

## Ancient Messiah Discourse and Paul's Expression ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα in Galatians 3.19

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In Gal 3.16 Paul asserts that Abraham's seed is the messiah. While some have suggested that the rationale for this assertion is Paul's identification of Abraham's seed with David's seed, few have identified evidence for this rationale in the immediate context of Galatians 3, and none have genuinely argued for it. Noting that the reappropriation of scriptural idioms is a common feature of ancient messiah discourse, I demonstrate that Gal 3.19 entails a reappropriation of the wording of Gen 49.10, an oracle often interpreted as Davidic-messianic, and thereby I elucidate the scriptural reasoning undergirding Gal 3.16.

**Keywords:** messianism, messianic exegesis, early biblical interpretation, intertextuality, Paul, Pauline theology, Christology, seed of Abraham

### Introduction

In Galatians Paul does not explicitly articulate the logic by which he interprets σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ as χριστός (Gal 3.16), an interpretation that has drawn much attention and been variously assessed.<sup>1</sup> There is evidence elsewhere in

<sup>1</sup> On the pessimistic end of the spectrum, see H. St. J. Thackeray, *The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1900) 69–71 (Paul's interpretation is 'extremely fanciful and sophistical'); H. J. Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (London: Lutterworth, 1961) 181 (Paul's interpretation is 'in contradiction' to scripture); and H. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (WUNT 29; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983) 73 (Paul interprets 'against ... original intention'). Among those who wish to exonerate Paul, see J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Macmillan, 1914) 142 ('grammatical accuracy' is beside the point); E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957) 71–3 (Paul is neither 'ignorant' nor a 'charlatan'); R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (Biblical Resource Series; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2002<sup>2</sup>) 180 (Paul's reading is 'internally consistent and compelling'); and N. T. Wright, 'Messiahship in Galatians? (2012)', *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul 1978–2013* (London: SPCK, 2013) 510–46, at 531 (who bats away 'the regular scholarly sneering at Paul's apparently bizarre exegetical habits'). Better is the more nuanced description offered by F. B. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*

Jewish literature and in Paul's own writings which suggests that this interpretation arises in part from an amalgamation of traditions concerning the seed of Abraham and the seed of David – what may fairly be called a 'messianic' interpretation of the promises to Abraham since the members of the Davidic dynasty were the anointed sovereigns of Israel (cf. Ps 2.2).<sup>2</sup> However, there is also evidence nearby in Gal 3.19 that the identification of the seed of Abraham with the anointed seed of David is part of the substructure of Paul's thought – namely, that Paul there alludes to Gen 49.10, a commonly adduced text in ancient Davidic-messiah speculation. What follows, then, proceeds in two parts. First, I will delineate the nature of ancient messiah speculation as interpretative discourse, including the characteristic borrowing of scriptural idioms by authors of messiah texts. Second, I will argue that the expression ἄχρισ οὐ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα in Gal 3.19 is a paraphrase of LXX Gen 49.10 and thus a specimen of such borrowed scriptural idioms.

### 1. Ancient Messiah Discourse and Borrowed Scriptural Idioms

The central role of scriptural interpretation in literary production, and especially in ancient messiah speculation, epitomises a common cultural ground between what are sometimes anachronistically regarded as two discrete religious communities – early Jews and Christians. Recovering a clear sense that all ancient messiah texts entail what Matthew Novenson calls 'creative reappropriations of an archaic scriptural idiom' enables a reassessment of ancient messiah discourse that avoids distortions arising from the analysis of purportedly competing messianic ideologies.<sup>3</sup> Such distortions include the conclusions that Paul has developed an ideology superior to Jewish messianic conceptions or that he has altogether abandoned the category of messiahship.<sup>4</sup> Alternatively,

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(London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016<sup>2</sup>) 175–6 (who recognises in Paul's interpretation a 'conjunction between deduction and induction, scriptural exegesis and the Christian gospel').

2 Cf. the identification of the messiah as σπέρματος Δαβὶδ in Rom 1.3. On other relevant Jewish literature, see below.

3 M. V. Novenson, *The Grammar of Messianism: An Ancient Jewish Political Idiom and its Users* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 18.

4 See e.g. F. C. Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, vol. II (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003) 125–6; W. Wrede, *Paul* (London: Philip Green, 1907) 86; J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel from its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah* (New York: Macmillan, 1955) 519–31; G. Scholem, 'Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism', *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken, 1971) 1–36, at 1–2; G. MacRae, 'Messiah and Gospel', *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (ed. J. Neusner, W. S. Green and E. S. Frerichs; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 169–85, at 171–2. Note also the programmatic critique of

the description of ancient messiah speculation as entailing 'creative reappropriations' of scripture is as applicable to the epistles of Paul as it is to 4 Ezra, the *Parables of Enoch*, the Psalms of Solomon, the scrolls of Qumran, and so on. But what precisely does this notion of creative reappropriation entail?

