

The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Hippolytus's *De Christo et Antichristo*: Overlooked Patristic Evidence in the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate

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The debate over the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ has been continuing for some time and shows no signs of abating, yet one conclusion has remained constant: the Church Fathers, generally, did not understand πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Pauline materials in the subjective sense as the 'faithfulness of Christ'. Furthermore, there has heretofore been no text that correlates Jesus' faithfulness with his death on the cross in patristic writings. In light of that, the aim of this study is (1) to offer a critique of recent work on πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Church Fathers, and (2) to break the longstanding silence by presenting overlooked evidence from Hippolytus's *De Christo et Antichristo* that unambiguously relates Jesus' faithfulness to his death on the cross.

Keywords: faithfulness of Christ, *pistis Christou*, Hippolytus, Church Fathers, Apostle Paul

I. Introduction

The πίστις Χριστοῦ debate has now become a well-known and even well-worn entity in NT scholarship. Modern discussion on this subject, following on from Richard Hays's monograph in 1983, has continued and shows no signs of abating.¹ Understandably the discussion has focused principally on the Pauline

¹ Richard Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2nd ed. 2002 [1983]).

materials as the key junctures for the scholarly traffic that has ensued (esp. Gal 2.16; 3.22; Rom 1.17; 3.22; Phil 3.9; Eph 3.12). There is, however, a broader array of texts outside of the Pauline corpus that are pertinent to the debate as well (e.g. Acts 3.16; Heb 12.2; Jas 2.1; Rev 1.5; 2.13; 3.14; 14.12).² As a natural development, scholars have also begun to examine materials from the Church Fathers with a view to illuminating the Pauline texts through their reception-history.³ In this excavation of patristic texts one piece of evidence that has so far been overlooked is the statement by Hippolytus in *Demonstratio de Christo et Antichristo* where he refers to the 'faith of Jesus Christ' (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν) demonstrated in the cross that protects believers from the sufferings of the anticipated apocalyptic tribulation. In light of this, the aim of this study is to expound the significance of the Hippolytus passage for the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. This will be achieved by: (1) describing current debates about Jesus' faithfulness in the Apostolic Fathers and Church Fathers; (2) analyzing Hippolytus's reference to the 'faith of Jesus Christ' in its immediate setting; and (3) identifying the significance of the text for NT studies.

II. Debates about Πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Apostolic Fathers and Church Fathers

The value of studies in *Wirkungsgeschichte* is that it shows the relevance of post-apostolic materials for shedding light on exegetical debates about the NT. Unless one posits a sharp and absolute divide between implied readers and subsequent real readers in the early centuries of the common era, the views of post-apostolic authors for understanding biblical texts is naturally of value for modern interpreters since they are closer in language, time, and conceptual framework to the biblical authors than ourselves.⁴ That is not to say that pre-critical patristic interpretation is necessarily superior to modern critical studies; however, to disregard the value of biblical interpretation in antiquity is to engage in a form of

2 For a fuller discussion of the wide array of issues in the debate, see Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle, eds., *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, forthcoming 2009).

3 Cf. R. A. Harrisville, 'ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: Witness of the Fathers', *NovT* 36 (1994) 233-41; I. G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions* (SNTSMS 84; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995); Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005) 23-41; Robert Matthew Calhoun, 'John Chrysostom on ΕΚ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ ΕΙΣ ΠΙΣΤΙΝ in Rom. 1:17: A Reply to Charles L. Quarles', *NovT* 48 (2006) 131-46; Mark Elliott, 'Πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Church Fathers and Beyond...', *The Faith of Jesus Christ* (ed. Bird and Sprinkle).

4 Cf. Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study* (STI; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006).

'exegetical amnesia'.⁵ Before examining Hippolytus's comment in *Demonstratio de Christo et Antichristo* it is necessary first to make some prefatory remarks about the state of scholarship with regards to evidence from the Church Fathers and its bearing upon the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate.

