

THE PROBLEM OF PRE-EXISTENCE IN PHILIPPIANS 2 6-11

CHARLES H. TALBERT

WAKE FOREST COLLEGE

FROM the ancient church to modern times there have existed two different interpretations of Phil 2 6-11. One sees the passage as making reference in vss. 6-8 only to the human existence of Jesus.¹ The other regards vss. 6-8 as referring both to Jesus' pre-existence and to his earthly life. In spite of its obvious difficulties,² it is the latter view which dominates modern exegesis. R. H. Fuller summarizes the consensus today when he says: "The attempts which have been made to eliminate pre-existence entirely from this passage . . . must be pronounced a failure. . . ."³ Is such confidence justified, however? The purpose of this paper will be to test the accepted exegesis of this passage, using as a criterion the principle: a proper delineation of *form* leads to a correct interpretation of *meaning*. Such a criterion seems especially appropriate in this case since we are dealing with hymnic material.⁴

¹ See the references in J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 131; G. Bornkamm, "Zum Verstaendnis des Christus-Hymnus, Phil. 2:6-11," in *Studien zu Antike und Urchristentum*, p. 179, n. 4. Among recent interpreters we may mention L. S. Thornton, *The Dominion of Christ* (1952); Lucien Cerfaux, "L'hymne au Christ-Serviteur de Dieu," in *Recueil Lucien Cerfaux* (1954), II, pp. 425 ff.; L. D. Strecker, "The Christological Hymn in Philippians 2," *Lutheran Quarterly*, 16 (1964), pp. 49-58; and John Harvey, "A New Look at the Christ Hymn in Phil. 2:6-11," *ExpT*, 76 (1965), pp. 337-39.

² The obvious difficulties of any interpretation which sees pre-existence referred to in the hymn include: (1) Incarnation is here regarded as kenosis rather than as epiphany as in most other early Christian hymns (cf. John 1 1-18; I Tim 3 16); (2) only here in early Christianity would there be a reference to a pre-existent reflection and decision of Christ; (3) the exegete is virtually committed to an interpretation of "emptied himself" as the giving up the form of God (divinity) for the form of a servant (humanity); (4) only with difficulty can the conclusion be avoided that exaltation as Lord is a higher state than being in the form of God (divinity). To read the hymn as referring to the human existence of Jesus rather than to his pre-existence, however, enables one to avoid these problems.

³ R. H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology*, p. 235, n. 9. E. Kaesemann, "Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2:5-11," *ZTK*, 47 (1950), pp. 313-60, and O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, are only two of the best-known scholars who interpret the hymn as referring to pre-existence.

⁴ According to M. R. Cherry, "The Christology of Philippians 2:5-11," Th.D. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1956, p. 89, the first person to isolate

The Form of Phil 2 6–11 in Modern Research

In modern research two different structural schemes compete with each other for scholarly allegiance. They are associated with the names of Lohmeyer and Jeremias. Lohmeyer sees the hymn as falling into six strophes of three lines each.⁵

- (1) Ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων
οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἡγήσατο
τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ
- (2) ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν
μορφὴν δούλου λαβών,
ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος
- (3) καὶ σχήματι ἐρεθεῖς ὡς ἄνθρωπος
ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν
γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου.
- (4) διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερίψωσεν
καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα
τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα
- (5) ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ
πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ
ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων
- (6) καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται
ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς
εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

Though it has found acceptance in many places,⁶ this delineation of the form of the hymn has come under the criticism of Jeremias.

Jeremias' criticisms are basically two.⁷ First, and most important, he shows that Lohmeyer's structure fails to follow the inner parallelisms

the passage and call it a hymn was Arthur S. Way in the first edition of his translation of the epistles (1901). Since Lohmeyer (1928), the passage has been generally taken as a non-Pauline hymn. Whether it is pre-Pauline or not is a matter of dispute. F. W. Beare, for example, argues that it is the work of a disciple of Paul (*The Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 30).

⁵ E. Lohmeyer, *Der Brief an die Philipper*, pp. 90 ff. Lohmeyer's criteria (p. 90) are the placement of the particles and the verbs. He regards the phrase "even death on a cross" as a Pauline addition.

⁶ A. M. Hunter, *Paul and His Predecessors* (rev. ed.), p. 123, says: "... his analysis of the hymn into six stanzas of three lines each seems to most scholars better than Jeremias' division of it into three stanzas of four lines."