In his study of diverse modes of messiah speculation across Jewish apocalyptic literature, Loren Stuckenbruck is struck by the lack of 'a basic core tradition ... about God's eschatological Messiah'.<sup>5</sup> What he does find, however,

is a series of documents composed near the turn of the Common Era by Jews who were inspired by biblical tradition ... to express their hope in a world restored to being totally in the control of the God of Israel. Such a dynamic hope drove their descriptions of eschatological events to be 'creatively biblical' at every turn.<sup>6</sup>

In using the phrase 'creatively biblical' Stuckenbruck is highlighting the interplay between tradition and innovation that is common to all acts of interpretation which are more than mere restatement.<sup>7</sup> Thus a given messiah text is marked both by conventionality, in that it speaks in the language of scripture, and originality, in that it narrates novel conceptions corresponding to the particular exigencies of its author's historical situation.<sup>8</sup> These novel conceptions are by definition distinct from one another, hence the absence of a 'basic core tradition' about a messiah. This raises the question, however, as to how such distinct portraits of messiahs can be drawn from one pool of scriptural resources. Nils Dahl's revisionist description of messiah speculation provides a paradigm for answering this question:

Consider the game of chess ... What really matters ... are the rules of the game. They allow for innumerable moves, so that one game of chess is never like any

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this tradition in Pauline scholarship, M. V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

5 L. T. Stuckenbruck, 'Messianic Ideas in the Apocalyptic and Related Literature of Early Judaism', *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* (ed. S. E. Porter; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007) 90-113, at 113.

6 Stuckenbruck, 'Messianic Ideas', 113.

7 Compare Fishbane's description of inner-biblical 'aggadic exegesis' as entailing 'an ongoing interchange between a hermeneutics of continuity and a hermeneutics of challenge and innovation' (M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 428). This is also apropos of messianic interpretation.

8 See further Stuckenbruck, 'Messianic Ideas', 113 n. 44; G. S. Oegema, *The Anointed and his People: Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kokhba* (JSPSup 27; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998) 305-6; and Novenson, *Grammar of Messianism*, 196. Contrast e.g. Scholem, 'Toward an Understanding', 2.

other ... very important rules for christological language were given in the Scriptures Christians received from the Jews.<sup>9</sup>

Dahl's description here is of early Christian messianology and is intended as a critique of a habit in New Testament scholarship of portraying Christology as the cumulative and inevitable end point of the Jewish scriptures. However, the same paradigm is equally applicable to Jewish messiah texts. Across the swath of messiah discourse in antiquity one can observe common characteristics or 'rules', as it were, that guide authors' reappropriations of scripture to describe their respective messiahs. These characteristics are also features of Paul's writings, and they constitute a lens through which Paul's messianology can be seen as 'creatively biblical' – a distinctive manner of speaking that nevertheless shares common traits with ancient Jewish messiah discourse.

A trait of ancient messiah discourse which is important for our analysis of Gal 3.19 is the reuse of scriptural idioms. In his description of this trait Novenson explains that 'when one finds the word "messiah" in an early Jewish or Christian text, one very often finds it in a phrase whose structure itself has precedent in one of the "messiah" passages in the Jewish scriptures'.<sup>10</sup> In short, later messiah texts do not just borrow the word 'messiah', they also borrow messiah idioms. To illustrate this, Novenson points to the expression 'the footsteps of the messiah' in m. Soṭah 9.15: 'With the footprints of the messiah (בעקבות משיחא) presumption shall increase and dearth reach its height.'<sup>11</sup> The phrase עקבות משיחא is lifted from MT Ps 89.52: 'Your enemies, O YHWH, scoff on the heels of your anointed one (עקבות משיחך)'.<sup>12</sup> A second illustration offered by Novenson and to which we will return presently is the use of 'temporal clauses, often with a verb of "coming" or "appearing"'.<sup>13</sup> Examples include: 'until there comes (עד עמוד) the messiah of Aaron and Israel' (CD XII, 23–XIII, 1; XIV, 19);<sup>14</sup> 'until comes

9 N. A. Dahl, 'Sources of Christological Language', *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of the Christological Debate* (ed. D. H. Juel; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 113–36, at 132–3. Dahl is drawing upon Ludwig Wittgenstein's 'notion of a "language game"'. This application of Wittgenstein's theory of language is explored further in Novenson, *Grammar of Messianism*, 11–36.

10 Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*, 53.

11 Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*, 55. For the Mishnah I follow the Hebrew text of P. Blackman, ed., *Mishnayoth* (New York: Judaica, 1983); translation modified from H. Danby, ed., *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933) 306.

12 Notably, the way the idiom is reused in Mishnah Soṭah does not correspond to its meaning in the psalm. In the former the phrase is a temporal clause indicating the future arrival of an anointed one, while in the latter it is a synecdoche for the anointed king.

13 Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*, 54.

