FINDING CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THROUGH

THE ARAMAIC *MEMRA*, *SHEKINAH*, AND *YEQARA*

OF THE TARGUMS

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A Dissertation

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the Faculty of

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Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Adam Joseph Howell

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APPROVAL SHEET

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Adam Joseph Howell

Read and Approved by:

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Russell T. Fuller (Chair)

_____
Terry J. Betts

_____
William F. Cook III

Date_____

To Liz,

my co-heir of the grace of life,

my Beloved

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

General

BDB   Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles Briggs, Edward Robinson, and
Wilhelm Gesenius, eds. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old
Testament, With an Appendix Containing Biblical Aramaic*
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952.

GCK   E. Kautzsch, ed. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Translated by A. E.
Cowley. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2006.

JM   Joüon, Paul, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew.* Translated by T.
Muraoka 2 vols. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000.

LXX   Septuagint

mg.   marginal gloss (in *Targum Neofiti*)

MT   Masoretic Text (Hebrew Old Testament)

Targumic Texts

CTg.   *Cairo Genizah Targum* manuscript fragments (of *Palestinian
Targums*), followed by manuscript identifier.

Frg. Tg(s).   *Fragmentary Targum(s)* (of the Pentateuch)

Tg. Isa, etc.   *Targum Isaiah*, etc. (from *Targum Jonathan* of the Later Prophets)

Tg. Jon.   *Targum Jonathan* (of the Prophets)

Tg. Josh, etc.   *Targum Joshua,* etc. (from *Targum Jonathan* of the Former Prophets)

Tg. Neof.   *Targum Neofiti* (of the Pentateuch)

Tg. Neof. [mg.]   *Targum Neofiti* marginal gloss

Tg. Onq.   *Targum Onqelos* (of the Pentateuch)

Tg. Ps.-J.   *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* (of the Pentateuch)

Tg. Ps, etc.	*Targum Psalms* (of the Writings)

Qumran Manuscripts

4QtgLev	*Targum of Leviticus*
11QtgJob	*Targum of Job*

Mishnah, Talmud, and Rabbinic Sources

Abod. Zar.	*Avodah Zarah*
Abot	*Avot*
Abot R. Nat.	*Avot of Rabbi Nathan*
Arak.	*Arakhin*
b.	Babylonian Talmud (e.g., *b. Berakhot*)
B. Bat.	*Bava Batra*
Ber.	*Berakhot*
Deut. Rab.	*Deuteronomy Rabbah*
Exod. Rab.	*Exodus Rabbah*
Hul.	*Hullin*
Gen. Rab.	*Genesis Rabbah*
m.	Mishnah (e.g., *m. Sukkah*)
Mak.	*Makkot*
Meg.	*Megillah*
Naz.	*Nazir*
Neg.	*Nega'im*
Qoh. Rab.	*Qoheleth Rabbah*
Roš Haš.	*Rosh HaShanah*
Šabb.	*Shabbat*
Sanh.	*Sanhedrin*
Šebu.	*Shevu'ot*

t.	*Tosefta*
Taʿan	*Taʿanit*
y.	Jerusalem Talmud (e.g., *y. Megillah*)
Zebah	*Zevahim*

Secondary Sources

AB	Anchor Bible
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
Bib	*Biblica*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
ChrCent	*Christian Century*
CurTM	*Currents in Theology and Mission*
EstBib	*Estudios bíblicos*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JPSTC	Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*

NAC	New American Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	*Novem Testamentum*
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
SwJT	*Southwestern Journal of Theology*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

PREFACE

Writing a dissertation is not a journey that one travels alone. Most often, the author stands on the shoulders of those who have sacrificially given of their time and resources to see this work completed. Doctor Russell Fuller, my dissertation supervisor, has provided feedback that has made this dissertation a worthwhile project. He has taught me to think critically, even about my own writing. By doing so, he has made me a better writer and scholar, and I am deeply indebted for his patience and diligent oversight of this project. Doctors T. J. Betts and William Cook have been sources of encouragement along the way and helped me see the light at the end, even in the most difficult days of this endeavor. Their pastoral demeanor will be rewarded at the resurrection.

This project is also a result of the prayers and encouragement of many friends and family. My parents have offered their home to my family on many occasions so that I could have time away to write. For that I am deeply thankful. My friends and colleagues at Southern Seminary have challenged my thinking on this project and offered encouraging words that pushed me to complete this dissertation. I am especially grateful for Ryan Hanley, who is a bulwark of encouragement to me.

No words would adequately express my gratitude to my wife, Liz. In the toughest days and in the most difficult seasons of this journey, her encouragement and praise remained unceasing. Many wives have sacrificed much for their husbands to complete a dissertation, but Liz has exceeded them all. This dissertation is a testimony of her love and faithfulness. My love for Liz has grown immensely over the past years, and I am excited to live the rest of this journey with my co-heir in the grace of life, my

beloved.

Finally, the Lord has given me grace through long nights and early mornings to complete this work for the glory of his name and the building up of his kingdom. My greatest desire is that God would be honored with this work and that Jesus would be exalted. To God alone, through Christ, be the glory.

Adam J. Howell

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2015

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For centuries, an important task for Christian scholars has been to find Christ

in the Old Testament. Among modern evangelical scholars, finding Christ in the Old

Testament is a fundamental pursuit. Various methods have been used to accomplish this

task, but one exegetical method used by the apostles was to employ terms and concepts

from the Targums.[1] The apostles certainly used other methods to find Christ in the Old

Testament, but targumic exegesis is a method that is often overlooked.[2] Modern scholars

who follow the exegetical patterns and interpretations of the apostles have the surest

footing in finding Christ in the Old Testament. Since the New Testament authors used

terms and concepts from the Targums to speak of Jesus, further investigating targumic

vocabulary and theological concepts is a legitimate method to see if the Targums possibly

point to Christ in the Old Testament. This exegetical method for finding Christ in the Old

Testament, so far, has not been fully exhausted.

Many biblical scholars often neglect the exegetical and theological value of the

Targums, and yet, as part of the first-century cultural milieu, these traditions on the

Hebrew Bible likely influenced the writers of the New Testament.[3] The extent to which

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[1]Craig Evans provides examples unrelated to *Memra*, *Shekinah*, or *Yeqara* in *Tg. Isa* 6:9–10
(cf. Mark 4:12); *Tg. Isa* 50:11 (cf. Matt 26:52); and *Tg. Isa* 5:1–7 (cf. Mark 12:1–12). See Craig Evans,
"Jewish Exegesis," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, et al.
(Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 381.

[2]For discussions of New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament and whether modern
scholars can mimic these techniques, see G. K. Beale, ed. *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?
Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker), 1994.

[3]Throughout this work the term "Hebrew Bible" will be used to speak of the Old Testament,
distinguishing between the Aramaic Old Testament (Targums) and the Hebrew Old Testament. The term

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New Testament authors appropriated targumic terms and ideas remains debatable.[4]

However, one could argue that New Testament authors used targumic concepts to explain

the person of Jesus Christ. By glancing at the Targums of Genesis 1, John's *Logos*

theology becomes evident as well as Paul's claims that "by Him all things were created"

(Col 1:16).[5] Indeed, the Targums provide a lens through which New Testament authors

read the Hebrew Bible and thus understood the Christ in their Scriptures.

The New Testament authors appropriated many contemporary traditions (Acts

17:28; Jude 14), and the Targums were included among these available sources. Second

Timothy 3:8–9 provides names of the two magicians in Pharaoh's court (Exod 7:11–12),

and yet these names are nowhere revealed in the Hebrew Bible. Instead, the Targums

likely provided Paul with the names of the Egyptian sorcerers in *Pseudo-Jonathan*

Exodus 7:11.[6] In addition, Martin McNamara has seen other possible targumic

similarities in the name "Zechariah, son of Barachiah" (Matt 23:35; *Tg. Lam* 2:20), the

idea of extending mercy (Luke 6:36; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Lev 22:28), and the phrase "son of man."[7]

These examples, among others, show that targumic concepts probably influenced New

Testament revelation in the first century.[8]

"Old Testament" will be used when specifically speaking of the Christian canon.

[4]The debate over the extent to which New Testament authors appropriated targumic terms will be discussed later in this chapter.

[5]John Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 21–24, 247–48; Martin McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 146–66; Domingo Muñoz Leon, *Dios-Palabra. Memra en los Targumim del Pentateuco* (Granada: Institucion S. Jeronimo, 1974), 607–11.

[6]McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited*, 236; Roger Le Déaut, "Targumic Literature and New Testament Interpretation," *BTB* 4, no. 3 (1974): 254; Lester L. Grabbe, "The Jannes/Jambres Tradition in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Its Date," *JBL* 98, no. 3 (1979): 393–401.

[7]For a summary of these and other similarities, see McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited*, 231–42. For the phrase "son of man" (בר נשא) in Jewish Aramaic, see Geza Vermes' study in Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 310–30.

[8]Whether the targumic traditions existed in the first century as *oral* traditions or *written* texts is debated. Those scholars who argue for written texts typically appeal to the Targum fragments found at

The New Testament authors not only used concepts from the targumic tradition, but they also appropriated specific targumic words in their writing. Three terms appear to shed light on how the New Testament authors understood Jesus' functional roles as the divine Son through the targumic traditions. The *Memra* (מימרא, 'word') creates, redeems, receives worship, and acts as a warrior on behalf of Israel.[9] The *Shekinah* (שכינתה/שכינה, 'presence') represents the manifest presence of God as in the pillar of fire and cloud at the exodus (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 13:21). Finally, *Yeqara* (יקרא, 'glory') is the visible, shining glory of Yahweh (*Tg. Isa* 6:1). In the Targums, these terms often function as an agent of God or a manifestation of God. Similarly, the New Testament presents Jesus as the agent and manifestation of God. Therefore, these three targumic terms may contribute to the New Testament presentation of Jesus' functional roles.[10]

Qumran (4QtgLev; 11QtgJob; 4QtgJob), or to the allusions in the Mishnah and Jerusalem Talmud that Targums would be read (*y. Meg.* 74d; *m. Meg.* 2:1). However, even if the Targums were only oral in the first century, the primacy placed on oral tradition in Jewish culture suggests that the targumic traditions were accessible and accurate renditions of the meaning of Scripture.

Many scholars reject the use of the Targums in New Testament studies on account of the late date of the written Targums. Flesher and Chilton date the Targums between AD 50 and AD 400–450. (Paul V. M. Flesher and Bruce Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction* [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011], 151–66). However, the rejection of the Targums' value based on their relatively late date can be questioned on a couple of grounds. First, most scholars accept the Mishnah as representative of first-century Pharisaic Judaism, and yet the Mishnah was not written down until around AD 200 (Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: An Introduction and Reader* [Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992], 5). If the Mishnah can represent traditions present in the first century (or earlier), then the Targums ought to be able to represent traditions that existed in the first century. Second, the Mishnah provides directions for the practice of Aramaic, targumic recitation (e.g., *m. Meg.* 2:1) suggesting that the traditions preserved in the written Targums existed in the first-century synagogue and would have been a part of the apostles' lives. Therefore, notwithstanding the issue of the written documents, good evidence exists for studying the Targums alongside the New Testament. For more arguments supporting an early date for the Palestinian Targums, see McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited*, 132–35.

[9]For summaries of the additional functions of the *Memra*, see Robert Hayward, *Divine Name and Presence: The Memra* (Totowa, NJ: Allanheld, Osmun, 1981); Bruce Chilton, *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Provenience of the Isaiah Targum*, JSOTSup 23 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 56–77.