⁷ J. Jeremias, "Zur Gedankenführung in den Paulinischen Briefen," in *Studia Paulina*, pp. 152–54.

of the hymn. Though Lohmeyer preserves in his arrangement the parallel between $\delta\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu\ \upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\upsilon}\psi\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu$ and $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\alpha\rho\acute{\iota}\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\ \tau\acute{o}\ \delta\nu\omicron\mu\alpha$ (vs. 9), he overlooks the parallel between $\gamma\acute{o}\nu\nu\ \kappa\acute{\alpha}\mu\psi\eta$ (vs. 10) and $\gamma\lambda\acute{\omega}\sigma\sigma\alpha\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\omicron\mu\omicron\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\eta}\sigma\eta\tau\alpha\iota$ (vs. 11), placing them instead in different strophes (5 and 6) and in different lines in their respective strophes (line 2 in strophe 5; line 1 in strophe 6). He also disregards the parallelism between $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \delta\omicron\mu\omicron\iota\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha\tau\iota\ \alpha\acute{\nu}\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omega\nu\ \gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ (vs. 7) and $\sigma\chi\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\iota\ \epsilon\upsilon\rho\epsilon\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ (vs. 7), placing them also in different strophes (2 and 3) and in different lines in their respective strophes (line 3 in strophe 2; line 1 in strophe 3). Second, Jeremias points out that Lohmeyer's structural scheme leaves all but strophes three and six dangling. The ends of strophes do not correspond to periods.

Using the inner parallelisms as the key to his scheme, Jeremias offers a suggested structure of three strophes with four lines each, each of which is a complete thought.⁸

- (1) $\text{Ὁ}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \mu\omicron\rho\phi\eta\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\ \upsilon\pi\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\omega\nu$
 $\omicron\upsilon\chi\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\pi\alpha\gamma\mu\acute{o}\nu\ \acute{\eta}\gamma\acute{\eta}\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron\ \tau\acute{o}\ \acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu\alpha\iota\ \acute{\iota}\sigma\alpha\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omega}$
 $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}\ \acute{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu$
 $\mu\omicron\rho\phi\eta\nu\ \delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\upsilon\ \lambda\alpha\beta\acute{\omega}\nu.$
- (2) $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \delta\omicron\mu\omicron\iota\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha\tau\iota\ \alpha\acute{\nu}\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omega\nu\ \gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$
 $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \sigma\chi\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\iota\ \epsilon\upsilon\rho\epsilon\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$
 $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\alpha\pi\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu$
 $\gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma\ \upsilon\pi\acute{\eta}\kappa\omicron\omicron\varsigma\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\chi\rho\iota\ \theta\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon.$
- (3) $\delta\iota\acute{\delta}\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \delta\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu\ \upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\upsilon}\psi\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu$
 $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\chi\alpha\rho\acute{\iota}\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\ \tau\acute{o}\ \delta\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\ \tau\acute{o}\ \upsilon\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\ \delta\nu\omicron\mu\alpha$
 $\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\acute{\omega}\ \delta\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\tau\iota\ \text{Ἰησοῦ}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\ \gamma\acute{o}\nu\nu\ \kappa\acute{\alpha}\mu\psi\eta$
 $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha\ \gamma\lambda\acute{\omega}\sigma\sigma\alpha\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\omicron\mu\omicron\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\eta}\sigma\eta\tau\alpha\iota\ \delta\tau\iota\ \kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \text{Ἰησοῦς}\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma.$

This structural scheme has found acceptance among a number of scholars because it does less violence to the crucial inner parallelisms of the hymn.⁹

The problem with this formal analysis, however, is that, in order to arrive at this result, Jeremias is forced to excise not only $\theta\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon$ (vs. 8), but also $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\upsilon\rho\alpha\nu\acute{\iota}\omega\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\iota\omega\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\chi\theta\omicron\nu\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$ (vs. 10) and $\acute{\epsilon}\iota\varsigma\ \delta\acute{\delta}\xi\alpha\nu\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\ \pi\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\varsigma}$ (vs. 11). The first excision is generally accepted as legitimate on the grounds that it disrupts the structure and contains the characteristically Pauline term $\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$. The

⁸ *Ibid.* In "Zu Phil. 2:7: 'Ἐαυτὸν Ἐκένωσεν,'" *NovT*, 6 (1963), pp. 186-87, Jeremias has reiterated his argument.

⁹ James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 50, who also in n. 3 indicates its acceptance by O. Michel and L. Cerfaux. Cerfaux (*op. cit.*, p. 426), however, does not accept the three excisions of Jeremias. He then has three strophes with four, five, and six lines. Cf. also L. D. Strecker, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

other two excisions, however, must be rejected.¹⁰ Both are non-Pauline expressions. If they are left in the hymn, however, Jeremias' third strophe is an impossibility.