14 For CD I cite the text of 4Q265 per J. M. Baumgarten *et al.*, eds., *Qumran Cave 4.xxv: Halakhic Texts* (DJD 35; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999); translation modified from F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

(עד ברא) the messiah of righteousness' (4Q252 v, 3);<sup>15</sup> 'when ... the time of my messiah comes (<sup>2</sup>ty)' (2 Bar. 72.2);<sup>16</sup> and 'when he [messiah] comes (ὄταν ἔλθῃ) he will show us all things' (John 4.25). Joseph Fitzmyer suggests that the precedent for this construction is found in Dan 9.25: 'From the going out of the word to return and build Jerusalem until an anointed one (הַמָּשִׁיחַ, ἕως χριστοῦ), a ruler, shall be seven weeks.'<sup>17</sup>

Moving beyond the examples of borrowed scriptural idioms adduced by Novenson, we also observe the same trait in repeated talk of messiahs 'arising' or being 'raised up'. Examples include: 'this is the messiah ..., who will arise [Syriac *dnh*, lit. "shine"] from the posterity of David' (4 Ezra 12.32);<sup>18</sup> 'See, Lord, and raise up (ἀνάστησον) for them their king, the son of David ... and their king shall be the lord messiah (χριστὸς κυρίος)' (Pss. Sol. 17.21, 32);<sup>19</sup> 'How beautiful is the king messiah who is destined to arise (למקום) from the house of Judah!' (Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 49.11);<sup>20</sup> 'from you shall come forth before me the

15 For 4Q252 I follow the text of G. J. Brooke *et al.*, eds., *Qumran Cave 4.xvii: Parabiblical Texts*, Part 3 (DJD 22; Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); translation modified from García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *Dead Sea Scrolls*.

16 For 2 Baruch I follow the Syriac text of S. Dederling and R. J. Bidawid, eds., *Apocalypse of Baruch, 4 Esdras* (The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version 4.3; Leiden: Brill, 1973); translation modified from that of A. F. J. Klijn in Charlesworth, *OTP*.

17 J. A. Fitzmyer, *The One Who Is to Come* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007) 62. The Greek is Theodotian Daniel; no comparable phrase appears in OG Daniel. As with the reappropriation of the phrase עקבות משיח from MT Ps 89.52, here also the proliferation of such temporal clauses occurs in new literary contexts which are markedly different from the original literary context from which the idiom is drawn.

18 The Latin omits the clause 'who ... David'. For 4 Ezra I follow the Syriac text of Dederling and Bidawid, *Apocalypse of Baruch, 4 Esdras*; and the Latin text of R. L. Bensly, ed., *The Fourth Book of Ezra: The Latin Version Edited from the MSS* (TS 3.2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895). Translation modified from that of B. M. Metzger in Charlesworth, *OTP*.

19 Cf. Pss. Sol. 18.5. Translation modified from R. B. Wright in Charlesworth, *OTP*. On the messiah of Psalms of Solomon, see J. H. Charlesworth, 'Introduction: Messianic Ideas', *Qumran-Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth *et al.*; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998) 29–32; and Stuckenbruck, 'Messianic Ideas', 93–7.

20 Cf. Frg. Tg. Gen 49.11, where the relevant infinitive reads למקום. For Targum Pseudo-Jonathan I follow the Aramaic text of E. G. Clarke, ed., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance* (New York: Ktav, 1984); for Fragmentary Targum I follow the Aramaic text of M. L. Klein, ed., *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch: According to their Extant Sources* (AnBib 76; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1980); translation modified from S. H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974) 9, 11. The targumim contain layers of tradition, some from the period directly relevant to Paul, some later. However, none of targumic texts adduced here are integral to my argument, and in every case they illustrate a feature of messiah discourse extant in earlier literature. On the provenance and dating of the various targumim and their use as evidence for early scriptural interpretation, see E. M. Cook, 'The Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in the

messiah ... and he shall arise (מִיָּקוּם) and rule' (Tg. Neb. Mic 5.1, 3);<sup>21</sup> and 'thus it is written, that the messiah (τὸν χριστόν) is to suffer and to arise (ἀναστῆναι) from among the dead' (Luke 24.46). This trope of a messiah 'arising' or being 'raised up' corresponds to the verbiage introducing the last words of David in 2 Sam 23.1: 'the oracle of the man who was raised up (מִקֶּה, אָנֵסְתִישֶׁן) on high, the anointed (מָשִׁיחַ, χριστόν) of the God of Jacob'.

Despite what appears to be a clear precedent in 2 Sam 23.1 for this phraseology, however, there are two problems with this hypothesis. The first is that in 4 Ezra 12.32 the relevant expression, which occurs only in Syriac, does not contain the verb *qwm* as one finds in Peshitta 2 Sam 23.1, but rather *dnh*.<sup>22</sup> The second problem is that 2 Sam 23.1 is never otherwise alluded to in later messiah texts.<sup>23</sup> Looking elsewhere, then, we find an alternative scriptural precedent for this manner of speaking, a text that is not strictly messianic (i.e., it does not contain the word 'messiah') but which does frequently receive messianic interpretations in later texts – Num 24.17: 'a star will come out of Jacob and a sceptre will arise (מִקֶּה, אָנֵסְתִישֶׁטַע) out of Israel'.<sup>24</sup> While in the MT and the LXX the same relevant verbs appear in Num 24.17 as do in 2 Sam 23.1, in Peshitta Num 24.17 one finds both *dnh* and *qwm*: 'a star will shine (*dnh*) out of Jacob and a ruler will arise (*qwm*) out of Israel'.<sup>25</sup> This suggests that at least for 4 Ezra 12.32, which contains the verb *dnh*, Num 24.17 is more likely the source from which its interpreter drew language to describe the coming of a messiah. Moreover, an allusion to Num 24.17 would also account for the syntax of Tg.