Two studies dealing with πίστις Χριστοῦ in the early church were released between 1994 and 1995, yet they drew diametrically opposed conclusions. The first to be published was a study by Roy A. Harrisville which dealt specifically with how the early Church Fathers understood the πίστις Χριστοῦ passages in the Pauline materials.⁶ Harrisville combed the early Church Fathers, searching for evidence of how they understood and articulated the πίστις Χριστοῦ constructions from Paul. While he located some ambiguous references, he found none that unequivocally referred to Jesus' own faithfulness. Moreover, he found that the Church Fathers regularly understood πίστις Χριστοῦ as referring to 'faith in Christ'.

One year later, Ian G. Wallis's monograph, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions*, was published. Wallis canvassed the earliest strands of Christian tradition, including the Church Fathers, for portrayals of Jesus as a man of faith. Unlike Harrisville, Wallis was not so much concerned with actual πίστις Χριστοῦ constructions as he was with finding general references to Jesus' faith or faithfulness in the early church. In contrast to Harrisville's study, Wallis argued that the early Christian traditions, both the NT and Church Fathers, presented Jesus over and over again as a man of intense faith.⁷

Though these studies are helpful, they are not without their problems. At times, Harrisville seems to overlook places where the πίστις Χριστοῦ construction may have taken on a more complex meaning in the eyes of the Church Fathers, especially in the case of Origen.⁸ Conversely, Wallis's investigation

5 Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, liii. See also Daniel J. Treier, 'The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis? Sic et Non', *TrinJ* NS 24 (2003) 77–103; John Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism* (London and New York: Westminster John Knox, 2007) 130–5.

6 Harrisville, 'ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ', 233–42.

7 For his discussion on the Church Fathers and other early Christian sources, see Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 175–200.

8 In his discussion on Origen's *Selecta in Psalmos* (PG 112.1233), in which he holds that Origen understands πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ only in an objective sense, Harrisville neglects to consider that Origen may have more in mind that just 'faith in Jesus Christ'. Commenting on Ps 17 (MT 18) v. 24, Origen quotes Matt 7.2 and relates them both with language reminiscent of Rom 3–4, "Repay your servant". It says the righteousness of faith of Jesus Christ, which has been disclosed to all who believe. [Δικαιοσύνην λέγει τὴν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἣτις πεφανερωται εἰς πάντα τοὺς πιστεύοντας]. For to those who rightly believe, faith is reckoned as righteousness [τοῖς γὰρ ὀρθως πιστεύουσιν ἡ πίστις εἰς δικαιοσύνην λογίζεται]. But whose πίστις is in view? Harrisville argues that Jesus' πίστις cannot be in view because Origen says that it refers to the plural, 'those who rightly believe'. However, he shows no consideration that both senses may be in view. It is possible to argue that Origen understands

lacks adequate attention on how the early Church Fathers actually understood the πίστις Χριστοῦ construction in the Pauline materials. In addition, though Wallis does treat the Apostolic Fathers to a limited extent, he does not discuss all the pertinent texts (e.g. Herm. *Mand.* 11.4) and merely notes others (e.g. Ign. *Magn.* 1.1; *Rom. Inscr.*; Herm. *Sim.* 6.3.6; 9.16.5), thus creating a significant lacuna in his study.

Harrisville and Wallis both neglect the evidence from the Apostolic Fathers,⁹ which is unfortunate because we have in the Apostolic Fathers an array of data that have a significant bearing on early Christian understandings of the salvific dynamics of the Christ-event generally and explications of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases more specifically. The Apostolic Fathers also provide a crucial nexus between the NT authors and the later Church Fathers and thus matter immensely in mapping the effect, continuity, and reception of the NT materials in the immediate post-apostolic period.¹⁰ In fact, there are at least eleven places in the Apostolic Fathers where πίστις is modified by a genitive that refers to Jesus Christ.¹¹ While each of these references are ambiguous as to their precise meaning, a case can be made that they refer not to 'faith in Christ,' but to 'the faithfulness of Christ'.¹² That is not to say that the concept of 'faith in Christ' is absent from the Apostolic Fathers, indeed it is ubiquitous, yet no genitive is used to denote the object of faith.¹³ Additionally, the faith of believers is also sourced in Jesus Christ. This is seen most clearly in Ign. *Phld.* 8.2, where Ignatius refers to Jesus' cross, death, and resurrection as well as the faith which comes through him (ὁ σταυρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ πίστις ἡ δι' αὐτοῦ).¹⁴

πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ to signify 'the faithfulness of Jesus Christ', which is reckoned as righteousness to 'those who rightly believe'. Whether this is the correct understanding of Origen here is beyond our current purposes; we merely wish to point out that it should have been considered as an option. See Harrisville, 'ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ', 238.