The failure of both modern attempts to deal adequately with the form of this hymn raises the question anew.¹¹ Is it possible, beginning with Jeremias' correct observation that the hymn is built around various inner parallelisms in strophes, each of which forms a complete thought, to discern a structure that will avoid his excisions in vss. 9-11? It will be the purpose of the following paragraphs of this paper to show that such a formal analysis is possible.

A Proposal on the Form and Meaning of Phil 2 6-11

The place to begin our investigation of the form of Phil 2 6-11 is with the obvious parallelism between *ὑπερέψωσεν* and *ἐχαρίσατο* in vs. 9 which has been recognized by both Lohmeyer and Jeremias. If we build around this parallelism and require the strophe to be a complete thought, we come out with a three-line strophe, the third line of which is a short or half line. The boundaries of the strophe are marked out by the conjunction *διό* which joins the two halves of the hymn and the conjunction *ἵνα* which joins the two sections of the last half of the hymn.

καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερέψωσεν
καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα
τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα

The repetition of *καὶ* (lines 1 and 2), *αὐτόν-αὐτῷ* (lines 1 and 2), *ὑπέρ* (lines 1 and 3), and *ὄνομα* (lines 2 and 3) reinforces our conclusion drawn on the basis of parallelism and completeness of thought.

Next we may consider the clear parallelism between *γόνυ κάμψη* (vs. 10) and *γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται* (vs. 11). Again if we build around

¹⁰ Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 123, speaks of Jeremias' excisions as "a Procrustean procedure unlikely to commend itself to many."

¹¹ G. Strecker, "Redaktion und Tradition im Christushymnus, Phil. 2:6-11," *ZNW*, 55 (1964), pp. 63-78, offers a new structure for the hymn based upon the excision of vs. 8 as a Pauline addition. He then has two strophes, 6-7 and 9-11, each with six lines divided into couplets of twos. This proposal has been received favorably by A. Feuillet, "L'hymne christologique de l'Épître aux Philippiens (2:6-11)," *RB*, 72 (1965), p. 503. Strecker's proposal, however, raises more problems than it solves: (1) it breaks the parallelism between *γόνυ κάμψη* and *γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται*; (2) it breaks the unity of *οὐχ* and *ἀλλά* in vss. 6-7; (3) it destroys the parallelism between *ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν* and *ἐταπείνωσεν ἐαυτόν*; (4) his couplets are not complete thoughts, and only with difficulty can his first strophe be considered other than an awkward sentence. Linguistic argument in such a matter can only be one strand of evidence. It cannot stand alone apart from formal considerations.

this parallelism and require the strophe to be a complete thought, we come out with a three-line strophe, this time with a short or half line beginning it.

ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ

πάν γόνυ κάμψη ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων

καὶ πάντα γλώσσα ἐξομολογήσεται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.

Note that κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός is needed in the third line to complete its thought just as ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων is needed in line 2 to complete its thought. The repetition of πάν and πάντα in lines 2 and 3 and the use of ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ in the first line and the actual name κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός in line 3 confirm our conclusions drawn on other grounds. It is also interesting to note that the short line is placed first in this strophe for two reasons. First, by placing it first it is possible to have the strophe end with a concluding liturgical phrase: εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς (vs. 11).¹² Second, it allows the two strophes to be related to one another in terms of form and key words by a type of chiasmus (aa bb cc). Not only are the two short lines placed next to one another but also they are linked by the repetition of the term ὄνομα. This means that the hymn's individual strophes are not only built around parallelism but also that the strophes are related to one another by the same type of literary device.

Having seen how vss. 9-11 are constructed around inner parallelisms, we may now turn our attention to vss. 6-8. Let us begin our investigation of this part of the hymn with the parallelism between ὁμοιώματι (vs. 7) and σχήματι (vs. 7). If again we build around this parallelism and require that the strophe be a complete thought, we find another three-line strophe with a short line as the last.

ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος

καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν

γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου.

Whereas the inner parallelisms of the last two strophes were synonymous parallelism, here we find a stairlike parallelism. Line 2 repeats line 1 and then carries it a step further. Here again we find key words tying the strophe together. Here they are ἄνθρωπος and γενόμενος. This again confirms our conclusions reached on other grounds.

¹² Cf. T. H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, p. 173 (bottom); Pr of Man 15c; Eph 1 6a, 12b, 14b. See also the remarks of D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, pp. 196 ff., and C. F. Kraft, "Some Further Observations Concerning the Strophic Structure of Hebrew Poetry," in *A Stubborn Faith*, ed. E. C. Hobbs, p. 65.