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Targums', *A Companion to Early Biblical Interpretation in Judaism* (ed. M. Henze; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2012) 92–117.

- 21 For Targum of the Prophets I follow the Aramaic text of A. Sperber, ed., *The Bible in Aramaic: Based on Old Manuscripts and Printed Texts*, vols. I–III (Leiden: Brill, 2004); translation modified from Levey, *The Messiah*, 93. MT Mic 5.3 reads 'and he shall stand (מַעֲמִיד)'. This motif is relatively frequent in the targumim; cf. Frg. Tg. Num 24.7; Tg. Ps.-J. Num 24.17,19; and Tg. Neb. 2 Sam 23.3.
- 22 For 2 Samuel I follow the Syriac text of P. B. Dirksen and P. A. H. de Boer, eds., *Judges, Samuel* (The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version 2.2; Leiden: Brill, 1978).
- 23 Cf. Oegema, *Anointed and his People*, 301.
- 24 Other candidates might include Amos 9.11: 'On that day I will raise up (מִקֶּה, אָנֵסְתִישֶׁן) the booth of David'; LXX Isa 11.10 in the Greek: '... the root of Jesse, who also will arise (ἀνιστάμενος) to rule the Gentiles'; and Jer 23.5: 'and I will raise up (מִקֶּה, אָנֵסְתִישֶׁן) for David a righteous branch'. The first two appear in Oegema's list of scriptures often featured in later messiah texts (Oegema, *Anointed and his People*, 302). John Collins is convinced that Jer 23.5 ought to be added to this list (J. J. Collins, 'Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism', *JR* 93 (2013) 90–1).
- 25 For Numbers I follow the Syriac text of D. J. Lane *et al.*, eds., *Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version 1.2; Leiden: Brill, 1991).

Ps.-J. Gen 49.11 and Tg. Neb. Mic 5.1, 3, in which ‘messiah’ is the subject of ‘arise’ rather than the object of ‘raise up’.<sup>26</sup>

An analogous type of reappropriation is also relevant to early Christian texts such as Luke 24.46 that use ἀνίστημι or its cognate ἀνάστασις to describe their messiah’s resurrection. In this connection Max Wilcox and Dennis Duling following Otto Betz and others note that Rom 1.3–4 is built on a pre-Pauline tradition according to which 2 Sam 7.12 is interpreted messianically. They correctly perceive the distinctive way in which early Christian interpreters exploited 2 Sam 7.12’s language of ‘raising up’ in light of their belief in Jesus’ resurrection. According to this theory, the 2 Sam 7.12 phrase ‘I will raise up (הִקִּימְתִּי, ἀνάστήσω) your seed after you’ was read by early Christian interpreters as a reference to the resurrection of the messiah.<sup>27</sup> Second Samuel 7.12, therefore, is a likely candidate for the scriptural precedent according to which early Christian authors speak of their messiah being ‘raised up’.<sup>28</sup> Thus 2 Sam 7.12, like Num 24.17, is another scriptural text which is not messianic *sensu stricto*, but which was later interpreted messianically and which provided a precedent for an oft-repeated messiah idiom.

With these reappropriations of idioms from Num 24.17 and 2 Sam 7.12 in mind, we return to the aforementioned example of the frequent appearance of ‘messiah’ in temporal clauses with a verb of ‘coming’ or ‘appearing’. There is a better explanation for the provenance of this idiom than Fitzmyer’s proposal, which is followed by Novenson, that Dan 9.25 provides the precedent for this manner of speaking.<sup>29</sup> While the relevant expression in Dan 9.25 (עֲדִימ־שִׁיחַ, ἕως χριστοῦ) contains the word ‘messiah’, it does not actually contain a verb of ‘coming’ or ‘appearing’ though six of Novenson’s seven examples do.<sup>30</sup>

26 Interestingly, Tg. Neb. 2 Sam 23.1 omits the verb ‘raised up (הִקִּימְתִּי)’ which is present in the MT, and Tg. Neb. 2 Sam 23.3 includes the phrase ‘destined to arise (דִּיקִימְתִּי)’ which is absent in the MT. Cf. Levey, *The Messiah*, 40.

27 See O. Betz, ‘Die Frage nach dem messianischen Bewusstsein Jesu’, *NovT* 6 (1963) 32 n. 4; E. Schweizer, ‘The Concept of the Davidic “Son of God” in Acts and its Old Testament Background’, *Studies in Luke-Acts* (ed. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1966) 186–93, at 190; J. H. Hayes, ‘The Resurrection as Enthronement and the Earliest Church Christology’, *Int* 22 (1968) 333–45, at 342–5; D. C. Duling, ‘The Promises to David and their Entrance into Christianity: Nailing Down a Likely Hypothesis’, *NTS* 20 (1973) 55–77, at 71, 74–7; M. Wilcox, ‘The Promise of the “Seed” in the New Testament and the Targumim’, *New Testament Text and Language: A Sheffield Reader* (ed. S. E. Porter and C. A. Evans; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997) 275–92, at 284, 292–3. Cf. 2 Tim 2.8.