9 Unless otherwise noted, the Greek text for the Apostolic Fathers is taken from K. Bihlmeyer, ed., *Die Apostolischen Väter* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1970).

10 Cf. A. Gregory and C. Tuckett, eds., *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (New York: Oxford University, 2007).

11 Cf. Ign. *Eph.* 20.1; *Magn.* 1.1; *Rom. Inscr.*; *Barn.* 4.8; 16.9; Herm. *Vis.* 4.1.8; *Mand.* 11.4; *Sim.* 6.1.2; 6.3.6; 9.16.5.

12 The strongest case for a subjective genitive can be made in Ign. *Eph.* 20.1, where Ignatius refers to a future letter that he wishes to write with reference to '[Jesus Christ's] faithfulness, his love, his suffering and resurrection' (ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ πίστει καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ ἀγάπῃ, ἐν πάθει αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναστάσει) (cf. Ign. *Magn.* 1.1; *Rom. Inscr.*; *Barn.* 4.8; 16.9; Herm. *Sim.* 9.16.5).

13 Cf. e.g. 1 *Clem.* 1.22; Ign. *Eph.* 14.1; *Smyrn.* 6.1; *Phld.* 2.1; Herm. *Vis.* 4.2.6; *Mand.* 4.1.4; 4.3.3.

14 This unique construction (ἡ πίστις ἡ δι' αὐτοῦ) also shows up in Acts 3.16. Cf. Herm. *Vis.* 4.1.8; *Mand.* 11.4; *Sim.* 6.1.2; 6.3.6.

While there is nothing in the Apostolic Fathers that will end the debate over the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ, these writings do provide possible references to the faithfulness of Jesus Christ outside the NT; in addition, they portray faith as something that is enigmatically mediated through Jesus. There are also several texts that show that the subjective and objective senses for πίστις Χριστοῦ are not mutually exclusive.¹⁵ This phenomenon is not restricted to the Apostolic Fathers as it shows up in the larger corpora of the later Church Fathers as well. The best example of this is Origen, who understood the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation in this dual sense.

As Harrisville notes, Origen reads διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Rom 3.22 as an objective genitive.¹⁶ However, a careful reading of Origen reveals that he also leaves open the possibility of a subjective genitive reading.¹⁷ In what survives from fragment four of Book V in the Tura Papyrus, Origen comments on Rom 3.21–24, ‘and those believing in Jesus or those making room for faith, which Jesus Christ created for them in the Father’ (καὶ πιστεύοντάς γε Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ ἢ πίστιν χωροῦντας ἦν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς αὐτοῖς ἐνεποίησεν εἰς τὸν Πατέρα).¹⁸ Here Origen seems to hold both options in tension. On the one hand, ‘faith in Jesus Christ’ is clearly in view; yet there remains a sense in which Jesus created room for that faith in the Father in the first place. Later, concluding his discussion on Rom 3.25–26, Origen explicates what he meant by faith

15 Cf. Herm. Vis. 4.1.8; Mand. 11.4; Sim. 6.1.2; 6.3.6. In his recent volume, Karl Ulrichs draws a similar conclusion regarding the evidence in the NT: ‘Ebenso ist eine Rubrizierung von PX, die ein einziges Genitivverständnis favorisiert und damit andere ausschließt, ein unphilologisches Bemühen—und ein unpaulinisches: Paulus denkt womöglich gar nicht in den Rubriken der Grammatiker, sondern verwendet bewusst “a general (‘vague’) expression” (K. F. Ulrichs, *Christusglaube: Studien zum Syntagma πίστις Χριστοῦ und zum paulinischen Verständnis von Glaube und Rechtfertigung* [WUNT 2/227; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007] 22, quoting S. Moises, *God, Language and Scripture: Reading the Bible in the Light of General Linguistics* [Leicester: Apollos, 1991] 109). See similarly Francis Watson, ‘As we have seen, the christological qualification of Paul’s faith terminology is intended to refer neither to “the faithfulness of Christ” nor to “faith in Christ” but, more open-endedly, to the faith that pertains to God’s saving action in Christ—originating in it, participating in it, and oriented towards it’ (Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentile: Beyond the New Perspective* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007] 255; cf. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* [London: T&T Clark, 2004] 75–6).

