

## ROMANS 1:3-4: AN EXAMINATION OF ITS PRIMITIVE CHARACTER

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Résumé de l'article

Dans son adresse de la lettre aux Romains, Paul inclut deux versets (Rm 1,3-4) qui rendent compte du message de l'Évangile en des termes inusités. Le sens de ce passage a été vivement débattu depuis des siècles. C'est ainsi que l'exégète Martin Hengel a pu écrire en 1976 que « dans les années récentes, il s'est écrit sur ce passage plus que sur n'importe quel autre du Nouveau Testament ». Un aspect majeur dans ce débat concerne l'origine de ces deux versets : dans quelle mesure Rm 1,3-4 est-il à attribuer à une tradition pré-paulinienne ? Dans cette étude, après avoir examiné les indices selon lesquels Paul fait référence à une confession de foi déjà existante, nous proposons une hypothèse quant au départage des éléments pauliniens et pré-pauliniens. Ce faisant, nous tentons de discerner ce que pourrait révéler une telle analyse au sujet des développements que connut la compréhension de leur foi par les chrétiens au cours des premières décennies du christianisme.

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## ROMANS 1:3-4: AN EXAMINATION OF ITS PRIMITIVE CHARACTER

PATRICK CRAINE

The opening verses of Paul's letter to the Romans have been hotly debated by scholars for centuries. In 1:1-7, Paul employs the traditional opening of a Greco-Roman letter. But in the midst of this salutation, he inserts two verses, vv. 3-4, explaining the message of the gospel with the use of unusual expressions. These verses state:

...(the gospel) <sup>3</sup>concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup>and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ...<sup>1</sup>

These two verses are at the heart of the scholarly dispute. At one point, in 1976, biblical scholar Martin Hengel would claim that "in recent years, more has been written about this text than about any other New Testament text."<sup>2</sup> The meaning of the verses can seem obscure, especially in light of other New Testament affirmations about Christ. What is Paul attesting about the resurrection? Who is the agent of the resurrection? What role does the resurrection play in Christ's designation as Son of God? Do these verses support adoptionism, the idea that Jesus *became*, or *was adopted*, as son of God through the resurrection?

A crucial point of the debate has been the origin of the verses, namely: To what extent is Rom. 1:3-4 from a pre-Pauline tradition? Does Paul cite here an earlier confession, or allude to one in formulating his own confession? Can we isolate fragments within the two verses that are drawn from the earlier tradition? Many scholars indeed argue that the verses contain pre-Pauline material, but they disagree over what parts of these verses are traditional and

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1. English translations are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

2. HENGEL 1976, p. 59. We find an abundant bibliography on these verses in ADIMULA 2021b, pp. 176-179 (list of commentaries at pp. 167-169). Adimula has since published another important study: ADIMULA 2021a. Shortened references are to be found at length at the end of this paper under "Works cited," others in the footnotes.

what parts are original to Paul.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this paper is to gather and evaluate the arguments for distinguishing pre-Pauline and Pauline material in the passage, to propose an hypothesis for delineating the original formula and Paul's redactions, and to attempt thereby to discern what our results might tell us about the formula's meaning in the early Christian community.

My paper is divided into seven sections. First, I will situate these verses in their literary context within the opening of Romans. Second, I will divide the text into its different structural and grammatical elements. Third, I will discuss the primitive status of the text: What criteria are present that would suggest its pre-Pauline character? Are there any reasons to be uncertain about such a judgment? Fourth, I will push the discussion of the pericope's primitive character further by examining theories about its redaction history. Fifth, I will offer some analysis and interpretation of the text, attempting to clarify two complex interpretive issues: the meaning of the flesh-spirit dialectic, and the text's apparent adoptionism. Sixth, I will propose a final consideration about Paul's redaction of the text. Finally, that leads me into my conclusion, where I will gather together the analysis and propose an hypothesis for delineating the pre-Pauline and Pauline elements of the passage.

## I. Literary Context

So we begin with our first step, looking at our passage's literary context and how it fits into the opening of Romans. We begin with the pericope's general context. The introduction to the letter takes up roughly half of the first chapter, from vv. 1-17. We can divide this introduction into three sections. The first, from vv. 1-7, includes a proper salutation in which Paul introduces himself and greets his audience. He follows the traditional Greco-Roman format for opening a letter, beginning with his name as the letter's sender, and identifying himself further as a servant of Jesus and an apostle. The second section of the introduction is at vv. 8-15, in which he offers his usual thanksgiving for the community and expresses his desire to visit the Christians in Rome. Finally, the introduction ends with vv. 16-17, in which he presents the letter's theme, namely the gospel and salvation.

Now we look more closely at the immediate context of our pericope in vv. 1-7, the *exordium*, or proper salutation. Here are these verses, alongside the original Greek text of vv. 3-4:

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3. See section IV below, "Origin and redaction history of pericope," for discussion of these views and references.

<p>1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God</p> <p>2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures,</p> <p>3 the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh</p> <p>4 and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,</p> <p>5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,</p> <p>6 including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ;</p> <p>7 To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:</p> <p>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.</p>	<p>3 περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα,</p> <p>4 τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν,</p>
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In this first section of the introduction, we have an unusual elaboration, including especially our pericope at vv. 3-4. This elaboration is perhaps because Paul sees the need to establish his authority to this audience, whom he has yet to meet. Verses 3-4 stick out structurally from vv. 1-2, and 5-7. Verse 1 indicates Paul's identity, the ground of his authority as an "apostle," and gives an indication of his calling and purpose through the statement that he is "set apart for the gospel." Verse 2 transitions to an explanation of the background to this gospel as promised through the prophets, proclaiming that the Messiah's purpose is clear already in the Old Testament. In vv. 3-4, Paul shifts to an explanation of what this gospel is, its content. With vv. 5-6 he returns to his usual manner of introduction and greeting, explaining his mission, and at v. 7 he concludes the salutation by extending grace and peace to the audience.

Writing to a community he has not yet met, in these opening verses Paul asserts his apostleship and through the pericope of vv. 3-4 he establishes the gospel he preaches from the beginning as one that is familiar to his audience, and that will be recognized as aligning with the faith they themselves profess. This pericope presents creedal affirmations that would be recognized by his audience of both Jewish Christians and Hellenistic Christians. The pericope connects the gospel he preaches with the promises of God made to Israel that form the basis of the beliefs of the early Christian community. Building on this account of the gospel in vv. 3-4, in the letter he will argue especially for

the focus of his mission to the Gentiles and attempt to unite the factions of Jewish and Hellenistic Christians in Rome.