[10]Another term that is germane to the discussion is *Dibbera/Dibbura* (דבורא/דבירא). Although *Dibbera* is an important term related to John's use of *Logos*, this dissertation is limited to occurrences of *Memra, Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* particularly. For comments on *Dibbera*, see Ferdinand Weber, *Jüdische Theologie auf Grund des Talmud und verwandter Schriften, gemeinfasslich dargestellt.*

Indeed, Jesus fulfills the roles expressed by these targumic terms. Paul and John teach that the Son of Man creates (John 1:3; Col 1:16–17) and conquers (Rev 19:13). In addition, the New Testament presents Jesus as the physical manifestation of the Godhead dwelling among men (John 1:14; Col 1:15, 27; Phil 2:6–7). Finally, Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God in the New Testament (2 Cor 4:6; Heb 1:3). The Apostle John combines all of these facets of targumic tradition in the prologue to his gospel. He identifies Jesus specifically as the "Word" (corresponding to *Memra*), but he also says that Jesus has "become flesh and *dwelt* (corresponding to *Shekinah*) among us," and that he expresses a "*glory* (corresponding to *Yeqara*) as of the only Son from the Father." In other New Testament passages, Jesus secured an eternal redemption (Heb 9:12), and as God's agent to judge, he will return again to deliver retribution on the Father's behalf (2 Thess 1:7–10). The way New Testament authors present Jesus often corresponds to the targumic presentation of the Lord manifesting himself and working through an agent.

Thesis

Since these targumic terms, *Memra, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara,* often parallel the New Testament presentation of the person and work of Christ, and since the New Testament directly connects these words to Christ, *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* will be examined to find Christ in the Old Testament.

Methodology

This thesis will examine the targumic passages where the terms, מימרא*,* שכינה*,* and יקרא occur, and then compare the targumic tradition to Christological concepts presented in New Testament revelation. Additionally, this thesis will endeavor

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(Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1897), 180; B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John: With Introduction and Notes* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1958), xvi; John Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010), 13–16.

to follow the exegetical pattern of the apostles to argue whether targumic passages refer to Christ. Where exegesis provides a conceptual, theological, or thematic connection between the targumic *Memra*, *Shekinah*, or *Yeqara* and Jesus Christ, one may find Christ in the Old Testament. In some cases, determining whether these targumic terms refer to Christ may be debatable. In fact, passages exist where these terms do *not* refer to Christ. Accordingly, this study does not force these terms to prefigure Christ in the Old Testament. However, those passages in which the *Memra*, *Shekinah*, or *Yeqara* acts as the agent for the Father or a manifestation of the Father will be particularly helpful to determine if the targumic texts help one to find Christ in the Old Testament.

Historical Background

Targums in the Ancient Synagogue

In the ancient synagogue, Targum functioned as an official Pharisaic interpretation of the Hebrew Bible.[11] In fact, the word תרגום means "interpretation" or "translation."[12] Since languages other than Hebrew prevailed as the vernacular of ancient Palestine, Jewish leaders sought to provide Scripture's official interpretation in Aramaic to aid the understanding of the Hebrew Bible. In this sense, Targums were a way of "doing theology." They provided Jewish people with an official interpretation and application of Scripture so that they could understand its meaning.[13]

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[11]For general studies on the use of Targums in the ancient synagogue, see Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); Martin McNamara, *Palestinian Judaism and the New Testament*, Good New Studies 4 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983), 17–89, 171–210; P. S. Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures," in *Mikra*, ed. M. J. Mulder (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988), 242–50; S. A. Kaufman, "Dating the Language of the Palestinian Targums and Their Use in the Study of the First Century C. E. Texts," in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in Their Historical Context*, ed. D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 129–30.

[12]Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli, and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 1695. Jastrow states that תַּרְגּוּם is derived from the verbal תַּרְגֵּם, which means "to interpret, translate, explain" (ibid., 1696).

[13]Some scholars point to the LXX as having a similar function. E.g., see John Bowker, *The*

The first-century Jew would have been familiar enough with Hebrew to understand aspects of the synagogue liturgy.[14] John Bowker points out that Hebrew was "the language of revelation" for the Jewish people, and they would not easily discard this historical language.[15] Hebrew was, indeed, the language of their fathers. Additionally, scrolls from Qumran demonstrate the use of Hebrew even outside of Scripture, as in legal documents. That the Qumran community wrote non-biblical documents in Hebrew suggests that Hebrew was part of their daily culture.[16] Outside of Palestine, evidence also exists that Jewish communities wrote in Hebrew into the early centuries AD. Texts from Leontopolis, Alexandria, and Dura-Europos relay prayers written by Jewish communities in Hebrew.[17] In addition, the linguistic transition from Biblical Hebrew to Mishnaic Hebrew suggests that Hebrew continued as a known language in Judaism.[18] If another language had fully replaced Hebrew, the question stands why Hebrew continued to be used in Jewish communities both in Palestine and in the Diaspora.

Although the common man knew Hebrew, he also needed help with

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Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretations of Scripture (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 5.

[14]For discussions of the presence of Hebrew in the first century, see George P. Howard, "Hebrew in First Century Palestine," *ResQ* 5, no. 2 (1961): 57–61. See also the discussion by Bruce Chilton and Paul Flesher, who take a "middle ground" (Flesher and Chilton, *The Targums*, 4, 287–90). They argue that first-century Jews would have known enough Hebrew to participate in the synagogue liturgy, but not enough to *apply* the reading of the Hebrew Bible, thus, the need for Targum.

[15]Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 3. Even in the Targums, Hebrew is considered the "sacred language" as opposed to the *lingua profana*, spoken Aramaic (Wilhelm Genesius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A. E. Cowley [Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006], 9).

[16]Mosheh Bar-Asher, "Qumran Hebrew Between Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew: A Morphological Study," in *Dynamics of Language and Exegesis at Qumran*, ed. Devorah Dimant and Reinhard G. Kratz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 3–17.

[17]Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 7n5. That Hebrew continued to be used in prayers *outside of Palestine* is even more telling that Hebrew was known and used among common Jewish communities.

[18]M. H. Segal, "Mišnaic Hebrew and Its Relation to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic," *JQR* 20, no. 5 (1908): 647–737.

understanding the interpretation of Scripture. The Aramaic Targums functioned as an official interpretation of Scripture so that the common person could understand its *meaning*.[19] While scholars debate the extent to which Hebrew was known, most agree that the primary function of Targum was to translate the Hebrew Bible as an official Pharisaic interpretation.[20] Bowker says, "The tendency in translation to express meaning rather than to be literal was reinforced by the efforts of Jews in every generation to interpret scripture and apply it to their own situation."[21] This desire to communicate the meaning of Scripture applied to all translations found in ancient Palestine (Aramaic, Greek, etc.), but the Targums were especially important since they were part of the synagogue liturgy.

In the synagogue, rabbis or elders read the Hebrew Bible while another man would recite the Aramaic orally.[22] This interplay between the reader and *meturgeman* (מתורגמן, 'interpreter') allowed the audience to follow the meaning of the Hebrew text by hearing the interpretation in a more accessible language. Later rabbinic literature applied several rules to how this interplay would be conducted indicating that the practice of reciting Targum was a vital part of synagogue worship to be executed orderly and

[19]Martin McNamara highlights how the rabbis sought to explain the *meaning* of Scripture (McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited*, 79). He points to R. Judah ben Ilaʿi, who says, "He who translates a verse literally is a liar, and he who adds to it is a blasphemer" (*t. Meg.* 4:41; *Quiddushin* 49a). R. Judah ben Ilaʿi illustrates his point with Exod 24:10, "They saw the God of Israel." A literal Aramaic translation would make one a liar since no one has seen God. However, to insert the "angel" of the Lord would make one a blasphemer in R. Judah ben Ilaʿi's opinion. Therefore, he concludes the verse should be rendered, "They saw the *glory* of the God of Israel." McNamara relates this type of interpretative translation to what John does in John 12:41, where he says that Isaiah saw the glory of Christ (cf. Isa 6:1, 5).

[20]Flesher and Chilton's "middle ground" is probably the best example of scholars who argue that Hebrew knowledge was minimal, and yet the liturgical elements in Hebrew (*Shema*, Hebrew prayers, etc.) were memorized (Flesher and Chilton, *The Targums*, 287–90). Even though they argue that Hebrew was mostly out of use, they still agree that Targums' primary function was to interpret the Hebrew Bible.

[21]Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 5.

[22]See *y. Meg.* 4, 1, 74d, l.16.

consistently.[23] To correlate the targumic interpretation with the reading of the Hebrew text, one verse of the Torah would be read at a time while three verses of the Prophets were allowed. The reason given for such small sections was "so the translator will not err" (*m. Meg.* 4:4b). These strict rules for reading and translating highlight the value the synagogue placed on making the Scripture applicable to the common Jew.

To make the Hebrew reading understandable, Targums display several techniques to communicate the meaning of a text.[24] Targums often explain idioms or difficult texts (*Tg. Onq.* Gen 4:7), elaborate on poetic passages (*Tg. 1 Sam* 2:1–10), or expand theological terminology (*Tg. Jer* 42:11).[25] The terms *Memra, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara* fall under the third category as the Targums sought to *explain* God's actions in time and space through a manifest agent. In the same way Targums *explain* odd idioms (e.g., *Tg. Onq.* Gen 4:7), they also *explain* anthropomorphism (e.g., *Tg. Neof.* Gen 3:8). Targums used theological terminology in place of anthropomorphic language to explain the text, not to avoid anthropomorphism.[26] The Targums were "doing theology" by employing biblical terminology and extending it across broader contexts to explain Scripture to its contemporary audience (e.g., Ps 33:4–7; cf. *Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:1). The result of such targumic expansion was that first-century Jewish communities had an interpretive tradition to help them understand Scripture.

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[23]For the Rabbinic references to synagogue prescriptions related to the reading of the Hebrew Bible and its accompanied Aramaic translation, see *m. Meg.* 2:1; *t. Meg.* 2:6; *y. Meg.* 74d; *m. Meg* 4:4–6; *t. Meg.* 3:21. See also Josephus in *Against Apion* 2:175.

[24]For good introductions to targumic method, see Michael L. Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1986), 1:xxix–xxxiv; Roger Le Déaut, "Targum," in *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Paris: Letouzey, 2002), col 1–344; McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited*, 101–19.

[25]*Tg. Onq.* Gen 4:7 explains "sin is crouching at the door" as "sin is reserved for you in the future to be repaid by you." *Tg. Jer* 42:11 explains that God will "save" and "deliver" by "my *Memra*."

[26]See discussion and references in Robert Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah: Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 12 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987), 22–23.

Historical Background of Research

In later rabbinic literature, the use of some theological terms to explain Scripture changed. Words like *Memra* and *Yeqara,* found primarily in the Targums, were superseded by *Shekinah* in broader rabbinic discussions about God's interaction in time and space. Judaism studied the generic "presence" (*Shekinah*) of God, and yet the rabbis also redefined God's "presence" for their own purposes. Rabbis now interpreted the *Shekinah* as the presence of God in man's obedience to *Torah*.[27] Even though Judaism adapted these theological terms to reduce confusion about God's transcendent nature, the issue of intermediaries still lingered.[28]

During the Middle Ages, Jewish scholars discussed the meaning of anthropomorphic language in Scripture in order to establish a firm monotheism. Saadia Gaon rejected all notions of "substance or accident or the attribute of substance or an accident" related to God, and thus rejected the idea that God has a body.[29] Regarding anthropomorphic language of God, Gaon said,

> Hence it is out of question and impossible to declare Him to be anything that He has Himself created. Consequently for all divine attributes pertaining to either substance or accident that are encountered in the books of the prophets it is necessary to find in the language of Scripture non-anthropomorphic *meanings* that would be in keeping with the requirements of reason. Whenever, then, we the community of believers apply to God epithets that have the appearance of anthropomorphisms, this is due to our endeavor to give a proximate and figurative description of deity. They are not to be taken in the material sense in which we

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[27]Israel Abrahams argues that the Rabbis held onto the term *Shekinah* as a combination of the *Memra* (invisible presence of God in man) and the *Yeqara* (the visible presence of God in light) in Israel Abrahams, *The Glory of Israel: Three Lectures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), 50–52.