28 It is almost certain, however, that the language of 2 Sam 7.12 did not influence messianic interpretation in the composition of the Targum of the Prophets since it is not given a messianic gloss there. See Levey, *The Messiah*, 37.

29 Fitzmyer, *One Who Is to Come*, 62; Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*, 55.

30 Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*, 54. The relevant Damascus Document passages (CD XII, 23–XIII, 1; XIV, 19) use the verb עָמַד, which is also found in MT Isa 11.10: ‘On that day, the root of Jesse, who shall stand (עָמַד) as a signal to the peoples ...’ The relation of the Qumran texts to

Gen 49.10, however, does contain such a verb: ‘The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes (הַשֵּׁבֶט לֹא יִשָּׁרָף מִיְהוּדָה, עַד כִּי־יָבֵא שִׁילֹה, ἕως ἃν ἔλθῃ).’ Having observed that later messiah texts borrow idioms not only from scriptural messiah texts but also other scriptural texts interpreted messianically, and given that Gen 49.10 is often drawn upon in later messiah texts,<sup>31</sup> it is reasonable to surmise that Gen 49.10 rather than Dan 9.25 is more likely to have provided the linguistic resources for describing the arrival of a messiah in such temporal clauses. Thus Novenson’s description of the characteristic of messiah discourse concerning the borrowing of scriptural idioms requires emendation. It is not just that later ‘messiah texts speak in syntactical patterns inherited from scriptural messiah texts’.<sup>32</sup> Rather, later messiah texts speak in idioms inherited from scriptural messiah texts *as well as other scriptural texts interpreted messianically*. This clarification clears the way for an analysis of Paul’s phraseology in Gal 3.19 with reference to ancient messiah discourse.

## 2. Until the Seed, who is Messiah, Comes (Gal 3.19 and Gen 49.10)

In Gal 3.19 Paul delineates the duration of the law’s ‘addition’ (προστίθῃμι) as being ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπηγγέλταται, ‘until such time as the seed should come to whom the promises had been made’. I propose that this statement entails a paraphrase of the enigmatic oracle given to Judah in Gen 49.10:

<p>MT Gen 49.10: The sceptre will not depart from Judah nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet until Shiloh comes (עד כִּי־יָבֵא שִׁילֹה), and the obedience of the peoples is his.<sup>33</sup></p>	<p>LXX Gen 49.10: A ruler will not fail from Judah nor a leader from his loins until there come the things stored up for him (ἕως ἃν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ), and he is the expectation of the nations.</p>
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this Davidic oracle, however, is complicated by the issue of bi-messianism, on which see J. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2010) 79–109.

31 See Oegema, *Anointed and his People*, 300–3, followed by Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*, 57–8.

32 Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs*, 55.

33 On the ambiguous word שִׁילֹה, see C. Westermann, *Genesis 37–50: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986) 230–1; on its messianic interpretation, see E. Grypeou and H. Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters between Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2013) 376–9.



The presence of this allusion to Gen 49.10 in Gal 3.19 is suggested by Nils Dahl, but he presents no argument to support his suggestion.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the allusion is not indisputably clear since Paul's phrasing and that of LXX Gen 49.10 do not precisely match:

Gen 49.10: ἕως ἃν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκειμένα αὐτῶ Gen 49.10 variant: ἕως ἃν ἔλθῃ ᾧ ἀποκεῖται <sup>35</sup>	Gal 3.19: ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπήγγελλται
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What then are the verbal correspondences between these texts that suggest Paul is reappropriating the phraseology of Gen 49.10, and how can the divergences be explained?

The commonality between LXX Gen 49.10 and Gal 3.19 is the use of the aorist subjunctive ἔλθῃ preceded by a composite phrase meaning 'until' and followed by the designation of something or someone whose coming signals a temporal end point. Paul's syntax is closest to the variant of LXX Gen 49.10, which was evidently known to early Christian authors.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, in both Gal 3.19 and the variant of LXX Gen 49.10 the subject of ἔλθῃ is further defined by a relative clause consisting of the relative pronoun ᾧ referring back to the subject of ἔλθῃ and functioning as the indirect object of a passive verb with continuing result. Paul's use of the perfect tense rather than the present for this verb is easily explained by his recounting of biblical history in Gal 3.16, where he introduces the explanation, 'the promises (αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι) were spoken (ἔρρέθησαν, aorist) ...' This would also explain Paul's exchange of the verb ἀπόκειμαι for ἐπαγγέλλομαι; he has couched his explanation of the Abraham narrative rhetorically in terms of promise.<sup>37</sup> Paul's insertion of τὸ σπέρμα indicates his

34 See N. A. Dahl, 'Contradictions in Scripture', *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1977) 172. F. Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief* (HThKNT 9; Freiburg: Herder, 1977<sup>3</sup>) 246 mentions the similar idiom found in other Jewish literature but ignores Dahl's suggestion concerning Gen 49.10. Dahl is followed by D. Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 86, who also merely suggests the allusion and presents no argument for it. Note also the correspondence indicated by W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (London: Yale University Press, 2003) 176–7.