## II. Division of Text

We turn now to examine vv. 3-4 more closely, dividing them into their elements and observing some structural and grammatical features. This procedure is essential for our discussion of the pericope's redaction history and its potential pre-Pauline character. The text before us can be divided into ten phrases, as in the table below. Each verse contains a subordinate clause that begins with an aorist participle (highlighted in the table below), followed by several connected prepositional phrases.

<p>3a: Concerning his son,  <b>3b: <i>having been born</i></b>  3c: of the seed of David  3d: according to the flesh</p> <p><b>4a: <i>having been appointed</i></b>  4b: son of God  4c: in power  <b>4d:</b> according to the spirit of holiness  <b>4e:</b> by resurrection from the dead,  4f: Jesus Christ our Lord,</p>	<p>3a: περί τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ,  <b>3b: τοῦ γενομένου</b>  3c: ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ  3d: κατὰ σάρκα,</p> <p><b>4a: τοῦ ὀρισθέντος</b>  4b: υἱοῦ θεοῦ  4c: ἐν δυνάμει  <b>4d:</b> κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης  <b>4e:</b> ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν,  4f: Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν,</p>
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We can divide v. 3 into four distinct phrases. At 3a, we have an introductory clause, περί τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, *concerning his son*. Then at 3b we have the first participle, τοῦ γενομένου. This is the aorist middle genitive masculine singular of the verb γίνομαι, modifying υἱοῦ, *son*, in 3a. Γίνομαι here can mean to *come into being*, to *descend*, or to *be born from*. At 3c we have ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ, meaning *of, from, or by the seed of David*. Finally at 3d we have κατὰ σάρκα, meaning *according to the flesh* or *with respect to the flesh*.

We can divide v. 4 into six distinct phrases. At 4a we have the second participle, τοῦ ὀρισθέντος, followed by, at 4b, υἱοῦ θεοῦ, *son of God*. The participle is the aorist passive genitive masculine singular of the verb ὀρίζω, meaning to *appoint* or *designate*. We then have three prepositional phrases. At 4c, ἐν δυνάμει, *in power*. At 4d, κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης: ἁγιωσύνη is a substantive formed from the adjective ἅγιος, *holy*, meaning *holiness*. So the phrase means *according to the spirit of holiness* or *with respect to the spirit of holiness*. At 4e we have ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, meaning *from or by resurrection of the dead*. Finally at 4f we have a closing clause, which connects these verses with what comes next in verse 5: Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, meaning *Jesus Christ Our Lord*.

Notice that in the table above, I have in-set the elements of 3b through 4e, separating them from the opening clause at 3a and the closing clause at 4f.

The reason for this is that scholars have with good reason identified 3a as an introductory formula by Paul leading into the beginning of the creedal statement with the first participle at 3b, and 4f as a closing or transitional clause into the rest of the salutation.<sup>4</sup> 4f, *Jesus Christ our Lord*, is seen as clearly Pauline given that it is so common a phrase for Paul. The title *kyrios* is used about 274 times in the Pauline corpus, and this very phrase appears 26 times in the seven undisputed letters. There is an obvious parallelism in 3b to 4e, but it clearly ends before we arrive at 4f. Moreover, the introduction of the first-person plural at 4f (“Jesus Christ *our* Lord”), which continues to be used in v. 5 (“through whom *we* have received”), seems to clearly signal the resumption of Paul’s own composition. Thus 3a and 4f are generally seen as Pauline additions encasing a pre-Pauline creedal formula (taken as more or less redacted depending on the scholar) that runs from 3b to 4e.

The division of the text that I propose here has consequences for our later discussion of the amount of Pauline redaction in the text. The consistency of the parallelism between v. 3 and v. 4 is, arguably, important for considering how Paul might have adjusted the text: noting the elements that break the parallelism is an important, though not conclusive, consideration in delineating redactions. In particular, I argue that 3c (“of the seed of David”) and 4b (“son of God”) should be seen as parallel phrases, in that they both serve as the object of their respective participles.<sup>5</sup> This differs from the division offered, for example, by Robert Jewett and Matthew Bates, who combine 4a and 4b into one element (“having been appointed son of God”), thus allowing ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ and ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν to serve as parallels in an ABBA structure.<sup>6</sup> The importance of my choice in how to divide the text will become apparent when we come to section VI, “The status of 4e: ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν.”

4. Rudolf Bultmann notably differs from the general view here, arguing that 3a is also pre-Pauline. See BULTMANN 1951, 1:49.

5. This reading aligns with that of DUNN 1980, p. 34; DUNN 1988, p. 5; and EHRMAN 2014, p. 221. Adimula adopts a middle line, seeing ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ as parallel with both υἱοῦ θεοῦ and ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν. See ADIMULA 2021a, p. 349.

6. See JEWETT 2007, p. 97; JEWETT 1985, p. 100; BATES 2015, p. 125. Bates, implausibly I think, presents the structure in this way:

3b	Participle	τοῦ γενομένου
3c	(A) ἐκ clause	ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ
3d	(B) κατὰ clause	κατὰ σάρκα
4ab	Participle + υἱοῦ θεοῦ + ἐν δυνάμει	τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει
4c	(B) κατὰ clause	κατὰ πνεῦμα ἀγιοσύνης
4d	(A) ἐκ clause	ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν

III. Primitive Character of Rom. 1:3-4

Now that we have seen how our text is broken into its various elements, we move to our third step, an examination of the primitive character of the text. What evidence do we have present in vv. 3-4 that suggest it could be borrowed by Paul from an existing Christian usage? We will first consider the reasons for seeing it as a primitive formula, then we will look at some indications that create uncertainty about its primitive character.

1. Indications of a Primitive Formula

In the last century, scholars have highlighted many indications of the pre-Pauline character of our passage. We can divide the main ones into seven distinct criteria.<sup>7</sup>

First, these verses have a *distinctive style* from the surrounding verses. Notice the parallel structure at play within 3b to 4e that sets it off from the surrounding verses. Comparing v. 3 to v. 4, we see that each has an opening participle with connected prepositional phrases.