[28]Daniel Boyarin, "Beyond Judaisms: Metatron and the Divine Polymorphy of Ancient Judaism," *JSJ* 41, no. 3 (2010): 323–65; Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); G. H. Box, "The Idea of Intermediation in Jewish Theology: A Note on Memra and Shekinah," *JQR* 23, no. 2 (1932): 103–19.

[29]Saadia Gaon, *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions,* ed. Samuel Rosenblatt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1948), 93, 111–12. He says, "Once, then, the demand that the Creator be a physical being has been proved to be absurd, the arrogation to Him of bodily accidents in general must likewise be excluded" (ibid., 93).

would apply them to human beings.[30]

For Gaon, anthropomorphic language about God was intended to provide the meaning behind the language rather than ascribe literal, bodily attributes to God. He lists several examples in which the Jewish interpretation avoids anthropomorphic language, but then he says,

> As for the proof from tradition, again, we find that whenever our sages, who were considered trustworthy authorities in regard to our religion, encountered any such comparisons of God to physical beings, they did not translate them in an anthropomorphic sense, but rendered them in such a way as to correspond to the previously established principle. [. . .] They therefore translated them in accordance with their clear understanding of the underlying thoughts.[31]

Some may see in this quote that the sages avoided anthropomorphism; however, Gaon continues to list examples of anthropomorphic language in which the sages alleviate the anthropomorphism *by* explaining the true meaning behind it.[32] The Jewish Targums were among these traditions that sought to alleviate anthropomorphisms *by* explaining the true meaning of Scripture.

Moses Maimonides argued that *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* were used to paraphrase passages that implied the corporeality of God. Maimonides affirmed that Jewish theology did not allow a body or form for God, and that the Targums (particularly *Tg. Onq.*) "take all pains to remove the ascription of corporeity (to God), and whenever the Scripture employs an expression that suggests corporeity, he (*Tg. Onq.*) interprets it according to its *meaning*."[33] In an attempt to make the Hebrew Bible understandable, Maimonides suggested that the Targums employed theological intermediaries for the

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[30]Ibid., 111–12, italics added.

[31]Ibid., 115.

[32]Ibid., 116–22.

[33]Moses Maimonides, *Moreh Nebukim*, pt. I, 27–28, cited in Moore, *Intermediaries in Jewish Theology* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007), 3, parentheses and italics added. This monograph is a reprint of Moore's original article in the *Harvard Theological Review* ("Intermediaries in Jewish Theology: Memra, Shekinah, Metatron," *HTR* 15, no. 1 [1922]: 41–85). Unless otherwise noted, the citations in this introduction are from the 2007 reprint of the original article.

benefit of the "common man."[34] However, Maimonides was unwilling to allow *Memra,*

Shekinah, or *Yeqara* to represent any possibility of hypostasis. For Maimonides, the

Memra "excludes personality and participation in the divine nature."[35] Maimonides

claimed, "*Memra* and *Shekinah* may be called intermediary agencies, not intermediary

beings, if there be any profit in labeling them at all."[36] At the same time Maimonides

argued these terms refer to anti-anthropomorphic, translational devices, he also argued

that they represent "intermediate agencies."

In the thirteenth century, Nachmanides went slightly further to argue that these

terms represented various modes of God's self-revelation.[37] Nachmanides referenced

targumic passages that leave anthropomorphisms in place, so he refused to relegate the

Memra, Shekinah, and *Yeqara* to mere buffer words that only soften anthropomorphic

language. In fact, he cited Exodus 14:31 and Deuteronomy 4:34 where the extant

Targums translate anthropomorphism literally. Likewise, he cited the Targums using

Memra or *Yeqara* where no danger of anthropomorphism exists (e.g., Gen 9:16–17;

31:49–50; Exod 16:8).

As "modes of God's self-revelation," Nachmanides understood how these

terms explained God's actions in the created world. In his *Commentary to the Torah*

(Gen 46:1), he spoke specifically of the *Shekinah* saying,

> God forbid that what is called *Shekhina* or the Created Glory is outside of the divine
> Name, may He be blessed as the Rabbi believed . . . and if one claims that it is the
> Created Glory according to the Rabbi's view of the verse "And the Glory of God
> filled the tabernacle," then how can blessing be offered to it? And he who blesses
> and prays to the Created Glory is an idolater because the many statements of the

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[34]Moore, *Intermediaries in Jewish Theology, 3.*

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid. Moore's assessment of Maimonides is crucial at this point. Moore is adamant that the *Memra* and *Shekinah* are not "beings," and yet Maimonides, a critical Jewish thinker, argued that these terms act as *agents* for God.

[37]For Nachmanides' discussion, see his *Commentary on the Pentateuch* at Gen 46:1.

Sages have dictated that the *Shekhina* is God, may He be blessed.[38]
Regardless of what Nachmanides meant by "Created Glory," he clearly identified the *Shekinah* as God. Therefore, the Targums used these terms to refer to God's self-revelation as opposed to a secondary being necessarily. And yet, the self-revelation of God surely entails an agent by which God's presence is known and/or seen. Nachmanides identified the *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* as theological terms in rabbinic literature to indicate God's use of an agent to reveal himself to the created world.

The medieval Rabbis introduced the ideas of translational circumlocution as well as intermediate agency related to the *Memra, Shekinah*, and *Yeqara*. To them, these terms represented a reverent way to speak of God's actions in the created world, and yet the terms carried a deeper theological idea than merely a translational technique to avoid anthropomorphism. The terms indicated that the transcendent God of Jewish theology acted in the created order through an agent who was also considered God himself.

Nearly all modern scholars of the Targums refer to the early Rabbis in their understanding of the *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara*, and yet the terminology they use to discuss these terms is often difficult to discern. At times, scholars see these terms indicating divine agency, while at other times, scholars claim the terms are merely translational devices to replace "Yahweh." However, even those scholars who state these terms represent anti-anthropomorphic translational devices will go on to say that the *Memra, Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* carry out functions that only Yahweh can do and equate these terms with Yahweh or his self-revelation. Therefore, in some sense, all scholarship understands that the targumic method seeks to explain biblical notions that, on the surface, may seem contradictory to God's transcendence. Many modern scholars view the *Memra, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara* as anti-anthropomorphic devices, but these terms are

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[38]Nachmanides, *Commentary to the Torah*, Gen 46:1*,* translated and cited in Daniel Abrams, "The Boundaries of Divine Ontology: The Inclusion and Exclusion of Metatron in the Godhead," *HTR* 87, no. 3 (1994): 312.

not limited to that function. These terms also explain God's actions in the created world

as God's manifest agents. While nearly all scholarship sees agency in these terms, a clear

distinction lies between those scholars who see Christological implications in the *Memra,*

Shekinah and *Yeqara* and those who do not. [39]

Marcus Jastrow shows that the term *Memra* is both a simple "command" or

"word," and also a "hypostatized" agent when with דיי ('of the Lord').[40] One cannot be

certain what he means by "hypostatized," except that he further defines the phrase

"*Memra* of the Lord" as "the Lord." Occurrences of *Memra* as a mere translation include

Onqelos Genesis 41:44, which explains the Hebrew ובלעדיך ('and without you'), and

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[39]Those who see *Memra, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara* as having Christological implications include
Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*
(Munich: Beck, 1924), 2:302–33; J. Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature* (London:
Macmillan, 1912); Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (London: Longmans, 1883),
1:46–48; B. F. Wescott, *An Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, 8th ed. (London: Macmillan,
1895), 1151–52; Alejandro Díez Macho, "El Logos y el Espiritu Santo," *Antlantida* 1 (1963): 381–96;
Domingo Muñoz Léon, *Dios-Palabra. Memrá en los targumim del Pentateuco* (Granada: Institición San
Jerónimo, 1974); Robert Hayward, *Divine Name and Presence: The Memra* (Totowa, NJ: Allanheld
Osmun & Co., 1981); Bruce Chilton, *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Provenience of the Isaiah
Targum* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982); John Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*;
Roger Le Déaut, "Targumic Literature and Interpretation," *BTB* 4, no. 3 (1974): 243–89; William Oesterley
and C. H. Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue* (London: I. Pitman, 1907), 180; C. H. Box,
"The Idea of Intermediation in Jewish Theology," *JQR* 23, no. 2 (1932–33): 102–19; R. D. Middleton,
"Logos and Shekinah in the Fourth Gospel," *JQR* 29, no. 2 (1938): 101–33; Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Religion
des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Reuther und Reichard, 1906).
    Those scholars who fail to see Christological implications in these terms include Seigmund
Maybaum, *Die Anthropomorphien und Anthropopathein bein Onkelos und den Spaten Targumim* (Breslau,
Germany: Schletter'sche Buchhandlung, 1870); Moses Ginsburger, *Die Anthropomorphismen in den
Targumim* (Braunschweig: Druck von Applehans & Pfenningstorff, 1981); George Foot Moore,
"Intermediaries in Jewish Theology: Memra, Shekinah, and Metatron," *HTR* 15, no. 1 (1922): 41–85; idem,
Judaism in the First Century of the Christian Era, vol. 1, *The Age of the Tannaim* (Cambridge, MA:
Harvard University Press, 1946), 414–21; F. C. Burkitt, "Memra, Shekinah, Metatron," *JTS* 24 (1923):
158–59; Gustav Dalman, *The Words of Jesus* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 229–31; W. E. Aufrecht,
"Surrogates for the Divine Name in the Palestinian Targums to Exodus" (Ph.D. diss., University of
Toronto, 1979); Andrew Chester, *Divine Revelation and Divine Titles in the Pentateuchal Targumim*
(Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1986); Samuel Cohon, *Jewish Theology: A Historical and Systematic
Interpretation of Judaism and Its Foundations* (Assen, Netherlands: Royals Vangorcum, 1971); Ferdinand
W. Weber, *System der Altsynagogalen palastinischen Theologie aus Targum, Midrasch, und Talmud*
(Leipzig: Dorffling & Franke, 1880); Vincenz Hamp, *Der Begriff "Wort" in den aramaischen
Bibelubersetzungen* (Munich: Neuer Filser-Vérlag, 1938).

[40]Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim,* 775. דיי is the Aramaic pronoun די plus the
targumic form of יהוה, which is typically written as יי or ייי. די is prefixed to nouns as ד, so the phrase "of
the Lord" is rendered by יי ('the Lord') + ד ('of').

Targum Psalms 19:4 that uses מימר ('word') to translate the noun form of אמר ('speech'). For the "hypostatized" *Memra*, Jastrow cites *Onqelos* Genesis 3:10, when Adam heard the "sound of the *Memra*" walking in the garden.[41] Rather than inferring that God walked in the garden to confront Adam, Jastrow suggests that the Targum employed God's agent, the *Memra,* to walk in the garden. While Jastrow argues this term was used "to obviate anthropomorphism," he also directly associates the *Memra* with the Lord as identical beings.[42] Where the *Memra* acts, the Lord acts. Jastrow's goal in his dictionary is not to draw Christological implications of these terms, and yet he sets the stage for the broader discussion of divine agents whom he equates with Yahweh.