35 See the apparatus of J. W. Wevers, ed., *Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974).

36 See e.g. Justin, *Dial.* 120.3–4 and the comments in A. Salvesen, 'Messianism in Ancient Bible Translations in Greek and Latin', *Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity* (ed. M. Bockmuehl and J. Carleton Paget; London: T&T Clark, 2007) 245–61, at 247.

37 The ambiguity of the הַיְהוּה in MT Gen 49.10 especially invited later flexibility in the interpretation of the phrase. For example, MT Ezek 21.32 (ET 21.27) interprets הַיְהוּה as וְשֵׁרֵלֹו, 'whose right it is', on which see Duling, 'The Promises to David', 59. On the use of Gen 49.10 in Ezek 21.32, see also W. L. Moran, 'Gen 49.10 and Its Use in Ez 21, 32', *Bib* 39 (1958) 416–25, where

linking of the Gen 49.10 oracle with the promises to Abraham's seed, 'who is messiah' (Gal 3.16).<sup>38</sup>

Accounting for the difference between the opening composite phrases – ἕως ἄν in LXX Gen 49.10 and ἄχρις οὗ in Gal 3.19 – is less straightforward, though not impossible.<sup>39</sup> Paul follows the Septuagint's use of ἕως in his citation of LXX Deut 29.3 (and LXX Isa 29.10) in Rom 11.8, which he introduces with the citation formula καθὼς γέγραπται:

Deut 29.3: καὶ οὐκ ἔδωκεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν καρδίαν εἰδέναι καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς βλέπειν καὶ ὄτα ἀκούειν ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης.	Rom 11.8: καθὼς γέγραπται· ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα κατανόησεως, ὀφθαλμοὺς τοῦ μὴ βλέπειν καὶ ὄτα τοῦ μὴ ἀκούειν, ἕως τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας.
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Notably, however, Paul makes precisely the same substitution I am proposing for Gal 3.19 – ἄχρις οὗ for ἕως ἄν – in his allusion to OG Ps 109.1 in 1 Cor 15.25:<sup>40</sup>

Moran describes Ezekiel's use of the Genesis oracle as 'free', 'creative' and 'original' (422). Note also the similarity in syntax between Gal 3.19 and the relevant phrase's rendering in LXX Ezek 21.32: ἕως οὗ ἔλθῃ ᾧ καθήκει. As with the variant of LXX Gen 49.10, the subject of ἔλθῃ is defined by a relative clause, with ᾧ functioning as the indirect object of a verb with continuing result.

38 Cf. Dahl, 'Contradictions in Scripture', 172 and Juel, *Messianic Exegesis*, 86.

39 For Gal 3.19, ἄχρις ἄν rather than ἄχρις οὗ is attested by B 0278. 33. 1175. 2464, and Clement. If this variant were accepted, it would constitute the only instance of the idiom in Paul, and Paul's expression would be somewhat closer to that found in LXX Gen 49.10, though probably insignificantly so. What can be said is that the construction of composite phrases meaning 'until' preceding subjunctives was fluid. See BDF §383.2. On this variant, see H. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (KEK 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951<sup>11</sup>) 108 n. 1.

40 See D. J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (KEK 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910<sup>9</sup>) 359 and A. Lindemann, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (HNT 9.1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 347. Also, in this connection E. B. Allo, *Saint Paul, première épître aux Corinthiens* (Études Biblique; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956<sup>2</sup>) 408 notes an apparent preference in Paul for the preposition/conjunction ἄχρι(ς) over μέχρι(ς), the former appearing fourteen times in the undisputed epistles and the latter five times. The same preference holds true to a greater extent concerning the composite phrase ἕως ἄν, which appears only in 1 Cor 4.5. Allo makes no mention of this, however – a curious omission given the wording of LXX Ps 109.1. Further, a small difference between Gal 3.19 and 1 Cor 15.25 is the appending of the moveable sigma to ἄχρι in Gal 3.19 according to Hellenistic Greek convention. This is unusual in the NT, occurring only in Gal 3.19 and Heb 3.13. It may merely be a stylistic adjustment since ἄχρι there precedes a word beginning with a vowel, though the appearance of ἄχρι οὗ in Rom 11.25; 1 Cor 11.26; and 15.25 would betray stylistic inconsistency. This inconsistency may suggest that Paul had access to a Greek version of Gen 49.10 reading ἄχρις οὗ, but this is speculative. See BDAG s.v. ἄχρι and BDF §21.