<b>3b: <i>having been born</i></b> <b>3c:</b> of the seed of David  <b>3d:</b> according to the flesh	<b>4a: <i>having been appointed</i></b> <b>4b:</b> son of God <b>4c:</b> in power <b>4d:</b> according to the spirit of holiness <b>4e:</b> by resurrection from the dead,
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These two parallel verses set up an antithesis between entrance to two opposed realms, with a dialectic of flesh and spirit, earthly and heavenly. In v. 3 we have the human/earthly/fleshly expressed through Jesus’ descent within the line of David. This descent from David, his place in a human genealogy, conveys Jesus’ human condition and his place in the earthly realm. In v. 4 we have the divine/heavenly/spiritual expressed through his appointment as son of God. We have various antithetical parallel phrases between these two verses: Christ as seed of David parallels Christ as son of God, with an antithesis between his human and divine identities. On one side he is born κατὰ σάρκα, *according to the flesh*, and on the other he is appointed κατὰ πνεῦμα, *according to the spirit*, indicating a distinction between an earthly and spiritual condition. And, perhaps, we have a parallel between Jesus’ descent from David, on one side, showing his entrance to the earthly realm, and on the other his resurrection from the dead, showing his entrance to the spiritual realm.

7. For the articulation of these general criteria for determining the primitive character of Pauline pericopes, I draw on the work of New Testament scholar Michel Gourgues. See, e.g., GOURGUES 2019, pp. 15-31; GOURGUES 2016, pp. 221-237.

Second, we have a *rupture from its surrounding environment*. The text before and after our passage uses first and second person pronouns, “I,” “we,” and “you.” But from 3b to 4e, we have the use of the third person singular.

Third, we have the presence of *distinct content* that is included because it is part of the formula but which is not strictly connected to the context of the surrounding environment of vv. 1-7. The elaboration of the gospel here in vv. 3-4 is put in the middle of the letter’s salutation. Interestingly the salutation would flow seamlessly if we completely removed 3b-4e. If the passage skipped from 3a to 4f, it would then still read smoothly: “concerning his son, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace,” etc. We find this presence of distinct content in other Pauline passages that bear the mark of being borrowed from a pre-Pauline usage, such as 1 Cor. 15:3-5.<sup>8</sup> There we note that Paul introduces the notion of Christ’s death and burial, whereas the mystery of the resurrection is the only part that is strictly relevant to the argument of the chapter.

Fourth, scholars have highlighted that we have a *disparity of vocabulary*, with one word and one phrase that appear nowhere else in the letter or in Paul’s other letters. That is the word ὀρίζω, to *appoint*, and the phrase πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης, *spirit of holiness*.<sup>9</sup>

Fifth, though it is perhaps more subtle than in other primitive passages, we have an *introductory formula* here signaling that we should expect a quotation or reference to borrowed material. That is at 3a, *concerning his son*. This introduction is similar to introductions we find in other formulas that show indications of being borrowed from a prior tradition. For example, 2 Tim. 2:8 begins with the introductory formula: “Remember Jesus Christ...” followed by a confessional statement.<sup>10</sup>

Sixth, we have the criterion of *multiple attestation*. The flesh-spirit antithesis is employed christologically in only two other New Testament passages, both of which present indications of borrowing material from a primitive tradition. First, in 1 Tim. 3:16: “He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the spirit.” Second, in 1 Pet. 3:18: “being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”<sup>11</sup> As we shall see, reading Rom. 1:3-4 with reference to these two passages carries consequences for its interpretation.

Seventh, we have not only a disparity of vocabulary, but a *disparity of ideas*. Scholars have noted that the passage incorporates at least four conceptual features that we would not expect to find in Paul. (1) First, the antithesis set up here between σὰρξ and πνεῦμα, *flesh* and *spirit*, is not typical of Paul. Paul does

8. For analysis of the borrowed status of 1 Cor. 15:3-5, see GOURGUES 2019, pp. 26-41.

9. See JEWETT 1985, p. 101.

10. For an examination of the traditional character of 2 Tim. 2:8, see GOURGUES 2009b, pp. 159-178.

11. For analysis of this christological use of the flesh-spirit antithesis, see ADIMULA 2021b, pp. 13-20. For analysis of 1 Tim. 3:16 with reference to its borrowed status, see GOURGUES 2009a, pp. 133-149. For analysis of the borrowed status of 1 Pet. 3:18, see ADIMULA 2021b, pp. 86-94.



use the flesh-spirit dialectic outside of borrowed formulas, but never christologically to distinguish Jesus' earthly and spiritual existences. We especially see him use it in anthropological and moral contexts (Rom. 8:4-8, 1 Cor. 5:3,5, Gal. 3:3, Gal. 5:17, Col. 2:5). For example, later in the letter, in Rom. 8, he uses it to speak of human behaviour: "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:5). He also uses it at Gal. 4:29 to distinguish the birth status of the free-born and the slave. (2) Second, the reference to Jesus' Davidic lineage is not typical of Paul. Paul explicitly references Jesus' descent from David at 2 Tim. 2:8 ("Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David, as preached in my gospel..."), and alludes to it in citing an Isaian prophecy at Rom. 15:12. However, 2 Tim. 2:8 is another instance where Paul seems to be borrowing from earlier material. Biblical scholar John Adimula points to 2 Cor. 5:16 as an indication of why it is unusual to see Paul connect Jesus to David. There Paul writes: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer."<sup>12</sup> Additionally, Paul mentions the physical descent of Jesus at Rom. 9:5, without however mentioning David. (3) Third, scholars have noted that we find no mention of the crucifixion in Rom. 1:3-4, which would be expected in a specifically Pauline account of the gospel.<sup>13</sup> (4) Finally, fourth, scholars suggest that the apparent adoptionistic implication in 4a through the use of ὁπίζω, resembling an alleged adoptionism of early Christianity, is not something we would expect to see in a Pauline Christology.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Reasons for Uncertainty

Now that we have shown the reasons for finding a borrowed formula here in our verses, we can point to two reasons in the text for some uncertainty about this judgment.

12. See ADIMULA 2021a, p. 348.

13. See, e.g., Eduard SCHWEIZER, "Rom 1:3f und der Gegensatz von Fleisch und Geist vor und bei Paulus," *Evangelische Theologie* 15 (1955), pp. 563-571 (at 563); and JEWETT 1985, p. 102.

14. See, e.g., JEWETT 1985; Ernst KÄSEMANN, *Commentary on Romans*, Grand Rapids MI, Eerdmans, 1980, p. 12; and EHRMAN 2014, pp. 218-225. Many authors have argued that primitive pre-Pauline Christianity was adoptionist, by drawing on Romans 1:3-4, as well as passages such as Mark 1:11, Acts 2:32-36, Acts 13:32-35, Heb. 1:5-6, and Heb. 5:5. Such scholars include: John H. HAYES, "The Resurrection as Enthronement and the Earliest Church Christology," *Interpretation*, 22 (1968), pp. 333-45; Barnabas LINDARS, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations*, Philadelphia PN, Westminster, 1961, pp. 139-44; and Adela Yarbro COLLINS and John J. COLLINS, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature*, Grand Rapids MI, Eerdmans, 2008, pp. 10-15, 117, 127. However, Matthew Bates has recently made a strong case against this alleged primitive adoptionism in "A Christology of Incarnation and Enthronement," pp. 107-127.