Ferdinand Weber began speaking of the *Memra* as a hypostasis in 1897. He said, "In the Targums, and in the older Jewish theology, there is a hypostasis, which carries the name 'word' and stands in the place of God."[43] Using the term "hypostasis," Weber discussed the theological nature of the *Memra*. For Weber, *Memra* represented a translational technique, but it was more than a circumlocution for the divine name. Whether Weber meant duality in God by the term "hypostasis" is unclear. However, "hypostasis" carried the connotation of agency for Weber. Commenting on *Targum Song of Songs* 1:2, he argued the *Memra* "stands as a mediatorial hypostasis between God and his people."[44] Although Weber failed to comment on the Christological implications of the *Memra*, he at least recognized divine agency in its uses in the Targums.

George F. Moore's study on these targumic terms is among the standard resources in this field. His contributions to the study of these terms came in his 1922

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[41]For another "hypostatized" use of *Memra*, Jastrow points to *Frg. Tg. P* Gen 3:9, in which the *Memra* "called" (קרא) to Adam while walking in the garden to find him. In *Frg. Tg. P* Gen 3:9, מימריה דיי stands as the subject of the verb of action.

[42]Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim,* 775.

[43]Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, 180.

[44]Ibid.

article in the *Harvard Theological Review* and in his three-volume work, *Judaism in the First Century of the Christian Era*.[45] Moore's primary focus in these studies was to show that the *Memra* fails to represent a hypostasis within the Godhead. Moore was driven in his conclusions by what he considered an early error in Christian interpretation of the Bible. Moore concedes that the early Christian interpreters of the New Testament understood John's *Logos* as a clear hypostasis and wanted to find a corresponding hypostasis in the Old Testament. Moore believes that any discussion of a hypostasis regarding the *Memra* was a result of Christianizing the term rather than understanding the term rightly from the Targums. Moore argued that instead of the Christian "apologetic" accomplishing its goal, it had the opposite effect and Jewish interpreters began to understand the *Memra* as an argument *for* their lofty monotheism. Moore states,

> The material that was diligently collected to prove that Jewish theology made a place for a being of divine nature . . . has more recently been appropriated to prove that Jewish theology, *unlike* Christian, interposed intermediaries between God and the world, rendered necessary by its 'transcendent' idea of God, of which error [the Christian error of a hypostatic being in the Godhead], conversely, the invention of such intermediaries is the proof [that is, the invention of intermediaries by the Jews to explain God's transcendence].[46]

Jewish theologians took the evidence produced by Christian interpreters and adapted it for their own monotheistic theology. According to Moore, Jewish monotheism was so strong that it could not allow for any type of hypostatic intermediary; therefore, Judaism implemented a circumlocution for God where the biblical texts allude to anthropomorphic action by a non-corporeal God.[47]

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[45]Moore, "Intermediaries in Jewish Theology," 41–85; idem, *Judaism*, 1:414–22.

[46]Moore, *Intermediaries in Jewish Theology*, 2. The brackets are intended to aid the reader in understanding Moore's position and represent my interpretation of his point. Moore believes that rabbis invented these terms as intermediaries because Christians had carried the idea of mediation to the point of hypostasis in the Godhead. Therefore, in Moore's understanding, the very invention of intermediaries proves that the Jewish view of God's transcendence is correct.

[47]Whether the *Memra, Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* are hypostases is predominantly irrelevant to the discussion even though this is the terminology that most scholars use to discuss these terms. That Moore understood these terms as *agents* or *manifestations* of the invisible God is integral to how one uses these

Moore investigated the targumic *Memra* from what he called a "philological" perspective.[48] He limited his research to lexical uses of *Memra* and failed to address New Testament implications because of his desire to understand Targums in their own right, avoiding Christianization of the Targums. At the end of Moore's study, he simply concludes, "It [the *Memra*] is a phenomenon of translation, not a creature of speculation."[49] Moore rejected New Testament appropriation of the *Memra* because he believed the Jewish context of the Targums would not allow God, who is a transcendent spirit, to act in time and space. By limiting his investigation only to the Targums and not allowing these terms to influence New Testament revelation, Moore developed a limited understanding of the targumic *Memra*.[50]

Even with this partial understanding of the *Memra*, Moore also points out how the *Memra* functions as God's agent. In a chapter on the Word of God and the Spirit, Moore begins by saying, "God's will is made known or effectuated in the world not only through personal agents (angels), but directly by his word or by his spirit."[51] While he limits personal agents to the angels, Moore willingly indicates that God "effectuates" his will in the created order through his word and spirit, namely through agents. Moore points out that *Memra* should be understood properly as "word" or "command," but he admits it is not used in the Targum to translate דבר.[52] Moore concludes that the only

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terms to see Christ in the Old Testament.

[48]Moore, *Intermediaries in Jewish Theology*, 4.

[49]Ibid., 14.

[50]To say that one's understanding of the *Memra* is limited in this sense should not imply that the understanding is incorrect. Moore draws helpful conclusions about the targumist's agenda in using such terminology. However, by arguing for a strictly translational function of these terms, he fails to see the theological implications that helped *interpret* the Hebrew Bible.

[51]Moore, *Judaism*, 1:414.

[52]Ibid., 1:417. The Targums regularly use פתגמא to translate the Hebrew דבר.

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personality that can be ascribed to the *Memra* is the personality of God that it represents.

He says,

> The appearance of personality which in some places attaches to the word is due solely to the fact that the *memra* of the Lord and similar phrases are reverent circumlocutions for 'God,' introduced precisely where in the original God is personally active in the affairs of men; and the personal character of the activity necessarily adheres to the periphrasis.[53]

Even so, Moore goes on to show how the *Memra* represents God speaking, the Lord fighting for Israel, and the Lord meeting Israel in the tabernacle by his *Memra*.

Moore carries this argument into his discussion of the *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* as well.[54] When the Hebrew Scriptures speak of God's presence coming to or departing a place, the Targums translate *Shekinah*. Likewise, to speak of the visible manifestation of God directly might demean God's character, so the Targums employ the term *Yeqara*. Moore equates the *Yeqara* with the Hebrew כבוד saying it is "the splendor of impenetrable light by which [God] is at once revealed and concealed."[55] While *Memra, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara* represent translational technique to Moore, he also cites clear examples where these terms represent agency for God or manifestation of God. Although Moore allows the terms to represent agency, he denies that they have Christological implications.[56]

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[53]Ibid., 1:419.

[54]Ibid., 1:419–20.

[55]Ibid., 1:420.

[56]Moore primarily discusses the lack of Christological implications in these terms by saying that Philo would not have borrowed these terms from the Targums (Moore, *Judaism,* 1:414–16). Moore indicates that a gulf existed between Philo and Rabbinic Judaism so that the two would not overlap in thought, nor would they be influenced by one another. He says, "Neither his [Philo's] conception of a transcendent God, nor the secondary god, the Logos, by which he [Philo] bridges the phenomenal world . . . had any effect on the theology of Palestinian Judaism" (Moore, *Judaism,*1:212). Moore believes that John borrowed his *Logos* from Philo, but since Philo had no connection to the targumic *Memra*, neither did John's use of *Logos*. Moore concludes therefore that John's Philonic use of *Logos* would not correspond to the targumic *Memra*. However, Moore's view of the lack of targumic influence on John is skewed since John would have been directly familiar with the Targums of the synagogue. John most likely used language from the synagogue to speak of Jesus rather than using language from contemporary philosophy.

In H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck's excursus on the *Memra*, they followed

George Moore's conclusions primarily.[57] They said, "The conclusion to be drawn from

the above statements with respect to the Johannine Logos, cannot be doubted: the term

'Memra Adonai' was a meaningless, purely formulaic substitute for the

Tetragrammaton."[58] Strack and Billerbeck show how the *Memra* substitutes for אלהים

and יהוה, but they do not indicate explicitly whether these substitutions imply agency.

They state, however, that *Memra* and *Shekinah* fall short of secondary divine beings.[59] In

places, Strack and Billerbeck completely disregard similarities between the *Memra* and

John's *Logos.* In other sections, they hint at Christological implications of these terms,

for example,

> While the word of Yahweh temporarily "happened" before individual men, it has
> occurred in a comprehensive and exhaustive manner in the world of Jesus: Jesus
> would therefore be called the word par excellence because everything the God of all
> mankind has to say concerning salvation is in his person.[60]

The view of Strack and Billerbeck is difficult to discern when they make comments such

as this. Even if *Memra* stands for a "formulaic substitute" for Yahweh, they still show

how John could have used this theological concept to refer to Christ.

Vinzenz Hamp conceded that these terms evolved in their use and distinct

characteristics. He not only researched *Memra* as a divine agent, but also the Holy Spirit,

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[57]Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 2:302–33.

[58]Ibid., 2:333. Aber and Dalman followed Strack and Billerbeck in this conclusion without seeing any Christological implications for these targumic terms. See F. Aber, "Memra und Shechinah," in *Festschriff zum 75 jährigen Bestehen des jüdisch-theologischen Seminars Fraenckelschen-Stiftung* (Breslau: M. & H. Marcus, 1929), 1–10; and Gustaf Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu: Mit Berücksichtigung Des Nachkanonischen Jüdischen Schrifttums Und Der Aramäischen Sprache* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1898), 187–89.

[59]Speaking specifically of the *Shekinah*, Strack and Billerbeck say, "As a divine hypostasis, you may give Shekinah as little thought as the Memra of the Lord" (Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, 2:314).

[60]Ibid., 2:333.

Wisdom, *Torah, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara.* However, he argued that the oldest and most

ordinary meaning of a title for Yahweh never disappeared:

> . . . the Memra of Yahweh is neither real nor a different person from Yahweh
> himself. The "word" concept evolved from a purely appellative sense to a divine
> inner property . . . . The latter use is found mainly in the latest Tg; however, the
> older and ordinary connotation never disappears.[61]

Hamp agreed that later developments of these intermediary terms implied agency, but he

retained the older sense of the term as a title in order to avoid further Christological

study.

Pamela Vermes, in a 1973 article, articulated the view of the Jewish

philosopher, Martin Buber.[62] Vermes built on Buber's exegesis of Exodus 3:12, 14,

extending the evidence of Buber's conclusions to the Targums and Midrash. Buber

argued that one should understand the name יהוה as indicating God's presence and

should be translated, "HE IS THERE."[63] Additionally, Buber proposed that the name

אהיה, which God indicates is his name, is simply the first person form of היה and

therefore takes the meaning of "I AM THERE." Vermes agreed with Buber's

presentation and applied his conclusions to the Targums and Midrash to see if the extra-

biblical literature confirmed Buber's findings.

According to Vermes, the Targums regularly substitute the Divine Name with

the *Memra.* This led Vermes to investigate the nature and development of *Memra* in the

Targums. Vermes concluded that God manifests his presence through his activity within

creation, and God's activity in the created order (including creation itself) is carried out

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[61]Hamp, *Der Begriff "Wort,"* 204.

[62]Pamela Vermes, "Buber's Understanding of the Divine Name Related to Bible, Targum and Midrash," *JJS* 24, no. 2 (1973): 147–66.