The apparent difficulty over the length of the second line is not prohibitive because (1) such formulae sometimes do have long lines followed by short lines (I Cor 15 3-5);¹³ (2) the last strophe in the hymn has one line that is as long and one that is longer than that of strophe two; (3) the other two structural schemes do not have lines of equal length; (4) if all the strophes are to have an equal number of lines, then the strophe built around the parallelism *ὑπερίψωσεν* and *ἐχαρίσατο* can be made into no more than a three-line strophe.

Our analysis to this point leaves us with another strophe built around the antithetical parallelism *μορφῇ θεοῦ* and *μορφὴν δούλου*¹⁴ which falls naturally into three lines, the last of which is a short line.

ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων

οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ ἀλλὰ ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν

μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν.

Again the repetition of the key terms, this time *μορφή* and *θεός*, reinforces our conclusion. The contrast *οὐχ-ἀλλά* guarantees that line 2 is one unit.¹⁵

The result of this analysis of the formal structure of the hymn made upon the basis of the criteria of respect for the inner parallelisms of the passage and having strophes that are complete thoughts, and reinforced by the repetition of key terms, looks like this:¹⁶

¹³ Eduard Schweizer, "Two New Testament Creeds Compared: I Cor. 15:3-5 and I Tim. 3:16," in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation*, ed. W. Klassen and G. Snyder, pp. 166-77. Also, if the evidence of Hans Kosmala, "Form and Structure in Ancient Hebrew Poetry," *VetT*, 16 (1966), pp. 152-80, be accepted, then in both Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry the length of lines varies both within strophes and from strophe to strophe within the same poem. A similar point is made about early Christian hymns by E. Haenchen, "Probleme des johanneischen Prologs," *ZTK*, 60 (1963), p. 309.

¹⁴ That the parallelism is antithetic is indicated by the contrasts between *ὑπάρχων* and *λαβὼν*, *θεοῦ* and *δούλου*, *οὐχ* and *ἀλλά*. In spite of the common *μορφῇ*, then, the two parts of the strophe are antithetical in an ab ba pattern. This antithetical parallelism, however, does not settle the meaning of *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων* and *μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν*. At least two possibilities exist. (1) *μορφῇ θεοῦ* may refer to pre-existence and *μορφὴν δούλου* to incarnation. (2) *μορφῇ θεοῦ* may refer to the image of God (i. e., like Adam, possessing the rôle of ruler over creation) and *μορφὴν δούλου* to the likeness of a servant (i. e., like the servant, accepting the rôle of submission to God the Creator). Neither the language itself nor the inner structure of this strophe, nor the two taken together, can decide between the two possibilities. This must be decided by the relation of this strophe to the rest of the hymn, especially strophe 2. See below for a discussion of this relation.

¹⁵ Cf. Rom 12 19a; 12 31; Col 3 22b; I Thess 5 15.

¹⁶ With the majority of scholars we regard the phrase "even death on a cross" as a Pauline addition.

- (1) Ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων
οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν
ἐκένωσεν
μορφὴν δούλου λαβών.
- (2) ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος
καὶ σχήματι εὖρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν
γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου.
- (3) διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν
καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα
τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα
- (4) ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ
πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων
καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσῃται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς
εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

A reader of the hymn would be given his clue to understand its structure by the immediate contrast between *μορφῇ θεοῦ* and *μορφὴν δούλου* which tie the first strophe together and the subsequent *ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων* which echoes *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ*. Immediately the reader would sense that he was in the presence of parallelisms of one kind or another. This would furnish the key by which the hymn could be interpreted.

One aspect of our analysis of the formal structure of the hymn remains incomplete. Earlier we showed that not only were the individual strophes of the hymn built around various parallelisms but also the last two strophes were related to one another in the same way, that is, by inverted parallelism or chiasmus. This raises the question about the relation between the first two strophes. Read in terms of the hymn set forth here, the parallelism between the first two strophes leaps out at the reader. The first lines of each strophe begin with the same preposition (*ἐν*). The objects of the prepositions are terms that could be read as synonyms.¹⁷ The verbal forms of the first lines are both participles and could also be taken as synonyms.¹⁸ The ends of the second lines are also parallel. Not only are the phrases located at the same place in each strophe but also the meanings of the two phrases are very close. Both convey the idea of subordination. Each phrase, moreover, is followed by a third line which further explains the meaning of the phrase

¹⁷ In the LXX *μορφῇ* and *ὁμοίωμα* can both translate the Hebrew *תְּמוּנָה* (cf. Job 4 16; Deut 4 12). Also, where the LXX has *ὁμοίωμα* in Deut 4 12, Symmachus has *μορφὴν* (Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 91, n. 5).