First, the text also bears the marks of redaction by Paul, with the incorporation of two typically Pauline phrases that break up the parallelism of the passage. First, ἐν δυνάμει at 4c is a phrase that appears five times in the undisputed letters before Romans (1 Thes. 1:5, 1 Cor. 2:5, 1 Cor. 4:20, 1 Cor. 15:43, 2 Thes. 1:11), and another five times in other letters, including Romans, in addition to this use at Rom. 1:4 (Rom. 15:13, twice at Rom. 15:19, 2 Cor. 6:7, Col. 1:29). Second, even though the phrase πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης at 4d is nowhere else used in Paul's letters, ἁγιωσύνη is a Pauline word, appearing also at 2 Cor. 7:1 and 1 Thes. 3:13. But beyond this, as we shall see in short order, holiness is a much more typically Pauline concept than even these three uses would suggest. Many scholars identify πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης as a Semitic reference to the Holy Spirit, and thus as having always appeared here in the formula of Rom 1:3-4 as a unit, either in an early formula or in Paul's composition.<sup>15</sup> But as we will see it may be possible that Paul added ἁγιωσύνης to a pre-existing use of πνεῦμα.

Second, the criterion of multiple attestation that we identified in the passage's use of the flesh-spirit antithesis nevertheless carries with it a degree of uncertainty. This is because the other two ancient formulas use different words and phrasing in expressing the antithesis. We can see this clearly in the table below, where the three passages are shown together:

Rom. 1:3-4	<b>3d:</b> κατὰ σάρκα / according to the flesh	<b>4c:</b> κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης / according to the spirit of holiness
1 Tim. 3:16b	ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί / He was manifested in the flesh	ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι / vindicated in the Spirit
1 Pet. 3:18	θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ / being put to death in the flesh	ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι / but made alive in the spirit

So, while the three passages seem to testify to a primitive usage of a christological flesh-spirit antithesis, perhaps first expressed in an oral tradition, the genesis of this phrasing and its original formulation remain unclear.

#### IV. Origin and Redaction History of Pericope

We have now seen that there is good reason to view our verses as containing pre-Pauline elements, but also that there is evidence of Pauline redaction, and some uncertainty about the extent of the redaction. We will now push our analysis further by looking at how other scholars have approached the question. We find many views on the amount of Pauline redaction in the scholarly literature, and in fact this debate forms part of the larger debate over the

15. See, e.g., BATES 2015, p. 123; Gordon D. FEE, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, Peabody MA, Hendrickson, 1994, p. 480, n. 19; Henry P. LIDDON, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, London, Longmans, 1893, p. 4; and DUNN 1988, p. 15.

distance between Paul and the tradition he is using. We will examine some of the views, with no attempt at being exhaustive. Generally speaking, the only point approaching any kind of consensus is that the dual structure of parallel participles – “born of the seed of David (...) appointed son of God” – is among the pre-Pauline content.<sup>16</sup> Broadly, we can divide the views on these verses’ redaction into three categories. First, those who think 3b to 4e is totally traditional and pre-Pauline.<sup>17</sup> Second, those who believe it is basically Paul’s original composition.<sup>18</sup> And third, those who see it as a mix, with some seeing greater or lesser Pauline redaction. We will focus here on the third group, who hold the view that I consider the most plausible, and draw particularly on two authors: Robert Jewett, whose redactional hypothesis is the most developed and influential; and John Adimula, who offers a strong recent engagement with Jewett’s hypothesis.

### 1. Robert Jewett

Drawing especially on analyses by Rudolf Bultmann and Eduard Schweizer,<sup>19</sup> Jewett proposes that the formula of 3b to 4e as we have it in Romans developed through three stages.<sup>20</sup> Jewett’s proposal is based on the notion that the early Christian community developed in its understanding of the person of Jesus, coming to more greatly appreciate Jesus’ transcendent divine status over time. Let us look at these three stages in turn.

1) The first stage was a composition of Jewish Christians, and included only 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, and 4e, as shown in the table below (adjusted, for simplicity’s sake, to align with my division of the passage). The passage then read: “having been born of the seed of David, having been appointed son of God by

16. See WHITSETT 2000, pp. 661-681 (at 663).

17. See Oscar CULLMANN, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*, London, Lutterworth, 1949, pp. 55-56; Archibald M. HUNTER, *Paul and His Predecessors*, London, SCM, 1961, pp. 25-28; Vernon H. NEUFELD, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*, Grand Rapids MI, Eerdmans, 1963, pp. 50-51; Bernadin SCHNEIDER, “κατὰ πνεῦμα ἀγιωσύνης (Romans 1,4),” *Biblica*, 48 (1967), pp. 360-369; Hans Werner BARTSCH, “Zur vorpaulinischen Bekenntnisformel im Eingang des Römerbriefes,” *Theologische Zeitschrift*, 23 (1967), pp. 329-339; Ernest BEST, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans* (Cambridge Bible Commentary), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967, pp. 10-11; and BATES 2015.

18. See WHITSETT 2000; James M. SCOTT, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 48), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1992, pp. 229-236; Vern S. POYTHRESS, “Is Romans 1:3-4 a Pauline Confession After All?” *Expository Times*, 87 (1976), pp. 180-183; David J. MACLEOD, “Eternal Son, Davidic Son, Messianic Son: An Exposition of Romans 1:1-7,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 162 (2005), p. 82.