[63]Ibid., 148–49.

by the *decree* or *word* of God.[64] She combined the היה word group with the אמר word group and argued that the Targums use the term *Memra* as an expression of God's active, articulated presence in his creation. Vermes writes, "YHWH is *ehyeh*; and *ehyeh* is the '*Memra* of the *Shekhinta* of YHWH.' That is to say, the verb *amar* and its derivatives go to join those of the verb *hayah*, and the combination of presence, speech, and creation is rounded off and made perfect."[65] For Vermes, the targumic *Shekinah* represents God's presence, while the *Memra* is God's name for himself, his אהיה as it was given to Moses in Exodus 3:12 and expounded by God in Exodus 3:14. Vermes included other passages (Exod 5:2, 33–34) to argue for the link between God's presence and his activity in creation.[66]

Vermes also examined the Jewish Midrash. Since the term *Memra* does not occur in Midrash, she focused on the *Shekinah*. However, Vermes noted the absence of *Memra* in the midrashic literature, stating, "In sum, it may be said that the texture of the *Shekinah* in Midrash may gain in substance from being related to everyday life, and in another sense, be the poorer for the omission of the *Memra* motif and the limitless avenues of thought to which it leads."[67] This statement indicates at least two aspects of Vermes' understanding of the *Memra*. First, Vermes presented the *Memra* as a rich theological term similar to *Shekinah*. Second, and consequently, to say that the *Memra* motif offers "limitless avenues of thought" indicates that the *Memra* perhaps means more than mere presence and speech. Vermes certainly made the case for God's presence and speech generally, and yet the Targums seem to develop a fuller understanding of *Memra*

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[64]Even though Vermes draws an etymological conclusion regarding the meaning of *Memra*, she simultaneously admits to its role as God's agent in creation and manifestation.

[65]Vermes, "Buber's Understanding of the Divine Name," 152.

[66]Ibid., 155–60.

[67]Ibid., 166.

beyond God's presence and verbal action. Vermes admitted that exceptions to her evidence exist, and although she never explicitly said that the *Memra* motif extends into the New Testament, she left the option open.[68]

Robert Hayward independently drew similar conclusions as Vermes regarding the etymology of *Memra*.[69] For Hayward, *Memra* is "an exegetical shorthand" for the term 'HYH based on his study of *Neofiti* Exodus 3:12 and 6:1–8.[70] *Memra* is "God's Name for Himself, understood and expounded as meaning God active and *present* in creation and redemption, in past and future."[71] Hayward argues that *Memra* is an active presence in God's covenant and remains a merciful presence in the Jerusalem temple. In these two examples, Hayward defines the *Memra* as God's name by which his presence is revealed to and invoked by God's people.

Even though Hayward presents the *Memra* as God's active presence, he rejects the notion of *Memra* or *Shekinah* as hypostases or personal beings. In his 1978 article in *New Testament Studies*, Hayward says, "The current scholarly attitude towards *Memra* is due almost entirely to the careful and painstaking work of students of Rabbinic Judaism, who were fully conscious the *Memra* could not be an hypostasis."[72] Since the basis of Rabbinic Judaism would not allow duality in God, Hayward argues that personal being cannot be part of *Memra's* meaning. Hayward argues that the most helpful studies in the Targums are those that deny hypostasis altogether. He says, "Students of Targumic

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[68]Ibid., 153, 166.

[69]Hayward, *Divine Name and Presence*, 15–26.

[70]Robert Hayward, "Memra and Shekinah: A Short Note," *JJS* 31, no. 2 (1980): 212.

[71]Hayward, *Divine Name and Presence*, 24 (italics original).

[72]Robert Hayward, "The Holy Name of the God of Moses and the Prologue of St. John's Gospel," *NTS* 25, no. 1 (1978): 19. Hayward posits New Testament scholars like A. Tholuck, J. S. Lange, E. F. Scott, C. F. Noloth, and C. F. Burney who see the *Memra* as a hypostasis against C. K. Barrett, J. Estlin Carpenter, D. F. Büchsel, E. Percy, and R. Schnackenburg who claim there is no room in *Memra* studies for hypostasis (Hayward, "The Holy Name of the God of Moses," 19).

Studies are deeply indebted to the work of those scholars who have demonstrated beyond doubt that the *Memra* is not an hypostasis, a being in any way separate from God, or an intermediary between the God of Israel and the creation."[73]

While Hayward holds the impossibility of *Memra* and *Shekinah* representing hypostases, he interprets the *Memra* based on his exegesis of *Neofiti* Exodus 3:12.[74] In his analysis of the occurrences of *Memra* in *Neofiti*, Hayward interprets the texts when *Memra* occurs with verbs of action as God's presence rather than a separate divine being. The *Memra* speaks, calls, and is revealed because God, in his active presence, speaks, calls, and is revealed.[75] Therefore, Hayward affirms that the *Memra* functions as God's agent-name to manifest his merciful presence to his people.

Regarding Christological implications of the *Memra*, Hayward says, "Jesus personifies God's 'HYH, the living proof that the God revealed to Moses at the bush is with His people."[76] Hayward maintains his original exegesis of the *Memra*, but goes further to say, "St. John then, if our hypothesis be correct, depicts Jesus as the *Memra*, who is God's Name, manifesting God's glory, full of grace and truth of the covenant, dwelling *with us* in the flesh, which Jesus himself describes as a Temple, the very dwelling place of the *Memra*."[77] Hayward refuses to allow any form of personal being in the *Memra*, and yet he shows how "God active and *present*" in his *Memra* has

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[73]Hayward, *Divine Name and Presence*, 5. Hayward points primarily to Strack and Billerbeck, Moore, and Hamp on this point.

[74]Robert Hayward, "The *Memra* of *YHWH* and the Development of Its Use in Targum Neofiti I," *JJS* 25, no. 3 (1974): 412–18.

[75]Ibid., 414. Hayward basically disregards *Memra* with verbs like blessing, leading, sending, protecting, rescuing, standing, and redeeming because their uses are so infrequent. "The use of *Memra* as subject of these verbs on such isolated occasions appears arbitrary and unmotivated by theological considerations" (ibid.).

[76]Hayward, "The Holy Name of the God of Moses," 29.

[77]Ibid., 30, (italics original).

Christological implications beyond the Targums.

Like the medieval Rabbis, modern Jewish scholarship would not argue that *Memra, Shekinah,* or *Yeqara* refer to Christ. However, they understand these terms as God's agents of action and manifestation so clearly that they can see how the New Testament authors could have appropriated these terms, giving them Christological significance.

The Jewish scholar Kaufmann Kohler, who would not see the *Memra* as Christ, affirmed the theological connection between the targumic *Memra* and the Christian doctrine of the Word.[78] Kohler understood the *Memra* to be derived from the Hebrew *Ma'amar* and *Dabar* (Ps 33:6; 107:20; cf. *Tg. Neof.* Gen 1 and *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 32:39 respectively), but argued that the Targums used *Memra* in a way similar to *Shekinah* as the manifestation of God's presence.[79] Without affirming any form of hypostasis, Kohler argued that the Aramaic *Memra* influenced Philo's *logos* theology.[80] He also believed that the New Testament church employed Philo's "semi-Jewish philosophy" in order to develop its doctrine of the Incarnation and Trinity.[81] Even though Kohler was unwilling to admit these terms represent hypostases, he allowed that Christianity could find value in these targumic terms as mediating powers/agents when

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[78]See especially Kaufmann Kohler, "Memra," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Isidore Singer (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1910), 464–65; idem, *Jewish Theology: Systematically and Historically Considered* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), 197–205.

[79]Kohler, *Jewish Theology*, 198–99. Kohler says, "The *Word* was thus conceived of as the first-created being, an intermediary power between the Spirit of the world and the created world order" (ibid., 198).

[80] For Kohler's discussion of how the *Memra* may have affected Philo, see Kohler, *Jewish Theology*, 199. Kohler says that the *Memra* was the "cornerstone" of Philo's "peculiar semi-Jewish philosophy" of the *Logos*. In Kohler, "Memra," 465.

[81]Kohler, "Memra," 465. While many of these scholars connect *Memra* with Philo's *Logos* in some capacity, the New Testament authors attained their understanding of the Word from the Old Testament and Targums directly. As stated before, Rabbinic Judaism made no place for Philo. John did not borrow Philo's semi-Jewish philosophy; rather, he appropriated Rabbinic Jewish theology regarding the *Memra*. Even so, Kohler acknowledges John's use of the *Memra* concepts in the Fourth Gospel.

developing its doctrine of Christ. He says, the *Memra* "is a kind of vice regent of God himself. From this it was but a short step toward considering him a partner and peer of the Almighty, as was done by the Church with its doctrine that the Word has become flesh in Christ, the son of God."[82] Therefore, Kohler understood how the New Testament church appropriated the targumic *Memra* to prefigure the hypostatic nature of Jesus.

Whereas Kohler viewed the *Memra* as a "vice regent of God," he presented the *Shekinah* as the premier mediating power of God. Kohler followed the early rabbis, who pushed *Memra* and *Yeqara* to secondary importance, but continued to esteem the *Shekinah* as the manifest presence of God in the world. Kohler says,

> Thus in the view of the rabbis *Shekinah* represents the *visible part* of the divine majesty, which descends from heaven to earth, and on the radiance of which are fed the spiritual beings, both angels and the souls of the saints. God himself was wrapped in light, whose brilliancy no living being, however lofty, could endure; but the *Shekinah* or reflection of the divine glory might be beheld by the elect either in their lifetime or in the hereafter.[83]

For Kohler then, the *Shekinah* was the visible presence of God that man could bear to see. Although he fails to assign personhood to the *Shekinah*, to say that the *Shekinah* is a "visible presence" and "mediating power" at least implies agency and/or manifestation.

Joshua Abelson began his chapter on intermediaries by saying, "The view commonly taken that the *Memra* is an expedient for avoiding the ascription of anthropomorphism to the Deity, is only half the truth."[84] For Abelson, the *Memra* is the "immanent manifestation of God in the World of matter and spirit."[85] To say that the

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[82]Ibid.

[83]Kohler, *Jewish Theology*, 198 (italics added).

[84]Ableson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinic Judaism*, 151.

[85]Ibid., 153. Abelson includes in his appendix how the *Yeqara* and *Shekinah* correspond to the *Memra*. He concludes that these additional targumic terms are "to an extent synonymous" and that they "denote aspects of the teaching covered by the larger and more comprehensive term, 'Memra'" (Abelson, *The Immanence of God,* 382). Abelson points to Acts 22:11 where he says that "glory is undoubtedly materialized" in a similar way as the Targums use this terminology (ibid., 381).

Memra is a "manifestation" does not require personification, and yet Abelson agrees that John used targumic language to describe Jesus. As Abelson assessed John's use of *Logos*, he said that John is more Jewish in his presentation of the Word than even Philo.[86] In John's gospel, where Jesus functions as an intercessor between God and man, he is portrayed with a "decidedly Rabbinic colouring."[87] In Abelson's view, John not only employed "the theological import of the Targumic Memra" in the prologue, but this theological import permeated the body of his gospel as well.[88] Moving beyond the gospels, Abelson contends, "In some of the most striking declarations of Paul there is the very same conception in regard to the Messiah (Christ)."[89] Although Abelson takes a decidedly Jewish nuance on what it means to be an "immanent manifestation of God in the World," he shows how the New Testament authors appropriated this targumic language to speak of Christ. In addition, he says that the New Testament authors have understood the targumic *Memra* correctly even if he believes they have appropriated the term incorrectly to refer specifically to Jesus.[90]

Israel Abrahams provided further insight into the use of *Shekinah* specifically. In his book, *The Glory of God*, Abrahams explains why he thinks rabbinic literature only carried over the term *Shekinah* into the Mishnah and Talmud rather than continuing with all three terms; *Memra, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara*.[91] He concluded that the *Shekinah* was the

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[86]Ibid., 160.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Ibid.

[89]Ibid. Abelson cites Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 15:45; Col 1:15, 17; and Col 3:11 as examples.

[90]Ibid., 161. Regardless of how the *Memra, Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* are used in the Targums, when the inspired New Testament authors appropriate these terms, they take on a decidedly different nuance. To say that the New Testament authors understood the *Memra* correctly probably means that they understood it to be an agent of God. Abelson simply disagrees that this premier agent is Jesus.