¹⁸ The verb *ὑπάρχω* can be used in hellenistic Greek as a synonym for *εἰμί* (Arndt and Gingrich, *Lexicon*, p. 845); also, *γίνομαι* may be used as a substitute for the forms of *εἰμί* (*Lexicon*, p. 159).

at the end of the second line.¹⁹ It would seem, then, that strophes 1 and 2 are related to one another by means of a simple formal parallelism just as the last two strophes are related in a chiasitic way. That these first two strophes are related formally in this way raises the question of how they are related in terms of their meaning. In order to determine this, two lines of argument must be considered.

In the first place, the simple parallelism which we have seen between the first two strophes is a parallelism between the two first lines (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων and ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος), between the ends of the second lines (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν and ἐταπείνωσεν ἐαυτόν) and the short third lines (μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν and γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου). Such a parallelism is significant because it breaks any close link between ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν and ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος. In terms of the proposed structure, such a link is absolutely impossible. The phrase ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος is parallel to ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων. It is not an explanation of ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν. That the parallelism between the first two strophes breaks the link between μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν and ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος is significant because it has been this link that has formed the *crucial point* in any argument for the pre-existence of Christ in this hymn.²⁰ Without this link, all *necessity* to interpret the passage in mythological terms is abolished.²¹

In the second place, in the last half of the hymn (vss. 9–11), the reader is given explicit guidance regarding the relation of the third and the fourth strophes. The conjunction ἵνα indicates that the hymn intends its readers to understand the exaltation as having the purpose of every knee bowing and every tongue confessing. A conjunction διὸ is also present to indicate the relationship between the two halves of the hymn. With regard to the first two strophes, however, there is no conjunction to indicate their intended relationship. Since the hymn

¹⁹ M. R. Vincent, *Philippians and to Philemon*, ICC, pp. 59–60; F. W. Beare, *op. cit.*, pp. 82, 84.

²⁰ Cf. the remarks of J. B. Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 132, and those of J. H. Michael, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, pp. 83–84. The argument for pre-existence certainly cannot be based upon the language since this is ambiguous and may be taken in different ways. The clue as to how the language should be understood is furnished by the structure of the hymn. After this article was finished, I was pleased to find this very point made by Lewis S. Mudge, "The Servant Christology in the New Testament," Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 1961, pp. 301 ff.

²¹ L. D. Strecker, *op. cit.*, p. 57, observes that Lohmeyer's arrangement of the hymn leads the interpreter to see a reference to pre-existence, but Jeremias' arrangement removes the need for a mythological interpretation entirely. Taking Jeremias' strophes individually, this is true. When they are taken together in sequence they may be read in terms of pre-existence, though with difficulty.

does supply assistance to the reader in the form of conjunctions in the two other instances where such assistance would be required, the absence of such a term between strophes 1 and 2 must surely be meaningful. The relation between the first two strophes must be regarded by the hymn writer as sufficiently indicated by the formal parallelism between them. The most natural way for a reader to take this formal parallelism between the first two strophes, moreover, would be to regard them as parallel statements about the same reality.

That the most natural way of reading the first two strophes would at the same time be a real possibility in the NT period is seen from a comparison with other units of tradition found in the epistles which are organized around such a formal parallelism. Rom 4 25 is a good example. The balanced couplet reads:

ὅς παρεδόθη διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν
καὶ ἡγέρθη διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν.

The parallel structure is a clue to its meaning. The fragment does not intend to split apart the saving effects of Jesus' death and resurrection. Rather the two lines of the couplet are to be regarded as virtually synonymous.²²

In such units of tradition when the meanings of the parallel lines are not synonymous, usually the language is clear and explicit so that the contrasting meanings are apparent to the reader (e. g., Rom 1 3-4; Col 1 15-20). In Phil 2 6-11, however, the language does not clearly and explicitly reveal a contrast in the meanings of strophes 1 and 2. Indeed, the very similarity of language in these two strophes inclines the reader to take them as parallel not only in form but also in meaning.

An examination of the language of the first two strophes in Phil 2 6-8 in light of our initial impression that the two strophes are parallel statements about the same reality must now be made. Since the short third lines of the first two strophes are explanations of the statements at the ends of the second lines, the crucial phrases are the first lines and those at the ends of the second lines. We may begin with an examination of the language in the first two lines.

The first line of the second strophe reads: ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος. How should this language be understood? It has been noted that wherever Christ is designated ἄνθρωπος in Paul's letters (Rom 5 12 ff.; I Cor 15 20-49; Phil 2 7b-8), a contrast with Adam is intended.²³ It is certainly the case in Rom 5 and I Cor 15. Phil 2 6-11,

²² C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 100; cf. also Rom 3 25-26; II Tim 2 11b-12a.