19. See BULTMANN 1951, 1:49-50; and SCHWEIZER, “Rom 1:3f und der Gegensatz von Fleisch und Geist vor und bei Paulus.”

20. Jewett first articulated his redaction hypothesis in JEWETT 1971, pp. 136-139. The hypothesis I present here is his later view as expressed in JEWETT 1985, pp. 99-122, and as summarized in JEWETT 2007, pp. 97-108.

resurrection from the dead.” In Jewett’s account we have here an adoptionist Christology, expressed through the use of ὀρίζω, and an emphasis on the role of the resurrection in this appointment as son of God.<sup>21</sup>

<b>3b:</b> having been born	<b>3b:</b> τοῦ γενομένου
<b>3c:</b> of the seed of David	<b>3c:</b> ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ
<b>4a:</b> having been appointed	<b>4a:</b> τοῦ ὀρισθέντος
<b>4b:</b> son of God	<b>4b:</b> υἱοῦ θεοῦ
<b>4e:</b> by resurrection from the dead	<b>4e:</b> ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν

2) The second stage is a Hellenistic Christian modification. They add 3d, κατὰ σάρκα, and most of 4d, κατὰ πνεῦμα (but not ἀγιωσύνης), as shown in the table below. Driven by Greek cultural attachment to the categories of σαρξ and πνεῦμα, this redaction aims to shift the emphasis of the passage. First, the addition of σάρκα, says Jewett, aims to weaken the importance of Jesus’ descent from the Jewish Messianic line. Second, the addition of πνεῦμα aims to weaken the idea of adoptionism and emphasize Christ’s divinity. According to Jewett, the perspective of this redaction is that “the redemptive power of Christ derives from his spiritual authority rather than from his Davidic origin.”<sup>22</sup>

<b>3b:</b> having been born	<b>3b:</b> τοῦ γενομένου
<b>3c:</b> of the seed of David	<b>3c:</b> ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ
<b>3d:</b> <i>according to the flesh</i>	<b>3d:</b> κατὰ σάρκα,
<b>4a:</b> having been appointed	<b>4a:</b> τοῦ ὀρισθέντος
<b>4b:</b> son of God	<b>4b:</b> υἱοῦ θεοῦ
<b>4d:</b> <i>according to the spirit</i>	<b>4d:</b> κατὰ πνεῦμα
<b>4e:</b> by resurrection from the dead	<b>4e:</b> ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν

3) The third stage is the final redaction by the author of Romans.<sup>23</sup> The author adds 4c, ἐν δυνάμει, *in power*, and the substantive ἀγιωσύνης, *of holiness*, to 4d, as shown in the table below. Thus, 4a to 4e now reads as we have it in the letter: “having been appointed son of God *in power* according to the spirit *of holiness* by resurrection from the dead.” The author of course also adds the introduction and conclusion at 3a and 4f, as already discussed. This final redaction, Jewett argues, aims to support the author’s purpose of reconciling the Jewish and Hellenistic Christian factions in Rome. The addition of *in power* was to further avert the note of adoptionism in the original creedal material. And, in Jewett’s view, the addition of ἀγιωσύνης was for a moral purpose, to avoid the possibility of libertinism that is allegedly inserted into the formula by the Hellenistic addition of κατὰ πνεῦμα. Jewett argues for this by pointing to the two other places where Paul uses the substantive ἀγιωσύνη

21. See JEWETT 2007, p. 104; JEWETT 1985, p. 113-114.

22. JEWETT 2007, p. 106; JEWETT 1985, p. 116.

23. See JEWETT 2007, pp. 106-107; JEWETT 1985, pp. 117-120.

(1 Thes. 3:13, 2 Cor. 7:1). Because the word is used in moral contexts in those two places, he draws the conclusion that for Paul the word has a specifically moral significance.

<b>3a: Concerning his son,</b> <b>3b:</b> having been born <b>3c:</b> of the seed of David <b>3d:</b> according to the flesh  <b>4a:</b> having been appointed <b>4b:</b> son of God <b>4c: in power</b> <b>4d:</b> according to the spirit <i>of holiness</i> <b>4e:</b> by resurrection from the dead <b>4f: Jesus Christ our Lord,</b>	<b>3a: περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ,</b> <b>3b:</b> τοῦ γενομένου <b>3c:</b> ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ <b>3d:</b> κατὰ σάρκα,  <b>4a:</b> τοῦ ὀρισθέντος <b>4b:</b> υἱοῦ θεοῦ <b>4c: ἐν δυνάμει</b> <b>4d:</b> κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης <b>4e:</b> ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν <b>4f: Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν,</b>
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Jewett additionally argues that even in the introductory formula of 3a, Paul is averting the adoptionist interpretation of the early confession. Jewett writes: “By introducing the credo with these words, however, Paul thwarts adoptionist inferences and qualifies the Davidic sonship by stressing that Jesus was the Son of God prior to his earthly appearance.”<sup>24</sup>

## 2. John Adimula

Adimula takes up Jewett’s three-stage theory directly.<sup>25</sup> He thinks Jewett’s theory is plausible, but that Jewett has not given enough evidence to establish his point. He agrees with Jewett’s characterization of the emphases of the Jewish Christians and the Hellenistic Christians, but against Jewett’s three stages of redaction, he says we might suppose that there was enough intermingling between the Jewish and Hellenistic Christians that we need not divide their contributions into two stages. Rather, it is possible that the two communities developed common expressions of faith. Thus the *sarx-pneuma* type of thinking supposed to be the Hellenistic addition may have already penetrated the Jewish Christian mindset. Adimula sees this evidenced in Romans’ frequent usage of the term πνεῦμα, thirty-four times, and its presence in the ancient formula at 1:4. However, Adimula acknowledges that the two groups were indeed initially separate and had to be united at some point. There may have been different manners of expressing the faith. He suggests that what we may have in Romans 1:3-4 is Paul borrowing a confession of faith that is one upon which both groups can be united, thus furthering his purpose of unifying Jew and Hellenist.<sup>26</sup>

24. JEWETT 2007, p. 107.

25. See ADIMULA 2021b, pp. 121-127.

26. See ADIMULA 2021b, p. 124.

Adimula agrees that the fragment of 3b to 4e pre-dates Paul, and also that we can see ἐν δυνάμει and ἀγιοσύνης as two Pauline additions to that fragment. He thinks Paul's addition of *in power* was based on Paul's discernment of Jesus' transcendence, as seen in Paul's clear emphasis on Jesus' pre-existent lordship.<sup>27</sup>

He disagrees, however, with Jewett's claim that Paul added ἀγιοσύνης for a moral purpose.<sup>28</sup> Jewett made this claim based on his interpretation that the two other uses of ἀγιοσύνη in the New Testament, 1 Thes. 3:13 and 2 Cor. 7:1, both Pauline, employ it with an ethical meaning.<sup>29</sup> But Adimula argues that Paul deploys the language of *holiness* much more broadly than Jewett and others acknowledge. Adimula counts Paul using the language of holiness sixty-three times in his letters up to and including Romans, and he concludes that it is common to him and a typically Pauline idea.<sup>30</sup> Paul's wide usage of holiness shows him often using the notion outside of moral contexts. He uses it in benedictions, regarding the Holy Spirit and the gospel, speaking of prayer and the saints, among others. Recall that Jewett believed ἀγιοσύνης was added by Paul in order to counter an alleged libertinism expressed by the addition of κατὰ πνεῦμα. Adimula notes, however, that two other passages employ the flesh-spirit dialectic in the context of Christ's resurrection without using ἀγιοσύνη. These are the two passages mentioned earlier as evidence of Romans 1:3-4's pre-Pauline character, under the criterion of multiple attestation: 1 Tim. 3:16b and 1 Pet. 3:18. Adimula sees this commonality in the use of the flesh-spirit dialectic as evidence of the Pauline redaction of ἀγιοσύνης. He writes:

Since the two passages have also been regarded as testifying to the early tradition anterior to Paul, it, therefore, suggests strongly that the early tradition simply employs σὰρξ-πνεῦμα in their expressions of faith in describing the mystery of Christ in this sense. Paul, having the idea of holiness and the terminologies already, redacted Rom 1:4 without wanting to alter the traditional representation simply added the substantive to κατὰ πνεῦμα.<sup>31</sup>

According to Adimula, there is no moral point made in the original formula. It is strictly christological. Paul's addition of ἀγιοσύνης does not add a moral exhortation. So, then, why would Paul have added ἀγιοσύνης? As we will see in the next section, Adimula argues that its addition was part of an emerging Christian understanding about the role of the Holy Spirit.

27. See ADIMULA 2021a, pp. 351-352; and ADIMULA 2021b, p. 125.

28. See ADIMULA 2021a, pp. 353-356.

29. See JEWETT 2007, pp. 106-107.

30. See ADIMULA 2021a, p. 354. He writes: "When one investigates the Pauline letters anterior to Romans and in Romans itself, it is obvious that Paul employs the language of holiness up to 63 times: as a verb ἀγιάζω (6 times), as nouns ἁγιασμός (7 times), ἅγιος (46 times), ἀγιότης (once) and substantive ἀγιοσύνη (3 times). It is without a doubt that the language and idea of holiness are common to Paul even before the letter to the Romans."

31. ADIMULA 2021a, p. 354.

## V. Analysis of Text

Having examined the origin and redaction history of our pericope, we now move on to our fifth step, offering some analysis of the text, and attempting to clarify some of its complexities. We will focus on two points: the flesh-spirit dialectic and the question of adoptionism.

As we have seen, vv. 3 and 4 are clearly meant to be read as an antithetical parallel of the flesh-spirit poles in Jesus' existence. But how are we to interpret the flesh-spirit dialectic here? What does each side of the dialectic represent and what is their connection? Some see a reference to Jesus' two natures as human and divine, with some more radically claiming that v. 4 implies a belief that Christ *became divine* at his resurrection.<sup>32</sup> This is the adoptionist reading. Additionally, many interpret πνεῦμα in v. 4 to refer to the Holy Spirit, and thus see the verse as referring to the role of the Third Person of the Trinity as the agent of the resurrection, as the one who raises Jesus. Indeed the passage as we find it in Romans seems to intend a reference to the Holy Spirit, but perhaps our examination of the redaction of the text can help us develop this perspective further, and shed light on the faith of primitive Christianity.

If we accept Adimula and Jewett's argument that Paul added ἀγιωσύνης to an original clause κατὰ πνεῦμα, what was his intention in doing so? Adimula argues that the addition of ἀγιωσύνης to the formula was part of an evolution that took place in the early Christian understanding of πνεῦμα. His thesis is that πνεῦμα was first employed to describe the spiritual condition of Christ, but its meaning evolved to refer to the Third Person of the Trinity.<sup>33</sup> Thus the original formula in Rom. 1:3-4 used πνεῦμα to refer to Jesus' spiritual condition, and Paul's addition of ἀγιωσύνης "portray[s] the evolution of the Spirit as an agent of sanctification already expressed in the Pauline corpus, as the Spirit who sanctifies."<sup>34</sup> Reading Rom. 1:3-4 in comparison with the other two New Testament passages that use the flesh-spirit dialectic christologically, 1 Pet. 3:18 and 1 Tim. 3:16, both seeming to be drawn from primitive Christian expressions, and neither of which employing ἀγιωσύνης or any language of holiness, suggests that Paul has adapted or developed an earlier tradition in crafting his account of the gospel in the opening of Romans.<sup>35</sup>

Thus Adimula argues that the original formula refers to two distinct conditions in which Jesus existed, one before his resurrection and the other after his resurrection. Verse 3, then, refers to an earthly mode of existence that Jesus entered by the incarnation into David's line. And v. 4 refers to a spiritual mode

32. See, e.g., BULTMANN 1951, 1:49-50; Ernst KÄSEMANN, *Romans*, p. 12; EHRMAN 2014, pp. 218-225; DUNN 1980, pp. 33-36; and Adela Yarbro COLLINS and John J. COLLINS, *King and Messiah as Son of God*, pp. 117-118.

33. Adimula makes this argument in Ch. 4 of ADIMULA 2021b, pp. 131-159.

34. ADIMULA 2021a, pp. 355-356.

35. See ADIMULA 2021a, pp. 355.



of existence that he entered by his resurrection. The passage, then, is not about Jesus' nature or the agent of his resurrection, but about his mode of existence. *Flesh* here is what he has in common with the Davidic line, and *spirit* is what he has in common with God. Adimula suggests we see here a claim that Jesus' spiritual condition is "activated" by God through the resurrection. To support this point, he cites Eph. 1:19-20: "the working of his great might which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places."

He argues that it is through this lens that we must interpret the verb ὀρίζω, to *appoint* or *designate*, which so many have taken as saying that the resurrection bestowed divine sonship on Jesus. The meaning of ὀρίζω in this passage is ambiguous, and the correct interpretation is hotly debated among scholars. Determining the proper interpretation of ὀρίζω is complicated by the fact that this is the only usage of the word by Paul. It is used elsewhere in the New Testament, in Luke, Acts, and Hebrews. Three of these instances refer to Christ, each in the passive, in Luke 22:22, Acts 2:23, and Acts 10:42. According to Adimula's analysis, in each of these three usages the verb means "appointed" in a timeless sense according to the plan of God.<sup>36</sup> According to Adimula, ἐν δυνάμει, *in power*, is better read as connected with the verb ὀρίζω at 4a than with υἱοῦ θεοῦ, *son of God*, at 4b.<sup>37</sup> Thus the reading would be that Jesus is *appointed in power as the son of God*, rather than that he is *appointed as the son of God who is in power*. Taken this way, ὀρίζω means that Jesus' divine sonship is revealed, made known, through the resurrection, that he is exalted in his very sonship through the resurrection. We can see a link here with the exaltation expressed in Phil. 2:9. So, then, he is son of God before, during, and after the resurrection. The resurrection has no bearing on this ontological state. But his divine sonship is revealed through the resurrection, and he is now glorified in his divine sonship. Adimula thinks we could see ὀρίζω used with a *functional* meaning, such that Christ now, in his state as God-man, takes on authority in his exalted status as son of God.<sup>38</sup> This is instead of giving ὀρίζω an *ontological* meaning in the sense that Jesus takes on divine sonship as a new mode of existence.