[91]Abrahams, *The Glory of God*, 50–52.

term that represented both the invisible presence of God in man (*Memra*) and the visible appearance of God in the world (*Yeqara*).[92] For Abrahams, the *Shekinah* was both the *Memra* and the *Yeqara*. After arguing from Saadia Gaon's Arabic translation of the Hebrew Bible that the *Shekinah* is closely related to "light," Abrahams concluded, "Yet, however interpreted, the Glory of God, visualized spiritually as well as physically as the Light of the Shekinah, plays much the same role in Rabbinic Judaism as the logos does in Philonean or Johannine theology."[93] Therefore, Abrahams approves that John understood these targumic terms similarly to the Rabbis. Abrahams was unwilling to say that John's appropriation of the *Shekinah* accorded with traditional Jewish theology. However, he recognized how John arrived at his conclusion given the targumic presentation and function of the divine Glory and Light represented as the *Shekinah* (cf. John 1:4–5, 9; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35–36).

Alfred Edersheim preferred the term "self-revelation" when speaking of the *Memra,* and yet he freely used the term hypostasis. He says, "Rabbinic theology has not preserved to us the doctrine of Personal distinctions in the Godhead. And yet, if words have any meaning, the *Memra* is a hypostasis, though the distinction of permanent, personal Subsistence is not marked."[94] While Edersheim admits rabbinic theology failed to elaborate on a personal doctrine of *Memra*, he readily ascribes personality to the *Memra*. In an appendix, he lists the targumic passages that "undoubtedly" ascribe "Divine Personality" or God's "Personal Manifestation" using *Memra*.[95] His use of the

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[92]Ibid., 51–52. One must keep in mind that these terms are often so interchangeable that scholars disagree as to which one represents the visible and invisible working of God. Abrahams views the *Memra* and *Shekinah* differently than Abelson, but both scholars see the connection to the New Testament presentation of Jesus.

[93]Ibid., 56.

[94]Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 1:48.

[95]Ibid., 2:661–64.

terms "hypostasis" and "personality" led him to compare the *Memra* to Philo's *Logos*. In this comparison, Edersheim concludes that the *Memra* is *not* represented in Philo's *Logos* since the *Memra* is theological and Philo's *Logos* is philosophical in nature.[96]

After rejecting a connection between *Memra* and Philo's *Logos*, Edersheim discusses John's gospel and the Christological implications of *Memra*. He concludes that John's gospel is "more Palestinian" than the others in its "modes of expression, allusions, and references."[97] For Edersheim, John's "Bereshith" is *theological,* representing a Jewish background, rather than a philosophical background as in Philo's *Logos*. He says, "John strikes the pen through Alexandrianism when he lays it down as the fundamental fact of New Testament history that 'the Logos was made flesh.'"[98] For Edersheim, the *Memra* represents personality and hypostasis, and the Apostle John further defines its Christological implications.

For *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*, Edersheim argues that these terms imply "God as revealed" rather than God in the act of revealing himself. The *Yeqara* is God's "excellent glory" while the *Shekinah* is his "abiding Presence."[99] In both cases, the terms suggest God's manifestation of himself in the created order and the Targums employ theological terminology to soften the idea of God's physical presence in creation. Edersheim further divides the meaning of *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* although these terms are nearly synonymous at times. *Yeqara* indicates the "inward and upward" while *Shekinah* represents "the outward and downward."[100] The former is the inner glory of God, a display of his heavenly nature, while the latter is his earthly presence as in the tabernacle. Edersheim

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[96]Ibid., 1:48.

[97]Ibid., 1:56.

[98]Ibid., 1:56–57.

[99]Ibid., 2:660.

[100]Ibid.

points out the Christological implications of these terms in 2 Peter 1:17 and John 12:41 (cf. *Tg. Isa* 6:1–8).

B. F. Westcott continued the idea of a "mediating power by which God makes himself known."[101] Westcott understood these terms to refer to God's agents similar to the Angel of the Lord. He also commented on the Christological implications of the *Memra* by discussing its relation to the philosophical *Logos*. Westcott distinguished between the *Memra* and the *Logos* by concluding that the *Memra* indicates a divine person subordinate to God, and *Logos* indicates a twofold personality in God's being. Westcott's distinction here seems quite arbitrary, especially since the New Testament teaches ontological unity *and* functional subordination within the Godhead.[102] In broader systematic theological categories, Westcott unintentionally affirmed that the *Memra* (functional subordination) is the *Logos* (ontological unity). Although Westcott's argument is difficult to follow at times, he believes the *Memra* is God's manifest agent and that the term has Christological implications.

With the discovery of *Targum Neofiti* in 1956, Alejandro Díez Macho reenergized the discussion of these terms.[103] He commented that in *Neofiti*, the *Memra* appears as distinct, or at least distinguishable from Yahweh.[104] As a distinct agent, Díez Macho highlighted the targumic evidence demonstrating the *Memra's* role in the created order. Díez Macho set out in his study to show that the *Memra* was a background to John's *Logos* doctrine, so he readily saw the Christological import of the *Memra*,

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[101]B. F. Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels* (London: Macmillan, 1888), 147.

[102]See Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 251, where he uses the term "economic subordination."

[103]See Alejandro Díez Macho, "Una Copia de todo el Targum jerosolimitano en la Vaticana," *EstBib* 16 (1956): 446–47. See also Domingo Muñoz Leon, "Appendice sobre El Memra de Yahweh en el MS Neophyti I," in *Neophyti I, Tomo III Levitico*, ed. A. Díez Macho (Madrid-Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1971), 70–83.

[104]Diez Macho, "Una Copia de todo el Targum jerosolimitano en la Vaticana," 393.

especially in the newly discovered *Neofiti* marginal glosses.

A student of Díez Macho, Domingo Muñoz Leon, once again used the disputed term "hypostasis" in his discussion. Muñoz Leon said that *Memra* contains "some hypostasis, as attributing a certain attribute to God, that which the biblical text ascribes to God."[105] He suggests hypostasis is a part of the *Memra*, but not the whole. In this sense, Muñoz Leon could at least reintroduce the *Memra's* mediating function: The *Memra* is "a description of God which has been specialized to designate the God who creates, reveals Himself, and works in the history of salvation through the mediation of His Word."[106]

After the discovery of *Neofiti*, Martin McNamara also brought to light many insights regarding the mediating function of the *Memra*. McNamara argues that the evidence from the Targums points to the *Memra* as another way of saying "God" or "the Lord." At the same time, he holds that the targumic *Memra* has a broader theological meaning, particularly in relation to John's *Logos* theology.[107] McNamara agrees that within the targumic evidence, the *Memra* does not appear as a hypostasis.[108] The targumists regularly move between the divine name, God, and *Memra* without a clear logic. The terms appear interchangeable. Although McNamara quickly moves toward a broader theological meaning of the *Memra*, he affirms that the Targums, on their own terms, do not require a hypostatic *Memra*.

A second assertion made by McNamara is that the use of *Memra* in the Targums may have developed over time, pointing to the theological richness of the

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[105]Muñoz Leon, *Dios-Palabra*, 632.

[106]Ibid., 139.

[107]See especially, Martin McNamara, "*Logos* of the Fourth Gospel and *Memra* of the Palestinian Targum (Ex 12[42])," *ExpTim* 79, no. 4 (1968): 115–17; idem, *Targum and Testament. Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible: A Light on the New Testament* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972), 101–6.

[108]McNamara, *Targum and Testament*, 101.

term.[109] Referring to George Moore's work, McNamara points out that Moore only researched the evidence of the *Memra* within *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Jonathan*, and he therefore came up with limited conclusions. However, once Díez Macho discovered *Targum Neofiti*, the interlinear and marginal glosses opened a new door to understanding the various uses and development of *Memra*. For McNamara, the marginal glosses in *Targum Neofiti* reveal targumic readings from complete manuscripts that have since been lost. At the time McNamara was writing *Targum and Testament*, Robert Hayward's article, researching the development of *Memra* in *Targum Neofiti* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, was not yet published.[110] However, in McNamara's introduction to the English translation of *Targum Neofiti* Genesis, he claims that the *Memra's* "origins, development, and antiquity as used in [an anti-anthropomorphic] sense are a matter of speculation."[111] Therefore, although he allows for development in the term, McNamara claims that to understand the development sheds no further light on the subject. McNamara allows for development in the *Memra* because the term has more theological significance than merely the development of a translational technique.

The third, and perhaps most influential, proposal by McNamara is that the Apostle John was heavily influenced by the targumic *Memra*. Even though McNamara admitted that the *Memra* is a substitute term for the divine name, he simultaneously argued that the Targums influenced John when he designated Jesus as the *Logos*.[112] McNamara said, "John got his doctrine on the nature of the Logos from New Testament revelation. The question at issue for us is the sources from which he drew the concepts

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[109]Ibid., 102.

[110]See Hayward, "The *Memra* of YHWH and the Development of Its Use," 412–18, for a more current assessment of the development of the use of *Memra* in *Tg. Neof.*

[111]Martin McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, The Aramaic Bible 1A (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 38.

[112]McNamara, *Targum and Testament*, 102–3.

and terms in which he expressed it."[113] McNamara distinguished between the targumic

evidence alone and the influence the Targums had on John's use of a related term

(*Logos*). In other words, he affirmed that the *Memra* represents a typical interpretive

technique while simultaneously recognizing its theological substance when John re-

interprets the actions of the *Memra* in the incarnate *Logos*.

To illustrate his understanding of *Memra*, McNamara connects John's

Prologue and the Poem of the Four Nights presented in the Palestinian Targums to

Exodus 12:42. The poem in *Neofiti* Exodus 12:42 speaks of the night "when the Lord

was revealed over the world to create it."[114] *Neofiti* Exodus 12:42 reads,

The First Night: When the Lord was revealed over the world to create it. The world was formless and void, and darkness was spreading over the face of the deep, *and the Memra of the Lord was light and shone*. So he called it the First Night.[115]	ליליא קדמיא כד אתגלי ייי על עלמא למבריה יתיה הוה עלמא תהו ובהו וחשוכא פריס על אפי תהומא וממריה דייי [ו]הוה נהורא ונהר וקרא יתה לילי קדמיא

Some accuse McNamara of unnecessarily emending this text.[116] However, McNamara's

adjustment to the text in *Targum Neofiti* seems justified based on the evidence of the

other extant Targums.[117]

In *Targum Neofiti*, the manuscript has a *vav*-copulative (bracketed in the

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[113]Ibid., 103.

[114]The same poem occurs in the other Palestinian Targums with minor (but important) variations.

[115]Emphasis added.

[116]See Hayward, *Divine Name and Presence,* 135. Hayward translates *Tg. Neof.* Exod 12:42, "The first night, when the Lord was revealed over the world to create it. . . . and the *Memra* of the Lord was there, and there was light, and it shone" (ibid.). Even though Hayward thinks the emendation is unnecessary, he still concludes, "St. John probably used the *Memra* as one of the background ideas to his Logos-doctrine. Nothing stands in the way of this conclusion, and it will be seen that certain positive advantages accrue to an interpretation of Logos which takes *Memra* into account" (ibid., 136).

[117]The *Frg. Tg. V* and *CTg. FF* both omit the *vav*. McNamara also cites Walton's London Polyglot and the Paris MS 110 as those texts that omit the *vav*. See McNamara's discussion in "*Logos* of the Fourth Gospel and *Memra* of the Palestinian Targum," 116.