²³ Beare, *op. cit.*, p. 84; Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 236, n. 19. Both men are ultimately indebted to L. Bouyer, *RSR*, 39 (1951-2), pp. 281-88.

however, is a non-Pauline hymn. Should it be interpreted in the same way as Rom 5 and I Cor 15? Two observations about Rom 5 12 π . incline us to view $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ used of Jesus in Phil 2 as another indication of the Adam/Christ typology. First, in Romans Paul is writing to a church which is independent of his influence. Throughout Romans the apostle takes pains to speak in terms of tradition which they have in common (1 3-4; 4 25; 6 3 π .; 8 28-30, for example). In 5 12 π . there is no indication that the Adam/Christ parallel was new to the Romans. Also, Mark 1 13 shows that the church at Rome knew such a typology.²⁴ Since the Gospel of Mark is not a Pauline document, this Adam/Christ typology must have been wider than the Pauline circle. Indeed, in hellenistic churches which used the LXX, such a reference to Jesus as second Adam would naturally have been made with the term $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$. Second, Rom 5 19 may possibly contain an echo of Isa 53 11 from the Hebrew text.²⁵ This would point to the traditional character of the reference since Paul used the LXX. Since 5 19 is a unit, the reference to Isaiah which is traditional would have been made in the context of a contrast between the one man Adam and the one man Christ. In this case, the use of $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ in an Adam/Christ typology is clearly pre-Pauline. In the light of these two considerations, it seems entirely legitimate to see here in Phil 2 7b-8 the contrast between Adam and Christ indicated by the use of $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ for Christ.

Note, however, that the phrase does *not* say that Christ, like Adam, was in God's image. Rather it says that Christ was $\acute{\epsilon}\nu \delta\omicron\mu\omicron\iota\omega\mu\alpha\tau\iota \alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omega\nu$. This can be understood in terms of the Adam/Christ parallel, however, if we reflect upon Gen 5 1-3. In vs. 1b the passage speaks of God's creation of Adam in his own image. In the Hebrew Bible the context makes it clear that Adam (man) is plural (men or mankind). In the LXX the Hebrew is understood in this sense, as vs. 2 shows: $\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\epsilon\nu \kappa\alpha\iota \theta\eta\lambda\upsilon \acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\iota\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, $\kappa\alpha\iota \epsilon\upsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$. $\kappa\alpha\iota \acute{\epsilon}\pi\omega\nu\delta\omicron\mu\alpha\sigma\epsilon\nu \tau\omicron \delta\nu\omicron\mu\alpha \alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\nu$ 'Αδάμ, $\eta \eta\mu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha \acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\iota\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$.²⁶ Then the passage says that Adam had a son, Seth, who was "in his own likeness" (בְּצִמְיֻתוֹ), "after his image" (בְּצִמְיֻתוֹ). Thus, the passage tells of one who is a son of Adam (plural) and is in his likeness. Though the LXX of Gen 5 1b translates בְּצִמְיֻתוֹ by $\kappa\alpha\tau' \epsilon\iota\kappa\omicron\nu\alpha$ and 5 3 translates בְּצִמְיֻתוֹ by $\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha} \tau\eta\nu \epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon\alpha\nu \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$,²⁷ that $\acute{\epsilon}\nu \delta\omicron\mu\omicron\iota\omega\mu\alpha\tau\iota \alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omega\nu$ is a perfectly legitimate translation of בְּצִמְיֻתוֹ in Gen 5 3 may be seen from passages like II Kings 16 10 where the LXX renders בְּצִמְיֻתוֹ by $\tau\omicron \delta\omicron\mu\omicron\iota\omega\mu\alpha$ and II Chron 4 3 where בְּצִמְיֻתוֹ is rendered by $\kappa\alpha\iota$

²⁴ J. Jeremias, "Αδάμ," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 1, p. 141; C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit in the Gospel Tradition*, p. 50.

²⁵ W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias, *The Servant of God*, p. 89, n. 399.

²⁶ All references to the LXX come from H. B. Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*.

²⁷ The LXX translates בְּצִמְיֻתוֹ by $\kappa\alpha\theta' \delta\omicron\mu\omicron\iota\omega\sigma\iota\nu$ in Gen 1 26

ὁμοίωμα.²⁸ It seems probable, therefore, that the phrase ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος is a part of the Adam/Christ typology and is intended to speak of Christ as son of Adam.