16 Harrisville, ‘ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ’, 238.

17 Cf. Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, 24–5.

18 J. Scherer, *Le Commentaire D’Origène sur Rom. III. 5–V. 7, d’après les extraits du Papyrus no. 88748 du Musée du Caire et les fragments de la Philocalie et du Vaticanus Gr. 762. Essai de reconstitution du texte et de la pensée des tomes V et VI du ‘Commentaire sur l’Épître aux Romains’* (Cairo: Impr. de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1957) 154.

'which Jesus Christ created for them in the Father'. Here we let Origen speak for himself:¹⁹

'And justifying the one who is of faith', that is, the one who *believes* in Jesus and *through Jesus in God*, and it is not unusual in the least in anticipation of the 'justifying the one who is of the faith of Jesus', to say that, just as 'Abraham believed God and it was credited to him for righteousness', in the same way to those who *believe* in Jesus, or *in God through Jesus*, God will credit their faith for righteousness, so also will he justify the one who is of the faith of Jesus.

καὶ δικαιοῶν τὸν ἐκ πίστεως, τουτέστιν τὸν πιστεύοντα εἰς Ἰησοῦν καὶ διὰ Ἰησοῦ τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ οὐκ ἄ[το]πόν γε προλαβόντας εἰς τὸ «δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ» εἰπεῖν [ὅτι] ὡς περ Ἀβραάμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ Θεῷ καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην, οὕτως τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἢ εἰς τὸν Θεὸν διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ λογιζέται ὁ Θεὸς τὴν πίστιν εἰς δικαιοσύνην, καὶ οὕτω δικαιοῖ τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.

As can be seen above, Origen seems to understand διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Rom 3.22 primarily in terms of 'faith in Jesus Christ', but embedded in that understanding seems to be the notion that when the believer puts his or her faith in Jesus Christ, then he or she becomes a beneficiary of the faith that Jesus himself displayed toward God.²⁰ Though the content of Jesus' faith is not made explicit, its presence is nonetheless felt in the twice repeated language of believing in God through Jesus. Unfortunately, in his examination of this text, Harrisville only focuses on the fact that the 'believes in Jesus [εἰς Ἰησοῦν]' phraseology parallels the 'faith of Jesus [Ἰησοῦ]' construction.²¹ However, as we have shown, Origen does not seem to stop with an objective construal of διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Instead, he leaves open the connotation of Jesus' own faith in God.

What should we conclude with regard to this extant evidence for the use of πίστις Χριστοῦ in early Christian literature? First, though there is a paucity of evidence from the Apostolic Fathers, there are several passages that may well refer to the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. These texts suggest that the categories of 'subjective genitive' and 'objective genitive' are not mutually exclusive. Second, this line is developed in the later Church Fathers such as Origen. While he and others typically see πίστις Χριστοῦ as referring to 'faith in Christ', in his *Commentarii ad Romanos* he also leaves room for 'the faithfulness of Christ' in his discussion on Rom 3.22–26. Third, despite the evidence for the subjective genitive in the

19 The Greek text comes from Scherer (*Le Commentaire D'Origène sur Rom. III. 5–V. 7*, 162) and the English translation is our own.

20 It is interesting to note that Jesus' faith in God is compared with Abraham's faith in God (so also Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, 24).

21 Harrisville, 'ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ', 238.

Church Fathers, heretofore there has been no known text that correlates Jesus' faithfulness with his death on the cross. Herein lies the significance of Hippolytus.