Ps 109.1: Εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου.	1 Cor 15.25: δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεῦσαι <u>ἄχρι οὗ θῆ</u> πάντας τοὺς ἐχθρούς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ.
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A similar substitution also appears to be involved in an allusion to LXX Deut 29.3 in 2 Cor 3.14:<sup>41</sup>

Deut 29.3: καὶ οὐκ ἔδωκεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν καρδίαν εἰδέναι καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς βλέπειν καὶ ὄτα ἀκοῦειν ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης.	2 Cor 3.14: ἀλλὰ ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν. <u>ἄχρι</u> γὰρ τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μένει, μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον ὅτι ἐν χριστῷ καταργεῖται·
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Paul thus exhibits consciousness of traditional wording as well as the prerogative to alter it.<sup>42</sup> Given these two clear examples in 1 Cor 15.25 and 2 Cor 3.14 of Paul substituting ἄχρι for ἕως in a scriptural citation, it is quite plausible that he makes a similar adjustment when alluding to LXX Gen 49.10 in Gal 3.19.

It remains to explain *why* Paul exchanges ἕως ἂν for ἄχρις οὗ in Gal 3.19. Paul only uses ἕως with the particle ἂν once, and he does so in a syntactical construction where the composite phrase is followed by a verb (notably, also ἔλθη): 1 Cor 4.5a: 'Therefore do not pronounce judgement before the time, before the Lord comes (ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος)'. Paul's meaning here is subtly different from his meaning in Gal 3.19. In 1 Cor 4.5 he is placing an *injunction* against something until a condition is met, whereas in Gal 3.19 he is describing the *continuation* of something until a condition is met.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, Paul always uses ἄχρι(ς) with

41 This allusion is acknowledged by E. Gräßer, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther: Kapitel 1,1–7,16* (ÖTK 8.1; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 2002) 138, who offers no comment on Paul's alteration of the Septuagint's wording. So also V. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB 32A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984) 207–8 and F. Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (NTD 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994) 274.

42 On this, see C. D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 259–64. Paul's preserving of ἕως in Rom 8.11 but neither in 1 Cor 15.25 nor especially in 2 Cor 3.14, where LXX Deut 29.3 is also cited, may be explained by his use of 'ein traditionelles "Florilegium" in Rom 11.8–10, as suggested by U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer: Röm 6–11* (EKK 6.2; Zürich: Benziger, 1972) 238.

43 Cf. BDAG s.v. ἕως 1aβ and s.v. ἄχρι 1bα. P. Bonnard, *L'épître de saint Paul aux Galates* (CNT 9; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1953) 73 insists that Paul's use of ἄχρις in Gal 3.19 is 'strictement temporel et non logique'. While it is unclear what it would mean for ἄχρις to have a 'logical' function, the difference between the temporal connotations of the uses of ἄχρις in Gal 3.19 and ἕως ἂν in 1 Cor 4.5 is clear. On the supposed curtailing of the law's applicability at the

this latter connotation. For example, he writes in 1 Cor 11.26b, ‘you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes (ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ)’.<sup>44</sup> In this, Paul is reflecting the usage of ἄχρι in the Septuagint, where the word occurs only three times (2 Macc 14.10, 15; and Job 32.11), always with the same connotation it has in Gal 3.19. Therefore, in Paul’s allusion to LXX Gen 49.10 in Gal 3.19 his substitution of the phrase ἄχρις οὗ for ἕως ἄν can be explained as an effect of the distinct connotations with which Paul normally uses each of the phrases.

In light of these considerations, I conclude that in Gal 3.19 Paul has paraphrased LXX Gen 49.10 and recontextualised its idiom of a temporal clause with a verb of ‘coming’ for his own purposes. As mentioned earlier, he has inserted the word σπέρμα – identified just three verses earlier as χριστός – into the wording of LXX Gen 49.10. In so doing, Paul relates the promises concerning Abraham’s seed to the promises concerning Judah, promises that were frequently interpreted messianically elsewhere in early Judaism.<sup>45</sup> Thus Gen 49.10 receives a consistent messianic interpretation in the targumim: Tg. Neof. Gen 49.10: ‘... until the time king messiah shall come, to whom the kingship belongs; to him shall all the kingdoms be subject’;<sup>46</sup> Tg. Onq. Gen 49.10: ‘... until the messiah comes, to whom the kingdom belongs, and whom nations obey’;<sup>47</sup> Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 49.10: ‘... until the time when the king messiah shall come, the youngest of his [Judah’s] sons, and because of him nations shall melt away’;<sup>48</sup> Frg. Tg. Gen 49.10: ‘... until the time of the coming of the king messiah, to whom belongs the kingdom, and to whom all dominions of the earth shall become subservient’.<sup>49</sup>

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coming of the messiah in Jewish tradition, see P. Fredriksen, ‘Judaism, the Circumcision of the Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2’, *JTS* 42 (1991) 532–64, at 550–1.