The first line of the first strophe reads: ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων. Since the phrase is formally parallel to ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος, the most natural reading of the phrase would be to take it also, if possible, as a part of the Adam/Christ typology. Is such a reading of the phrase possible? Three strands of evidence indicate that it is. (1) μορφή in the LXX is virtually a synonym for ὁμοίωμα since the LXX translators use them both to translate תִּבְנִית, תִּבְנִיָּה, and תְּמוּנָה.²⁹ Also, where the LXX has ὁμοίωμα in Deut 4 12, Symmachus has μορφήν.³⁰ (2) καὶ ἡ μορφή is used in Dan 3 19 to translate the Aramaic מְלִצָּה while elsewhere ὁμοίωμα is used to translate the Hebrew מִצָּלָה.³¹ (3) The Peshitta renders μορφή by "demoutha."³² Moreover, the connection of μορφή θεοῦ with the expression οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, which almost certainly echoes Gen 3 4,³³ indicates that an Adam/Christ parallel is intended. It seems probable, therefore, that the phrase ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων is also part of the Adam/Christ typology and is intended to speak of Christ as the second Adam who has reversed the decision of the first Adam.

The first lines of strophes 1 and 2 are both to be interpreted in terms of an Adam/Christ contrast. The two lines say that Christ is both the second Adam and son of Adam. The LXX of Gen 5 1-3 certainly seems to have understood the creation of Adam in God's image as parallel to the birth of Seth in Adam's image. Witness the structure:

ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν Ἀδὰμ κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ . . .
 ἐπωνόμασεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῶν Ἀδὰμ . . .
 (Ἀδὰμ) ἐγέννησεν κατὰ τὴν εἰδέαν αὐτοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα
 αὐτοῦ . . .
 ἐπωνόμασεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Σήθ.

Moreover, early Christianity knew traditions which regarded Jesus as second Adam (Rom 5 12 ff.; Mark 1 13; Luke 4 1 ff.)³⁴ and traditions

²⁸ See also Isa 40 18; Ezek 1 5, 26; 2 1 (LXX). According to Hatch and Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint*, II, p. 993, Aquila uses ὁμοίωμα in Gen 5 1.

²⁹ μορφή renders תִּבְנִית in Judg 8 18 (A); תִּבְנִיָּה in Isa 44 13; תְּמוּנָה in Job 4 16. ὁμοίωμα renders תִּבְנִית in Judg 8 18 (B); תִּבְנִיָּה in Deut 4 17, 18; תְּמוּנָה in Deut 4 12, 15, 16.

³⁰ See n. 17.

³¹ I Sam 6 5.

³² Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 43, n. 1.

³³ Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 123; Cullmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 177 f. In the LXX ἴσος stands for π (e. g., Job 5 14; 10 10). Though the LXX of Gen 3 5 reads ὡς θεοί, the Hebrew text reads כְּאֱלֹהִים for the temptation of Eve and Adam in the garden.

³⁴ A. Feuillet, "Le récit Lucanien de la Tentation (Lc. 4:1-13)," *Biblica*, 40 (1959), pp. 617-31; J. Hastings, "Notes on Recent Exposition," *ExpT*, 14 (1902-3), pp. 389-91.

which regarded Jesus as son of Adam (Luke 3 23 ff.). That the two different views are found side by side in Luke indicates that the early Christians saw no conflict between them. It would seem, therefore, that there can be little doubt that the first two lines are paralleled in meaning as they are in form. But what of the ends of the second lines? Can the same be said for them?

The end of the second line of the first strophe reads: *ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν*. This phrase, attested nowhere else in Greek, is grammatically harsh.³⁵ It is explicable, however, if understood as an exact rendering of the Hebrew "poured out his nephesh" (נִפְשׁוֹ . . . הִנָּחֵן) in Isa 53 12.³⁶ If so, then the phrase refers to the servant's surrender of life. It is significant that this phrase (*ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν*) is explained by the short third line, *μορφὴν δούλου λαβών*. Since *δοῦλος* and *παῖς* are both used in the LXX to render the נֶפֶשׁ of Deutero-Isaiah,³⁷ since *δουλεύειν* is found in the LXX at Isa 53 11, and since Aquila reads *ὁ δοῦλος* instead of *ὁ παῖς* at Isa 52 13,³⁸ *δοῦλος* is fitting in this explanatory phrase.³⁹ That the early church elsewhere in the sources available to us used *παῖς* and *υἱός* is not, therefore, decisive. The phrase "he emptied himself" is, thus, most probably a reference to Jesus as the servant who surrendered his life to God.

Strophe 2 has a second line which ends: *ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν*. Since this phrase is formally parallel to *ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν* of strophe 1, the most natural way to read the phrase would be to see in it also a reference to the servant's surrender of life. Is such a reading of the phrase possible? Several facts show that it is. In the LXX *ταπεινώω* is used for נִיָּץ. In the niphal נִיָּץ can mean "humble oneself."⁴⁰ It is the niphal participle of נִיָּץ, moreover, which is used in Isa 53 7 with just such a meaning. "He was oppressed, yet he humbled himself."⁴¹ This is the meaning of the Hebrew, though the LXX reads

³⁵ Jeremias, *Servant of God*, p. 97.