III. Hippolytus and the Faithfulness of Christ

Hippolytus (ca. 170–236 CE) was a Greek-speaking Roman presbyter, a rival bishop in Rome, and martyr. He disagreed vehemently with the bishops Zephyrinus, Callistus, and Pontianus of Rome and was elected bishop of a schismatic community in Rome (Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 6.20). He was eventually exiled to Sardinia by the emperor Maximinus Thrax where he died, but his body was brought back to Rome by Bishop Fabian where he was buried. As a schismatic and a Greek author in Rome, his works suffered unfortunate neglect. Hippolytus's major works included *Apostolic Tradition*, *Commentary on Daniel*, *On Christ and Antichrist*, *Homily on the Heresy of Noetus*, *Benedictions of Isaac and Jacob*, and *Benedictions of Moses*. Yet his most influential literary achievement was his *Refutation of All Heresies* which roots all doctrinal aberrations of the faith in the schools of Greek philosophy. Hippolytus's writings are also of relevance for studies on messianism and millenarianism in the early church.²² Everett Ferguson says of him: 'Hippolytus resembled Irenaeus in theology, Origen in scholarship, and Tertullian in attitudes but was inferior to all three in originality and achievement.'²³

In *Demonstratio de Christo et Antichristo*, Hippolytus endeavours to present a synthesized account of the coming of the Antichrist from the Holy Scriptures, principally Daniel and the Apocalypse, and explains its effects upon the church prior to the second advent of Jesus Christ (*De Chr.* 20). This tract is written so that the designated reader, Theophilus, may maintain faith in what is written, anticipate the things to come, and so avoid offence to God and humanity alike (*De Chr.* 67). In the narration, the Antichrist is a Jewish ruler who mirrors the ministries of Jesus Christ in manifold ways and wages war against the church after subjugating north-east Africa and the Palestinian coastland (*De Chr.* 6, 52). When Hippolytus comes to the tribulation that is destined to fall upon the church by this adversary, he cites Rev 12.1–6 and interprets the image of the woman as signifying the church and the child as the 'perfect man-child of God' who is declared among the nations (*De Chr.* 60–61). The flight of the woman into the wilderness in Rev 12.6 is interpreted as designating the church that escapes persecution by fleeing from city to city and taking refuge in the wilderness and mountains. Hippolytus then relates the two wings of the great eagle given to the woman for the purpose of her escape in Rev

22 Cf. Andrew Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation: Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology* (WUNT 207; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2007) 423–34.

23 Everett Ferguson, 'Hippolytus', *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (ed. Everett Ferguson; New York and London: Garland, 2nd ed. 1998) 531.

12.14 as signifying the arms of Jesus Christ stretched out upon the cross. Here Hippolytus needs to be quoted in full:²⁴

'And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.' That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days (the half of the week) during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church, which flees from city to city, and seeks concealment in the wilderness among the mountains, possessed of no other defence than the two wings of the great eagle, that is to say, **the faith of Jesus Christ**, who, in stretching forth His holy hands on the holy tree, unfolded two wings, the right and the left, and called to Him all who believed upon Him, and covered them as a hen her chickens. For by the mouth of Malachi also He speaks thus: 'And unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.'

«καὶ ἐδόθησαν τῇ γυναικὶ αἱ δύο πτέρυγες τοῦ ἀετοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου, ἵνα πέτηται εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, ὅπου τρέφεται ἐκεῖ καιρὸν, καὶ καιροὺς, καὶ ἡμισυ καιροῦ ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ ὄφεως. » Αὐταὶ εἰσὶν αἱ χίλια διακόσια ἐξήχοντα, τὸ ἡμισυ τῆς ἐβδομάδος, ὡς κρατήσῃ τύραννος, διώκων τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν φεύγουσαν ἀπὸ πόλεως εἰς πόλιν, καὶ ἐν ἐρημίᾳ κρυπτομένην ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν, ἔχουσαν μεθ' αὐτῆς οὐδὲν ἕτερον, εἰ μὴ τὰς δύο πτέρυγας τοῦ ἀετοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου, τουτέστιν, **Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν**, ὅς ἐκτείνας τὰς ἁγίας χεῖρας ἐν ἀγίῳ ξύλῳ, ἠπλώσε δύο πτέρυγας, δεξιὰν καὶ εὐώνυμον, προσκαλούμενος πάντας τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας, καὶ σκεπάζων ὡς ὄρνις νεοσσούς. Καὶ γὰρ διὰ Μαλαχίου φησί: «Καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά μου ἀνατελεῖ Ἥλιος δικαιοσύνης, καὶ ἴασις ἐν ταῖς πτέρυξιν αὐτοῦ.»

