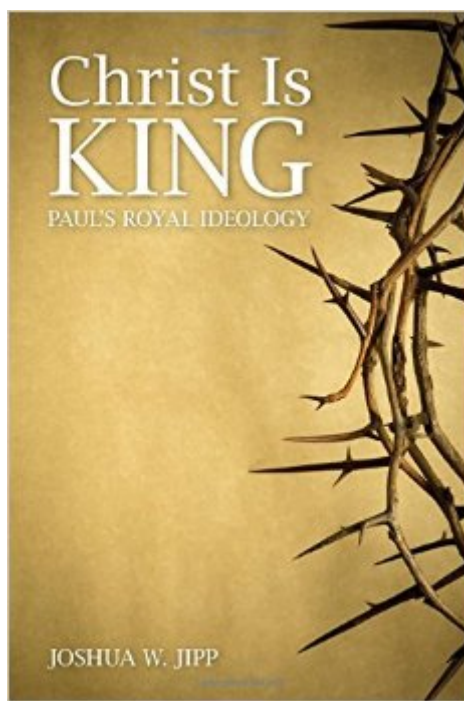


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Christ Is King: Paul's Royal Ideology



Synopsis

Until recently, many scholars have read Paul's use of the word *Christos* as more of a proper name ("Jesus Christ") than a title, Jesus the Messiah. One result, Joshua W. Jipp argues, is that important aspects of Paul's thinking about Jesus' messiahship have gone unrecognized. Jipp argues that kingship discourse is an important source for Paul's christological language: Paul uses royal language to present Christ as the good king. Jipp surveys Greco-Roman and Jewish depictions of the ideal king and argues for the influence of these traditions on several aspects of Paul's thought: king and law (Galatians 5–6; Romans 13–15; 1 Corinthians 9); hymning to the king (Colossians 1:15-20); the just and faithful king; the royal roots of Paul's language of participation "in Christ"; and the enthroned king (Romans 1:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28). Jipp finds that Paul's use of royal tropes is indeed significant. *Christos* is a royal honorific within Paul's letters, and Paul is another witness to ancient discussions of monarchy and ideal kingship. In the process, Jipp offers new and noteworthy solutions to outstanding questions concerning Christ and the law, the *pistis Christou* debate, and Paul's participatory language.

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What is meant when Paul says the "law of Christ"? • How can a Jew conceptualize and worship a second divine figure next to Yahweh? • What does Paul mean when he uses participatory language to speak of Christ's people sharing in Christ's identity and narrative? • Additionally how did Paul develop his participatory soteriology? How is one to

understand the justice/righteousness language in Romans? And what did Paul hope that this construction of Christ the king would accomplish in the lives, rituals, social existence, and communal ordering of his churches? (11) To these questions and more Dr. Jipp proposes a deeper and more extensive understanding of ancient kingship discussions and their reworking in Paul's Christ discourse. Thus, more than showing that Christ is an honorific, Jipp endeavours to show that situating Christ within ancient kingship discourse actually helps one to understand Paul's arguments within his various letters. In part, by ancient kingship discourse, he means to tap into discussions concerning what the good/ideal king looks like? What does he do? What is his relation to the people? to God? Using this background of the common discourse of ancient kingship, Dr. Jipp's main proposal seems to be that Paul was attempting to rework the symbolic universe or social imagery of his churches in order to reorder the allegiances and practices around the reign of Christ the King (11). Thus, Paul is taking and transforming the common motifs of royal ideologies of the time in order to invent a new royal ideology of Christ the King (276). The first chapter lays the groundwork and sets up the arguments contained in the subsequent chapters. Here Dr.

you can read my full review here: [wp \[.\] me/p3JhRp-T9In](http://wp.me/p3JhRp-T9In) "Christ is King," Jipp's basic argument is that Paul used, reworked, and applied ancient conceptions of the good king "both Greco-Roman and Jewish" to Christ in order to structure reality or the symbolic universe of his congregations (9). This does not mean that Christ was simply another king among many. Paul clearly portrays Christ as absolutely set apart from and superior to any other ruler (10). Thus we can't (and won't) fully understand Paul's language unless we understand that Paul is "frequently . . . setting forth a vision of Christ as the king" (11). In his introduction, Jipp lays out his basic argument, surveys kingship discourse in Greek, Hellenistic, Roman writings, and in the remains of temples, statues, coins, etc. Next he surveys Israel's conception of their king by looking through the Old Testament (especially the Psalter) and Second Temple texts. Chapter 2 looks at Christ the king as living law, and Jipp tries (and I think succeeds) to make sense of the phrase "the law of Christ" (Gal 6.2; 1 Cor 9.22). Chapter 3 looks at the Christ hymns found in Colossians 1.15-20 and Philippians 2.6-11. Hymns were written about Greco-Roman kings for the benefactions they gave to their people. Christ, the Son of God, was elected by God, shares his throne, rules on his behalf, and brings peace and harmony. Christ is worthy of divine worship. In chapter 4, since we are in Christ's kingdom, we share his Holy Spirit, he is the first fruits of the resurrection (a resurrection that believers will surely experience), believers share in numerous

aspects of Christ's rule • (143).

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