³⁶ L. S. Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ*, p. 168, n. 6; H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Cross of the Servant," in *The Cross in the Old Testament*, pp. 104-05; Jeremias, *Servant of God*, p. 97, n. 445; Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 123. In *NovT*, 6 (1963), pp. 182-84, Jeremias replies to his critics.

³⁷ *δοῦλος* in Isa 49 3, 5; *παῖς* in 42 1; 49 6; 50 10; 52 13.

³⁸ R. P. Martin, *An Early Christian Confession*, p. 26; Cerfaux, *op. cit.*, p. 427. Hatch and Redpath, *op. cit.*, I, p. 348, indicate that Symmachus also reads *δοῦλος* at 52 13. It is perhaps significant that Aquila reads *μορφή* in Isa 52 14 (Hatch and Redpath, II, p. 934).

³⁹ The only justification for the contention of Kaesemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 342 ff. (followed by Bornkamm, Beare, and Fuller), that *δοῦλος* is to be understood in the sense of becoming subject to the cosmic powers is his acceptance of Lohmeyer's structure. Once this structure is rejected, Kaesemann's interpretation of *δοῦλος* must be also.

⁴⁰ For example, Exod 10 3 (Brown-Driver-Briggs, *Lexicon*, p. 776).

⁴¹ J. Skinner, *Isaiah XL-LXVI*, p. 142. Only in this passage is there the meaning "he humbled himself."

differently. Again it refers to the surrender of the servant's life to God. These facts indicate that *ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν* can most certainly be read as parallel to *ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν* in meaning as well as in form. Also, *ταπεινῶ* is used in early Christianity of Jesus in connection with Isa 53 1-12 as an illustration of his attitude (I Clem 16 2, 17, a passage which is almost certainly independent of Phil 2).⁴² This makes it likely that *ἐταπείνωσεν*, just as *ἐκένωσεν*, is an echo of the servant of Second Isaiah. Both phrases, "he emptied himself" and "he humbled himself," are, therefore, to be read against the background of Isa 53. Both refer to the servant's surrender of life. In this regard, it is significant that the short third line of strophe 2 reads: *γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου*. The two phrases are, therefore, synonymous in meaning as they are parallel in structure.

It would seem that the formal parallelism between the first two strophes is the clue to their meaning. Indeed, any interpretation which takes them as other than parallel in meaning as well as form flies in the face of all the clues furnished the reader by the author of the hymn and takes the less probable for the more probable explanation of the language. Parallel structure points to parallel meanings. That the parallelism between the first two strophes is intended to point to a common meaning is significant because there is no question that strophe 2 speaks of the human existence of Jesus. This would mean that strophe 1 also would be a statement not about the pre-existence of Jesus but about his earthly life. Strophe 1 says that Jesus, unlike Adam, did not grasp for equality with God but rather surrendered his life to God. Strophe 2 says that Jesus as a son of Adam surrendered his life to God. Both are concerned with the decision of Jesus to be God's servant rather than to repeat the tragedy of Adam and his sons.

In conclusion, it may be said that the modern confidence in an interpretation of Phil 2 6-11 which sees there the pre-existence of Jesus followed by his incarnation and subsequent exaltation does not stand up under the test: a proper delineation of form leads to a correct interpretation of meaning. Analysis of the form of the hymn yields the conclusion that it means to speak only of the human existence of Jesus.

⁴² Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 94, n. 1.

Copyright and Use:

As an ATLAS user, you may print, download, or send articles for individual use according to fair use as defined by U.S. and international copyright law and as otherwise authorized under your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement.

No content may be copied or emailed to multiple sites or publicly posted without the copyright holder(s)' express written permission. Any use, decompiling, reproduction, or distribution of this journal in excess of fair use provisions may be a violation of copyright law.

This journal is made available to you through the ATLAS collection with permission from the copyright holder(s). The copyright holder for an entire issue of a journal typically is the journal owner, who also may own the copyright in each article. However, for certain articles, the author of the article may maintain the copyright in the article. Please contact the copyright holder(s) to request permission to use an article or specific work for any use not covered by the fair use provisions of the copyright laws or covered by your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement. For information regarding the copyright holder(s), please refer to the copyright information in the journal, if available, or contact ATLA to request contact information for the copyright holder(s).

About ATLAS:

The ATLA Serials (ATLAS®) collection contains electronic versions of previously published religion and theology journals reproduced with permission. The ATLAS collection is owned and managed by the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) and received initial funding from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The design and final form of this electronic document is the property of the American Theological Library Association.