« Et datæ sunt mulieri duæ alæ aquilæ magnæ, ut volaret in desertum, ubi alitur per tempus et tempora et dimidium temporis, a facie sarpentis. » Hi sunt dies mille ducenti sexaginta (dimidium scilicet hebdomadæ) quibus tyrannus rerum potietur, persequens Ecclesiam fugientem de civitate in civitatem, et in solitudine in montibus latitantem, nullo alio tutam præsidio, quam duarum alarum aquilæ magnæ; **fidei scilicet Jesu Christi**, qui, extensis in sancta cruce sanctis manibus suis, duas extendit alas, dexteram atque sinistram, vocans ad se omnes fideles, ac velut gallina eos protegens. Nam et ait per Malachiam: « Vobis qui timetis nomen meum, orietur Sol justitiæ; et sanitas in pennis ejus. »

What is striking is that in this text from Hippolytus we have a subjective genitive construction, viz., Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν, denoting Jesus' faithfulness, and this is directly related to Jesus' death on the cross. This seems certain given: (1) the relative pronoun ὅς relates back to Jesus Christ as the subject of what follows; (2) the wings are the hands of Jesus Christ spread out on the cross as the means by which this faithfulness is formally displayed; (3) in a christocentric interpretation of Mal

24 Translations and text are from ANF 5.217 and PG 10.781.

4.2 Jesus emerges as the one with ‘healing in his wings’;²⁵ and (4) this ‘faith of Jesus Christ’ is distinguished from a subsequent act of faith by those called to believe in him (πάντας τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας). In fact, the faithfulness of Christ and faith in Christ are both necessary components in the redemptive story assumed by Hippolytus. It thus appears that we have here the clearest reference in the corpus of patristic writings to the saving significance of Jesus’ faithfulness as displayed on the cross.

While Hippolytus derives his remarks about Jesus’ faithfulness in death from Revelation, we can credibly correlate his thoughts with what Paul says about Jesus’ death as an act of obedience. When Paul refers to the ἐνὸς δικαιοῦματος and ὑπακοὴ τοῦ ἐνὸς (Rom 5.18–19) it is most likely that he has in mind Jesus’ voluntary death as the fulfillment of the law (Rom 3.21; 8.4) and the enactment of the role of the Isaianic Servant who is obedient and justifies many (Isa 53.11–12). That naturally contrasts with Adam’s breach of the divine commandment and so establishes Jesus’ position as the new Adam through his vicarious obedience.²⁶ If we read Paul’s remarks in Gal 2.20²⁷ that Christ is τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἔμοῦ in light of Gal 1.4, 3.13 and 4.4–5, then, the participles can be coordinated with Christ’s willingness to provide redemption by going to the cross as part of God’s plan of apocalyptic deliverance. In which case, the self-giving love of Jesus Christ in Gal 2.20 expresses the fidelity and obedience of God’s son to the task of redemptive suffering on the cross. In Phil 2.5–11, Jesus’ obedience unto death, understood as his willingness to experience utter humiliation on the cross, is the focal point of the hymn as it marks the paradigmatic model for godly service and humility (Phil 2.8). It could be objected that ὑπακοή and πίστις are not strictly synonymous. Nonetheless, Paul can intimately associate the two together as per the ὑπακοὴ πίστεως that brackets Romans (Rom 1.5; 16.26; cf. 1.8; 15.18; 16.19). Rudolf Bultmann could even speak of ‘faith primarily as obedience’ as the first point in his exposition of Paul and faith.²⁸ Finally, we should note the comment of Richard Longenecker that ‘Christ’s obedient, faithful sonship undergirds a great many of

25 Cf. recently Dale C. Allison, ‘Healing in the Wings of His Garment: the Synoptics and Malachi 4:2’, *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honour of Richard B. Hays* (ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008) 138–9.