Aramaic above) that is absent in the other Palestinian Targums. McNamara understands this *vav* to be a scribal error and removes it from *Neofiti* in order to obtain the translation quoted above. If the *vav* remained, one could translate the passage such that "the light" (נהורא) is the grammatical subject that shone (ונהר). In the translation above (omitting the *vav*), the *Memra* of the Lord is the light and shines into the darkness.[118] This language is strikingly similar to John's description of the *Logos* (John 1:5, 3:19; 8:12; 1 John 1:6; 2:8–9, 11). The poem in *Neofiti* Exodus 12:42 concludes with the new creation on the Fourth Night at the advent of the Messiah. Commenting about the relationship between this Fourth Night and John's Prologue, McNamara claims, "This new creation, described in Jn 1 as the counterpart of the first creation, began when the Word was made flesh. The light then began to shine in the darkness of the non-messianic age."[119] McNamara suggests that John understood the link between the Light (*Memra*) who created on the First Night, and the incarnation of the *Logos* to begin the work of the new creation of the Fourth Night.

The above evidence, along with McNamara's view that John was heavily influenced by Jewish liturgy, indicates, "it is legitimate to assume that John is very much under the influence of the Targums in the formulation of his doctrine of the Logos."[120] McNamara hesitates to identify the *Memra* with the *Logos* directly, but he also allows for theological substance in the term.

After examining the uses of *Memra* in targumic texts, Bruce Chilton concludes,

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[118]Without vowel pointing and accents, it is difficult for a non-Semitic student to know the nuances for sure. However, without the *vav*, it would be most natural to read "*Memra* of the Lord" as the subject, היה as the verb, and נהורא as an adverbial accusative of situation.

[119]McNamara, "*Logos* of the Fourth Gospel and *Memra* of the Palestinian Targum," 117.

[120]McNamara, *Targum and Testament*, 104. See also Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*, for how the Targums influenced John's entire theology of Jesus as the *Logos* rather than just how the Targums may have influenced John's use of the word alone.

מימרא is not simply a metonym for God, or even for God understood as speaking, but it is the term which conveys the sense of God's distinctively vocal, deliberative, creative, and worshipped aspects in Neophyti, and his distinctively active, demanding, and resisted aspects in Pseudo-Jonathan.[121]

Chilton provides two insights here. First, he suggests that *Memra* represents God's agent who speaks, creates, and demands within the created order. Secondly, he affirms that the presentation of *Memra* is not uniform in all of the Targums. Therefore, all of the extant Targums are helpful to determine the full meaning and function of these terms. For Chilton, the Targums never fully develop a "*concept* of God's מימרא," but they provide a "theological *manner* of speaking of God."[122] These metonyms for God's active presence in the world contain theological substance that Chilton carries into his study of Isaiah and John's gospel.

In his study of *Memra* in *Targum Isaiah*, Chilton expounds the theological substance of *Memra*. The *Memra* is an agent of punishment (*Tg. Isa* 30:27–33), demands obedience (*Tg. Isa* 1:19–20), speaks (*Tg. Isa* 6:8), protects (*Tg. Isa* 17:10a), and acts as an intermediary (*Tg. Isa* 48:3; 65:1).[123] This theological depth leads Chilton to pursue the theological implications in the New Testament.[124] Chilton argues that whether the *Memra* represents a hypostasis should not be an issue in the discussion. With the *Memra* as God's agent, he says, "The Targumic theologoumenon of the *memra* as God's activity of commanding has influenced the sense of *logos* in the fourth Gospel."[125] Chilton's

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[121]Bruce Chilton, "Recent and Prospective Discussion of *Memra*," in *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism: Intellect in Quest of Understanding–Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox,* vol. 2, ed. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Fredrichs, and Nahum M. Sarna (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 131.

[122]Ibid.

[123]Bruce Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, 57–63.

[124]Bruce Chilton, "Typologies of *memra* and the Fourth Gospel," in *Targum Studies: Textual and Contextual Studies in the Pentateuchal Targums,* ed. Paul V. M. Flesher (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 89–100.

[125]Ibid., 93. For Chilton, the way the Targums use *Memra theologically* should lead scholars to further discussion of the *Memra* rather than limiting the notion to a mere circumlocution for Yahweh.

understanding of the relationship between the *Memra*, *Logos*, and Jesus is obscure, but he concludes, "The *logos* in John is simply a development of conventional notions of the *memra* in early Judaism."[126]

Roger Le Déaut provides a helpful balance to the discussion of intermediaries in the Targum and their relation to the New Testament. He says, "Between an uncritical confidence and a total skepticism there is therefore room for a prudent and fruitful use of the Targumic literature for NT exegesis."[127] Regarding the *Memra* specifically, he says that it is the "privileged substitute for the divine Name," but the personification of the *Memra* was a "subsequent development of Christian theology."[128] After discussing John's use of *Memra* and *Yeqara* throughout his gospel, Le Déaut makes one of the strongest statements about exegesis in general as it impacts the Christological implications of these targumic terms. He says, "When the NT presents us with a perplexing exegesis of the OT, the biblical versions—which are actually the earliest interpretations of Scripture—may sometimes suggest what was the perspective of the Christian authors, intent on finding in it a sense allowing him to *re-read* the Bible in light of its fulfillment."[129] For Le Déaut, the New Testament authors freely and rightly drew out the meaning of these "privileged substitute[s] for the divine Name."

Craig Evans, a New Testament scholar, agrees that most occurrences of *Memra*

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[126]Ibid., 100. To be fair to Chilton's position, he does not necessarily equate the *Memra* or *Logos* with Jesus, nor does he indicate that scholarship should pursue this identification. Rather, he shows how these three overlap in meaning within their independent historical and interpretive settings. *Memra* belonged to Targum, *Logos* belonged to Philo, and Jesus belonged to John. Even so, Chilton pursues further theological (Christological?) substance to *Memra* apart from a periphrasis for the divine name.

[127]Roger Le Déaut, "Targumic Literature and Interpretation," 243. See also Roger Le Déaut, *La Nuit Pascale: Essai sur La Signification de la Pâque Juive à Partir du Targum d'Exode XII 42* (Rome: Institut Biblique Pontifical, 1963).

[128]Le Déaut, "Targumic Literature and Interpretation," 268.

[129]Ibid., 288 (italics original).

are periphrastic. However, he also says, "sometimes *memra* is an independent agent."[130] The *Memra* feels (*Tg. Amos* 4:11) and acts as an intermediary (*Tg. Isa* 65:1). As an independent agent, Evans argues that John's *Logos* provides further theological significance for *Memra, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara*, even if John's appropriation of these targumic terms overstepped the targumic presentation in its own right.[131] Evans agrees with the majority of scholarship that *Memra* stands for a periphrastic way to speak of God. And yet he also understands the theological depth inherent in the *Memra*, which leads him to the overt Christological implications found in the New Testament.

Conclusion

Throughout these background studies on *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara*, scholars have sought to understand the targumic translational method for these terms as well as their inherent meaning. Nearly all scholars in this field conclude that although these terms represent periphrastic ways to speak of God, they still function as God's agents, representing the Lord himself as active and manifest in the world. That *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* represent agency and manifestation suggests that these terms carry theological meaning beyond their translation without the necessity of hypostasis. Similarly to how the Spirit of God or the Angel of the Lord are separate from God in the Old Testament, so also, *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* appear to be separate agents who stand in the place of God himself.

Even so, a clear line can be drawn between those scholars who see Christological implications in these terms and those who do not. For some scholars, these terms mean nothing more than God's activity in the world without bearing on the person and work of Christ. For others, the obvious next step to understand the *Memra,*

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[130]Craig Evans, *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John's Prologue*, JSNTSup 89 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 127.

[131]Ibid., 128–29.

Shekinah, and *Yeqara* is to extend targumic conclusions into the New Testament and find where the New Testament attributes these same roles to Jesus.[132] In the words of Strack and Billerbeck, Jesus would be the "word *par excellence*" since he fulfills the roles of divine agent for God and manifestation of God.

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[132]See footnote 37 in this chapter for those scholars who see Christological implications in these terms and those who do not.

CHAPTER 2

THE MEANING OF *MEMRA, SHEKINAH,* AND *YEQARA* AND
THEIR THEOLOGICAL USE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Introduction

Although targumic scholars may not use agent-terminology to describe

Memra, they present the *Memra* as performing the works of God in the world and at least

imply his role as God's agent. Similarly, scholars present the targumic *Shekinah* and

Yeqara as manifestations of God. The primary division regarding these terms occurs

because many scholars neglect their Christological implications. Scholars like Paul

Billerbeck, Kauffman Kohler, and Robert Hayward, who may not agree with the

Christological appropriations of these terms in the New Testament, still affirm that John's

Logos is similar to the targumic *Memra*, if not identical. Indeed, the New Testament

authors explain biblical and theological concepts about Jesus by using terminology and

concepts similar to the Targums. They explain Jesus' deity by connecting his person and

work to Old Testament portrayals of God sometimes using targumic concepts. The New

Testament authors explain God's work in the world through his preeminent agent, Jesus

(Col 1:15–17). In addition, the New Testament authors use terms similar to the Targums

to speak of Jesus as the Son through whom man sees the Father (John 14:9). Jesus is God

dwelling among men, displaying the glory of God as the visible manifestation of the

Godhead (John 1:14). By employing these targumic terms (*Memra, Shekinah*, and

Yeqara) and by expanding the targumic concepts of divine agency and manifestation, the

New Testament authors provide an exegetical pattern by which one can find Christ in the

Old Testament.

Memra, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara*: Meaning and
Old Testament Theological Significance

Within the targumic traditions, *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* have meaning

independently from their New Testament appropriation. Understanding these terms in

their targumic context provides a basis to discover how the New Testament authors used

similar terms and concepts. In their targumic context, these terms seem to have

originated from theological concepts already found in the Hebrew Bible. Consequently,

Memra, Shekinah, and *Yeqara* represent more than an exegetical or translational

invention. Indeed, they are theological interpretations of God's active presence in the

world.

Memra (מימרא)

Fundamentally, *Memra* means "word," "decree," "command," or "speech."[1]

Memar (מימר) sometimes translates Hebrew contexts with a voice, either of God or of

man (*Tg. Onq*. Gen 3:17; 4:23), and carries this basic meaning. Hayward and Vermes

agree that *Memra* essentially means "word" or "speech," but they argue exegetically that

Memra represents God's active presence in speaking. They combine the אמר word

group with the Divine Name (אהיה) from Exodus 3:12, 14 to say that God's *Memra* is his

אהיה, namely his audible, active presence.[2] As such, *Memra* represents more than just

God's "speech" or "command." Instead, *Memra* alludes to God's actual presence

invoked through his name. Hayward and Vermes introduce the idea that the basic lexical

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[1]Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli, and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 775; Gustov Dalman *Aramäisch-Neuherbräisches Handwörterbuch Zu Targum, Talmud, und Midrasch* (Hildesheim, Germany: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967), 234; Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods* (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002), 670; idem, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period,* 2nd ed. (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002), 305; Jacob Neusner and William Scott Green, eds., *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period: 450 B.C.E. to 600 C.E.* (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 2:422.

[2]See Robert Hayward, "The Holy Name of the God of Moses and the Prologue of St. John's Gospel," *NTS* 25, no. 1 (1978): 16–32; and Pamela Vermes, "Buber's Understanding of the Divine Name Related to Bible, Targum and Midrash," *JJS* 24, no. 2 (1973): 147–66.

definition of *Memra* has further theological meaning and implications.

Some scholars provide additional meanings for *Memra* that highlight the theological development of the term as it is used in the Targums. Marcus Jastrow gives the secondary meaning, "hypostatized," when the term is used in the phrase מימרא דיי ('Word of the Lord'), and he further defines this hypostatization as "the Lord."[3] Gustav Dalman points to a secondary meaning, "person," but he separates this definition from the phrase מימרא דיי, which he lists as a third meaning, citing *Onqelos* Numbers 11:23.[4] For Dalman, the phrase מימרא דיי represents "God (as speaking or acting in the world)."[5] Jacob Neusner also extends the meaning of *Memra* beyond its lexical basics. Although he refuses to ascribe hypostasis or personal subsistence to the *Memra*, he says, "It designates the active attribute of God—usually linked to commanding. Under that general rubric, it can be used to describe him speaking, creating, acting, punishing, or receiving worship."[6] These scholars recognize that the *Memra* reflects a theological meaning determined by its use in the Targums.