So, rather than an adoptionist reading that sees the passage referring to Christ's movement from human nature to divine nature by his resurrection, the proposal here is that Jesus is God-man throughout the phases of his existence, but there is a change in his condition, in his mode of existence, that

36. ADIMULA 2021b, p. 117.

37. ADIMULA 2021b, p. 118. As testimony to the interpretation difficulties here, Bates likewise attempts to avert an adoptionist reading, but by making the opposite argument. He thinks ἐν δυνάμει is best tied to υἱοῦ θεοῦ to form the christological title "Son-of-God-in-power." See BATES 2015, pp. 125-127.

38. ADIMULA 2021b, p. 118.



occurs through his resurrection. Jesus is fully human and fully divine before and after. He has human body and soul before and after, but something happens through his resurrection by which his humanity changes from “fleshly condition” like ours in our earthly state to a “spiritual condition” that makes it more akin to the divine and gives him access to heaven and to exaltation in heaven.

It will help our understanding here to refer to 1 Cor. 15, where Paul draws the distinction between the body before and after the resurrection. 1 Cor. 15:42-45 associates πνεῦμα closely with the condition to which one is given access through the resurrection. Paul writes:

So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body (σῶμα ψυχικόν), it is raised a spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν). If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Paul here distinguishes between the pre-resurrection σῶμα ψυχικόν, *physical body*, and the post-resurrection σῶμα πνευματικόν, *spiritual body*. The condition at the resurrection is spiritual, opposed to the earthly condition. This passage, while about the general resurrection, also comments on the nature of Jesus’ resurrection. Clearly Romans 1:3-4 and other texts highlight a unique change in Jesus, an exaltation that occurs in his own resurrection, but in 1 Cor. 15, Paul indicates there is an analogous change in condition that occurs for the blessed in the general resurrection.

The argument for the Pauline redaction of ἀγιοσύνης and ἐν δυνάμει is strengthened by examining how Paul uses ἐν δυνάμει. I propose that in adding ἀγιοσύνης to πνεῦμα, Paul himself was forming the phrase πνεῦμα ἀγιοσύνης as a reference to the Holy Spirit in Semitic form. If we examine Paul’s uses of the phrase ἐν δυνάμει we find that he frequently employs it to speak of the power of God (1 Cor. 2:5, 1 Cor. 4:20, 1 Cor. 5:4 – speaking of Jesus, 2 Cor. 6:7, 2 Thes. 1:11), but also in speaking specifically of the power of the Holy Spirit. He does this at 1 Thes. 1:5: “for our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit” (ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ). But he also does it two times in Romans itself at 15:13 (ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος ἁγίου) and 15:19 (ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος). Moreover, in addition to Rom. 1:4, he uses the phrase ἐν δυνάμει in connection with resurrection at 1 Cor. 15:43: “It is sown in weakness, *it is raised in power*” (σπεύρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει). Thus, I suggest that resurrection, Holy Spirit, and the phrase ἐν δυνάμει are connected concepts for Paul as he is writing the letter.

I argue then that in Rom. 1:3-4, Paul took a formula referring to a transition in Jesus’ mode of existence (from fleshly to spiritual) and developed it in line with a deepening understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit. The original

meaning is retained: the passage still speaks of Jesus taking on a new spiritual condition as we find described in 1 Cor. 15:42-45. As we saw above, Paul's use of πνεῦμα in 1 Cor. 15 is the same as Adimula ascribes to the original formula of Rom. 1:3-4, referring to the spiritual condition of Jesus rather than to the Holy Spirit. But in redacting Rom. 1:3-4, Paul deepens the original formula in a Trinitarian key by adding ἐν δυνάμει and ἀγιοσύνης. The reference to the Holy Spirit need not imply that the Holy Spirit is the agent of the resurrection. Adimula points out that the resurrection is never described as being accomplished by the Holy Spirit elsewhere in the New Testament. Rather it is mostly ascribed to God. He notes that Paul does not present the Spirit as acting upon Jesus, but proceeding from Jesus or representing Jesus (see Rom. 8:9, Gal. 4:6, Phil. 1:19). So, we could see here instead a further specification, or description, of Jesus' post-resurrection mode of existence. Jesus not only exists in a new "spiritual" condition, but, Paul adds, this spiritual condition is like that of the Holy Spirit.

## VI. The Status of 4e: ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν

Now that we have analyzed the text and considered some scholarly views of its redaction and interpretation, I have one final proposal to offer about Paul's redaction of the formula.<sup>39</sup>

The line at 4e, ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, has generally been considered part of the primitive formula. We saw that the primitive character of 4e is important to Jewett's three-stage analysis. Adimula explains, "The resurrection of Jesus which forms the backbone of verse 4 is (...) not originated from Paul. The belief in and the expressions about Jesus' resurrection began earlier before Paul came into the picture."<sup>40</sup> An examination of other verses that bear the marks of a primitive character clearly supports Adimula's point: belief in Jesus' resurrection from the dead is part of the tradition that Paul received and passes on. Paul is explicit about this in 1 Cor. 15:3-5: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ (...) was raised (ἐγήγερται) on the third day in accordance with the scriptures..." Moreover, the notion of resurrection *from the dead* (ἐκ νεκρῶν) is attested in primitive formulas (see Rom. 4:24b and Rom. 10:9b).

However, confession of Jesus' resurrection is so foundational to the Christian gospel that we need not see every reference to it as a sign that the author is borrowing a formula. While profession of Jesus' resurrection is typical of ancient formulas, it is likewise typical of Paul. The phrase itself,

39. For this last point about 4e, I am indebted to the insight of my professor, Fr. Michel Gourgues, O.P., shared during a seminar attended at Dominican University College in Ottawa (Sept.-Dec. 2022).

40. ADIMULA 2021a, p. 348.

ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, connecting ἀνάστασις and νεκρός, is, in fact, not found in the ancient formulas, but it is indeed found in Paul's own formulations, such as at 1 Cor. 15:12-13, 1 Cor. 15:21, and Phil. 3:11. So the reason given for including 4e as part of the ancient formula is not sufficient.