26 Cf. e.g. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas, TX: Word, 1988) 284–5; N. T. Wright, ‘Romans’, *NIB* (ed. Leander E. Keck; 10 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2002) 10.528–9; Charles H. Talbert, *Romans* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002) 153–4; J. R. Daniel Kirk, ‘The Sufficiency of the Cross (I): The Crucifixion as Jesus’ Act of Obedience’, *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 24 (2006) 36–64.

27 On the referent of πίστις, see the discussion in Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 153–5.

28 Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. K. Grobel; 2 vols.; London: SCM, 1952) 1.314–15.

the crucial discussions of the NT writers, for it informs matters that are not only christological in nature but also soteriological, ecclesiological, eschatological, ethical, and sacramental'.²⁹ In sum, Hippolytus's exposition of Jesus' faithfulness in death from Revelation is conceptually paralleled by Paul's articulation of Jesus' death as an act of obedience.

IV. Implications

What is the significance of this text from Hippolytus? Evidently Hippolytus was reading Revelation with an understanding of Jesus' 'faithfulness' as demonstrated definitively in his death on the cross as salvific (in line with Rev 1.5; 5.6–12; 14.12) and indelibly part of the eschatological scenario of tribulation and deliverance that was to fall upon the church prior to the *parousia*.³⁰ Moreover, while the cross of Jesus Christ is clearly a saving event for Hippolytus, it is not in the sense of providing atonement for sins at this point.³¹ Rather, the cross is part of an apocalyptic narrative whereby Jesus' death protects and preserves believers from the messianic woes that are to come upon the church and he is the source of healing for his followers (cf. Matt 23.27/Luke 13.34; Col 1.24; 1 Pet 2.24).³² Jesus' faithfulness in death is portrayed as a *shield* that preserves believers from the diabolical designs of the Antichrist as opposed to a *sacrifice* that turns away divine disfavour. Finally, we also caution against an uncritical and too hasty importation of this instance of a subjective genitive of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν into interpretation of Pauline texts simply because

29 Richard N. Longenecker, 'The Foundational Conviction of New Testament Christology: The Obedience/Faithfulness/Sonship of Christ', *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology* (ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994) 488.

30 Cf. Sigve K. Tonstad, *Saving God's Reputation: The Theological Function of Pīstis Iesou in the Cosmic Narratives of Revelation* (London: T&T Clark, 2006); David A. deSilva, 'On the Sidelines of the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: The View from Revelation', *The Faith of Jesus Christ* (ed. Bird and Sprinkle).

31 Elsewhere Hippolytus refers to Jesus as the one from 'whose side also flowed two streams of blood and water, in which the nations are washed and purified' (*De Chr.* 11). He also refers to the cross as a 'trophy' which the church carries about with her as a symbol of Christ's triumph over death (*De Chr.* 59). Hippolytus rehearses the Baptist's testimony from John 1.29 that Jesus is the 'Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world' (*De Chr.* 45). Finally, Hippolytus alludes to 1 Pet 3.19 where he states that Jesus was 'reckoned among the dead... by death overcoming death' and he descended to Hades in order to 'ransom the souls of the saints from the hand of death' (*De Chr.* 26, 45).

32 See further, Brant Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile: Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement* (WUNT 2/204; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2005); Scot McKnight, *Jesus and his Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory* (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2005).

Hippolytus's remark emerges from the framework of Revelation and not from an exegesis of Galatians and Romans; what is more, there still remains a tacit historical and theological distance between Hippolytus and the NT authors that must be countenanced. That qualification aside, we think that this text sheds new light on the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate from the vantage point of patristic literature as Hippolytus provides a clear instance of Jesus' faithfulness being related to his saving work on the cross. Further, this dramatic portrayal corroborates passages where Paul associates Jesus' death with his obedience and fidelity to his calling.