44 See also Rom 1.13; 5.13; 8.22; 11.25; 1 Cor 4.11; 15.25; 2 Cor 3.14; Gal 3.19; 4.2; and Phil 1.5–6. The two remaining uses of ἄχρι in the undisputed letters (2 Cor 10.13, 14) function differently, as spatial prepositions. The word ἄχρι does not appear in the disputed letters. Paul does use ἕως alone in the undisputed letters, sometimes with a connotation similar to his use of ἄχρι (1 Cor 1.8; 16.8; 2 Cor 3.15).

45 Thus rightly Juel, *Messianic Exegesis*, 86: ‘In Galatians, “offspring” (“seed”) has been inserted into the paraphrase of Gen. 49:10, confirming the link with more obvious messianic oracles like 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89, as well as with the preceding citation of Gen. 22:18.’ On Gen 49.10 as a catalyst for messianic speculation, see further Duling, ‘The Promises to David’, 59, 64; Oegema, *Anointed and his People*, 300–3; Salvesen, ‘Messianism in Ancient Bible Translations’, 246–7; and Gordon, ‘Messianism in Ancient Bible Translations’, 265–6.

46 Translation modified from M. McNamara, ed., *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992).

47 Translation modified from Levey, *The Messiah*, 7. See Gordon, ‘Messianism in Ancient Bible Translations’, 265–6, who suggests a significant correspondence between the Pauline topos of ‘the obedience of faith’ and Tg. Onq. Gen 49.10 (‘whom nations obey’).

48 Translation modified from Levey, *The Messiah*, 9.

49 Translation modified from Levey, *The Messiah*, 11.

Further, while none of the targumim explicitly relate Gen 49.10 to the line of David, talk of anointed kings regularly refers to the Davidic dynasty,<sup>50</sup> and of course any Davidide is by definition of the tribe of Judah (cf. Ruth 4.12, 18–22; Sir 45.25; 1 Esd 5.5; Matt 1.2–6). And what is implicit in the paraphrases of the targumim is explicit in the Qumran commentary on Gen 49.10 in 4Q252 v, 3–4: ‘... until comes (עד בוא) the messiah of righteousness [Gen 49.10], *the branch of David* [Jer 33.15]’.<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, Paul’s messianic interpretation of Gen 49.10 in Gal 3.19 – especially by his recapitulation of the word σπέρμα (Ἀβραάμ) – also amounts to an identification of the seed of Abraham with the seed of David.

This identification, however, is an *unstated* premise in Paul’s line of thought. It is unstated likely because it is assumed by Paul and also because it reflects a traditional, if not necessarily widespread, conflation of the promises to Abraham and to David concerning their respective progeny. This is evident in the use of the same descriptors to refer to the ‘seed of Abraham’ (i.e. the patriarchs) and to David in MT Psalms 89 and 105, respectively;<sup>52</sup> in the application of the promises of the proliferation of Abraham’s seed in MT Gen 22.17 to David in MT Jer 33.22;<sup>53</sup> in the amalgamation of the promises to David and the promises to Abraham in the interpretation of MT Psalm 89 in Tg. Ket. Ps 89.4;<sup>54</sup> and in the appropriation of the covenant with Abraham for the House of David in MT Ps 72.17.<sup>55</sup> Thus, if in Gal 3.16–19 Paul is applying the promises concerning Abraham’s seed to David’s seed, then he is participating in an interpretative tradition with an established pedigree. This would explain why Paul’s interpretation of Gen 49.10 in Gal 3.19 is not more explicitly signalled for his Galatian readers. It would have been unnecessary for Paul to show his work, so to speak, in collating the Davidic and Abrahamic traditions because such an interpretative move would have been uncontroversial. Moreover, Paul’s choice not to elaborate on the role of David in his reasoning in Galatians 3 is congruent with one of the main concerns of his letter – the status of gentiles vis-à-vis the family of Abraham. To have explicitly brought David into that discussion would have added an extra turn in Paul’s argument where he evidently saw a straighter path. Nevertheless, by observing Paul’s allusion to Gen 49.10 in Gal 3.19 we gain a glimpse into the scriptural reasoning by

50 But not always. See 1 Sam 24.11 (ET 24.10) concerning the Benjaminite king Saul (cf. 1 Sam 9.1–2) and Isa 45.1 concerning the Persian emperor Cyrus.

51 Translation modified from García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *Dead Sea Scrolls*.

52 Compare MT Ps 89.4, 39 and 40, and Ps 105.6, 15, 42 and 43, on which see B. Gosse, ‘Abraham and David’, *JSOT* 34 (2009) 25–31, at 25–6.

53 On which see Wilcox, ‘The Promise of the “Seed”’, 279.

54 On which see Wilcox, ‘The Promise of the “Seed”’, 279.

55 On which see J. T. Hewitt and M. V. Novenson, ‘Participationism and Messiah Christology in Paul’, *God and the Faithfulness of Paul: A Critical Examination of the Pauline Theology of N. T. Wright* (ed. C. Heilig, J. T. Hewitt and M. F. Bird; WUNT 11/413; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016) 393–415, at 405.

which he asserts in Gal 3.16 that the promises of Abraham were made to Abraham's single seed, ὅς ἐστιν χριστός – namely, that the seed of Abraham is the seed of David, who is messiah.