There is reason, however, to think that 4e is instead an addition. Namely, its inclusion in the formula would break the parallel structure that we find between the primitive elements of vv. 3 and 4, at least if the division of the text that I have proposed is accepted.<sup>41</sup> The table below, showing 3b through 4e as they appear in their integrity in Romans, highlights the elements that break the parallel structure, namely 4c, *in power*, the last portion of 4d, *of holiness*, and 4e. Once those elements are removed, we see the parallels clearly, between 3b and 4a, 3c and 4b, and 3d and 4d (minus ἀγιοσύνης).

<b>3b:</b> having been born	<b>4a:</b> having been appointed
<b>3c:</b> of the seed of David	<b>4b:</b> son of God
	<b>4c:</b> <i>in power</i>
<b>3d:</b> according to the flesh	<b>4d:</b> according to the spirit <i>of holiness</i>
	<b>4e:</b> <i>by resurrection from the dead,</i>

## Conclusion

In an influential article arguing for Paul's original composition of Rom. 1:3-4, Christopher Whitsett contests the idea that Paul is "woodenly citing" an earlier formula, and insists that he, rather, "makes his own conscious use of an early conventional exegesis" of the prophecies in 2 Sam. 7:14 and Psalm 2:7.<sup>42</sup> But does the view that Paul draws on an earlier Christian expression of faith mean that he is "woodenly citing" an earlier formula, in Whitsett's terms? Clearly not. Paul assuredly included vv. 3-4 in Romans with full knowledge of their exegetical import to the broader themes and arguments of the letter, as Whitsett maintains. We can say this, though, without dismissing the strong evidence that we are indeed in the presence of a text that draws on a traditional formula. The fact that Paul uses a formula does not mean that he does so unthinkingly. In fact, it seems right to presume that Paul is being quite

41. As noted above, some see 4e as integral to the parallelism as part of an ABBA structure. For further discussion of the possible Pauline redaction of ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν see the brief arguments to this effect in Charles Kingsley BARRETT, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, New York NY, Harper, 1957, pp. 18-20 and Gijs BOUWMAN, *Paulus aan de Romeinen: Een retorische analyse van Rom 1-8*, Abdij Averbode, Werkgroep voor Levensverdieping, 1980, pp. 124-127. Jewett critiques both authors at JEWETT 1985, p. 105.

42. WHITSETT 2000, p. 661. In 2 Sam. 7, God promises to establish the house of David as a throne to last forever from his line. In v. 14, God promises: "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." In Psalm 2:7, we have God's promise to his holy one: "I will tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you.'"

thoughtful in the choice of material he employs. Paul, it seems, has borrowed an existing formula and then adapted it and made it his own.

We have already noted the many reasons for finding pre-Pauline material here: the parallelism of the two verses, the disparity of vocabulary and ideas from Paul's other writing, the shift to use of the third person, the disruption in content from the surrounding environment, the presence of an introductory formula, and multiple attestation among ancient formulas. Further, we have shown that there are elements here that are well attested as Pauline notions and phrases: ἐν δυνάμει, ἀγιωσύνη, and Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. Moreover, we have proposed that the inclusion of ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν at 4e is more likely a Pauline redaction than a part of the original formula.

Our analysis, then, allows us to propose a hypothesis for delineating the original material from the Pauline redactions. I suggest the pre-Pauline formula runs from 3b to 4d, excluding 4c, ἐν δυνάμει, excluding ἀγιωσύνη from 4d, and excluding 4e. Paul's addition, then, is an opening and closing clause at 3a and 4f, as well as ἐν δυνάμει, ἀγιωσύνη, and 4e. We can see these findings in the following table, with the original material bolded and the redacted material italicized:

<b>3a: Concerning his son,</b> <b>3b: having been born</b> <b>3c: of the seed of David</b> <b>3d: according to the flesh</b>  <b>4a: having been appointed</b> <b>4b: son of God</b> <i>4c: in power</i> <b>4d: according to the spirit of holiness</b> <i>4e: by resurrection from the dead,</i> <b>4f: Jesus Christ our Lord,</b>	<b>3a: περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ,</b> <b>3b: τοῦ γενομένου</b> <b>3c: ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ</b> <b>3d: κατὰ σάρκα,</b>  <b>4a: τοῦ ὀρισθέντος</b> <b>4b: υἱοῦ θεοῦ</b> <i>4c: ἐν δυνάμει</i> <b>4d: κατὰ πνεῦμα ἀγιωσύνης</b> <i>4e: ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν,</i> <b>4f: Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν,</b>
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So, if our hypothesis is correct, then the original formula would read as follows:

<b>3b: having been born</b> <b>3c: of the seed of David</b> <b>3d: according to the flesh</b>	<b>4a: having been appointed</b> <b>4b: son of God</b> <b>4d: according to the spirit</b>
<b>3b: τοῦ γενομένου</b> <b>3c: ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ</b> <b>3d: κατὰ σάρκα,</b>	<b>4a: τοῦ ὀρισθέντος</b> <b>4b: υἱοῦ θεοῦ</b> <b>4d: κατὰ πνεῦμα</b>

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## SUMMARY

In his salutation in Romans, Paul inserts two verses, 1:3-4, explaining the message of the gospel with unusual expressions. The meaning of this passage has been hotly debated for centuries. In 1976, biblical scholar Martin Hengel wrote that "in recent years, more has been written about this text than about any other New Testament text." A crucial point of the debate has been the origin of the verses, namely: To what extent is Rom. 1:3-4 from a pre-Pauline tradition? In this paper, we examine the evidence that Paul draws on an existing creedal formula and propose a hypothesis for delineating the pre-Pauline and Pauline material. As we proceed, we seek to discern what our analysis might reveal about how Christians' understanding of their faith developed in the earliest decades of Christianity.

## SOMMAIRE

Dans son adresse de la lettre aux Romains, Paul inclut deux versets (Rm 1,3-4) qui rendent compte du message de l'Évangile en des termes inusités. Le sens de ce passage a été vivement débattu depuis des siècles. C'est ainsi que l'exégète Martin Hengel a pu écrire en 1976 que « dans les années récentes, il s'est écrit sur ce passage plus que sur n'importe quel autre du Nouveau Testament ». Un aspect majeur dans ce débat concerne l'origine de ces deux versets : dans quelle mesure Rm 1,3-4 est-il à attribuer à une tradition pré-paulinienne ? Dans cette étude, après avoir examiné les indices selon lesquels Paul fait référence à une confession de foi déjà existante, nous proposons une hypothèse quant au départage des éléments pauliniens et pré-pauliniens. Ce faisant, nous tentons de discerner ce que pourrait révéler une telle analyse au sujet des développements que connut la compréhension de leur foi par les chrétiens au cours des premières décennies du christianisme.