Indeed, the Targums present the *Memra* as more than just a "word" or "decree." *Neofiti* Genesis 1–2 attributes the creation of the universe to the *Memra*. *Neofiti* Exodus 14:30 says that the *Memra* redeemed Israel from Egypt. Likewise, the *Memra* fought Israel's battles as they entered the promised land in *Targum Joshua* 10:14. In the Abrahamic narrative, *Onqelos* Genesis 15 suggests that the *Memra* was God's

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[3]Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim,* 775. Although Jastrow's dictionary entry is minimal, he equates the מימרא דיי with "the Lord" similarly to how many scholars would equate the angel of the Lord with Yahweh (see, e.g., Stephen L. White, "Angel of the Lord: Messenger or Euphemism?" *TynBul* 50, no. 2 [1999]: 299–305). Where the angel of the Lord is active, most evangelicals would say that is the Lord acting in time and space. Jastrow makes the same assumption regarding the *Memra*. Where the *Memra* of the Lord is active, it represents God's activity in the world.

[4]Dalman, *Aramäisch-Neuherbräisches Handwörterbuch*, 234.

[5]Ibid. Dalman's definitions align him with Jastrow and others. The *Memra* is "God (as acting or speaking in the world)." In addition, Dalman points out the aspect of "person" in the *Memra*.

[6]Neusner, *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*, 2:422.

agent to communicate the covenant to Abraham and to mediate the covenant sign.[7] In

each of these cases, the *Memra* carries out a role beyond verbal speech or declaration

from God. In fact, the *Memra* functions as God's agent in the Targums by doing the

work that the Hebrew Bible ascribes to God.

These uses of *Memra* as an agent in the Targums seem to be derived from Old

Testament theology rather than a translational invention of Rabbinic Judaism. Since the

Targums were the official interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, the *Memra* stands as a term

used to *explain* God's active presence in Israel's history. God often used agents to carry

out his purposes in the Old Testament.[8] Indeed, Scripture equates some of these visible

agents with God similarly to how Targum equates מימרא דיי with יהוה.[9]

While these visible agents help one see how God works in the world, some Old

Testament passages even suggest that God's Word functions as an agent. Psalm 33:6

says that that heavens were created "by the word of the Lord" (בדבר יהוה), where the ב

functions as an instrumental ב.[10] The phrase "breath of his mouth" (ברוח פיו) in Psalm

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[7]Cf. the Noahic covenant (*Tg. Onq.* Gen 9:12–15, 17) and the Sinai covenant (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 31:13, 17), in which the *Memra* functions as the agent and mediator of the covenant signs of the rainbow and Sabbath respectively.

[8]See, for example, the fourth man in the fiery furnace (Dan 3:25, 28); Angel of the Lord (Gen 16:9–11, 22:11; Exod 3:2; 14:19; Num 22:22–27); Spirit of God (Exod 31:3; Num 24:2; Ps 143:10); and Wisdom (Prov 3:19). Cf. *Tg. Judg* 6:12 where the Angel of the Lord appears to Gideon. The Angel of the Lord identifies himself as the *Memra* of the Lord when he speaks to Gideon.

[9]E.g., in Gen 18–19, "the Lord" appears to Abraham (Gen 18:1), and yet Abraham sees "three men" standing before him to deliver the message from the Lord (Gen 18:2). The Lord speaks with Abraham in this interchange (Gen 18:10, 13), but later only two of the men (now called angels) enter Sodom (Gen 19:1). The third man was seemingly a manifestation of the Lord, while the other two were agents to carry out God's vengeance against Sodom. Likewise, in Gen 32:22–32, Jacob wrestles with "a man" (ויאבק איש עמו) who is later identified as God (אלהים, Gen 32:28, 30; cf. Hos 12:3–4). Even the Old Testament identifies them as visible agents while simultaneously calling them "God."

[10]Francis Brown, et al., eds. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, With an Appendix Containing Biblical Aramaic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 89, III 2a; Ronald Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax,* 3rd ed., rev. John C. Beckman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), §243; E. Kautzsch, ed., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, trans. A. E. Cowley (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006), §119o; Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew,* trans. T. Muraoka, vol. 2 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000), §132e, §133c.

33:6b may suggest that the "word of the Lord" in 33:6a only means his speech. However, some targumic manuscripts translate Psalm 33:6 as the *Memra* of the Lord indicating that Jewish exegetes understood this passage to be speaking of God's agent rather than his verbal speech only.[11] Psalm 107:20 highlights the role of God's word as an agent of healing, while Psalm 147:15 portrays God's word as running across the earth. Furthermore, in Psalm 103:20, God's word is personified as having a voice that should be obeyed. This authoritative "voice" is God's דבר. In Psalm 105:19, the Word (אמרת) of the Lord refined Joseph, where אמרת stands as the subject of the verb. In other words, the "Word of the Lord" (אמרת יהוה) performed God's work of testing Joseph. Here, the Targum translates אמרת as *Memra* suggesting the interpretation of agency in this passage, not "command." Although the Old Testament phrase "word of the Lord" typically denotes God's message or speech to the prophets, the passages just listed suggest that God's Word also functions as an agent or takes on anthropomorphic characteristics in the Hebrew Bible. Since God's דבר implies his presence, the Targums extend the theology of the Hebrew Bible throughout their interpretations of Scripture. Where God is present and active, the Targums often interpret that it is God's agent, his *Memra*, who acts.

Shekinah (שכינה) and *Yeqara* (יקרא)

In general, *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* allude to different nuances of the same basic meaning, namely God's manifestation. At times, the *Shekinah* stands as God's presence with his people, while at other times, the *Yeqara* functions as the manifestation of God to Israel. Both words indicate God's manifestation, and they are often used interchangeably

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[11]David M. Stec, *Targum of Psalms*, The Aramaic Bible 16 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), 22–23, 73ng. The vast majority of the occurrences of דבר in the Hebrew Bible are translated in the Targums as פתגם or מלא, not מימרא. Even if the Targum interpreted this verse to be God's speech only, the tradition still indicates God using an agent to accomplish his work. That agent/instrument is his speech. The targumist then could extend this idea theologically into the rest of the Targums when God acts in the created order through an agent.

or even in tandem. *Onqelos* Numbers 14:14 illustrates this tight connection. The Hebrew Bible says that the Lord (יהוה) was among his people, he was seen face to face, and his presence stood over them as a pillar of cloud at day and fire at night. *Onqelos* Numbers 14:14 interprets that the *Shekinah* dwelled amongst Israel. Rather than Israel seeing God face to face they saw "with their eyes" the "*Shekinah* of the *Yeqara* of the Lord," which was the cloud that overshadowed them. Passages like this demonstrate the difficulty of separating the "dwelling presence" of God (*Shekinah*) from the "weighty/glorious presence" of God (*Yeqara*).[12] One often implies the other. Because these terms are so closely related, they will be considered together.

The term *Shekinah*, built on the Semitic root שכן, denotes "dwelling" or "settling."[13] In later rabbinic literature, it carried the meaning of "royalty," or a "royal residence," often being used to describe God's presence in the temple or his "Holy Abode."[14] In the Targums, *Shekinah* represents God's "divine presence" manifested in the world.[15] *Shekinah* often represents God's presence dwelling among the people of Israel (*Tg. Onq.* Num 35:34), or his presence in the tabernacle and temple (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 40:34–35; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 31:15; *Tg. Isa* 4:5). Sometimes, *Shekinah* is accompanied by a cloud of glory (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 13:21; 20:21; *Tg. 2 Sam* 22:12). Combining the theological meaning of God's presence with the basic lexical meaning of

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[12]To say that *Yeqara* is the "weighty presence" of God highlights its relationship to the Hebrew כבוד. *Yeqara* is the awe-inspiring presence of God that demands and elicits awe, worship, and honor.

[13]Dalman, *Aramäisch-Neuherbräisches Handwörterbuch*, 423.

[14]Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim,* 1573; Martin McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible: A Light on the New Testament,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 148–53.

[15]Geoffrey Wigoder, Fred Skolnik, and Shmuel Himelstein, eds., *The New Encyclopedia of Judaism* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 709; Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic,* 550; idem, *Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, 1145; Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim,* 1573.

"dwelling," the *Shekinah* represents the "dwelling presence" of God among his people.[16]

Being derived from the Hebrew שכן, *Shekinah* developed its meaning from the Old Testament. The glory of the Lord dwelled (וישכן כבוד יהוה) on Mount Sinai in Exodus 24:16. God dwelled with his people in the exodus and wilderness, leading them by a pillar of cloud at daytime and fire at night (Exod 13:21–22; Num 35:34). The presence of God dwelled in the tabernacle throughout the wilderness journeys (Exod 33:9), and then settled in the temple after Solomon had completed it (1 Kgs 8:10). In Exodus 15:17, Moses says that God will bring Israel into the place he has made for his own abode, indicating his promised presence with Israel in their land. God also promised his covenantal presence with Israel in Leviticus 26:12, promising to walk in their midst (והתהלכתי בתוככם) as their God. Numbers 5:3, describes God as a "dweller" in the camp (אשר אני שכן בתוכם).[17] In Deuteronomy 16:6, the place where God has chosen for his name to dwell indicates his presence, and the Targums translate this verse as the place where God's *Shekinah* dwells.[18] In each of these Old Testament examples, God's presence is explicit or he is described as "dwelling" with his people. Therefore, the Targums accurately extended the term *Shekinah* to interpret and explain biblical passages indicating God's presence.

While the *Shekinah* represents the nuance of God's dwelling presence, the

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[16]The *Shekinah* presence of God is often similar to the New Testament notion of the Holy Spirit's presence among believers. A visible manifestation typically is not present, and yet God's presence is a legitimate reality. Another parallel would be Jesus' teaching in Matt 28:20 that he will be with the disciples even to the end of the age. Even as he is preparing to ascend, Jesus says that his presence will be with the church. Although physical manifestation may be rare or unnoticed after Jesus' ascension, his presence in the church is a reality.

[17]The grammar of Num 5:3 uses a *Qal* participle as an accusative of situation to describe a "*habitual* or *abiding* state or activity" (Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax: A Traditional Semitic Approach* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, forthcoming], §16a, §16l). The participle functions as a descriptor of who God is rather than a verb indicating his action. In his nature, God is a "dweller" with his people in Old Testament theology.

[18]*Tgs. Onq., Neof.,* and *Ps.-J.* all interpret the place where God's name will dwell as the promise of his *Shekinah* presence.

Yeqara represents God's "weighty" presence, often seen as the cloud of God's glory (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 40:38; *Tg. Onq.* Num 10:34). *Yeqara* is often used to translate the Hebrew כבוד and means "weightiness" or "heaviness."[19] Like the Hebrew כבוד, יקר highlights God's "honor," "dignity," and "glory."[20] The *Yeqara* often appears in heavenly visions, where the presence of God is seen at its very essence rather than in the created world (*Tg. Isa* 6:1). However, the *Yeqara* also represents God's manifest glory in the world. In *Onqelos* Exodus 16:7, Moses and Aaron warn the people that they will see the glory of the Lord, namely, a weighty manifestation of God in judgment because of Israel's grumbling. *Onqelos* Exodus 20:18 interprets the "thick darkness" where God dwelled at Sinai as "the dark cloud where the *Yeqara* of the Lord" dwelled. In *Onqelos* Genesis 28:13, the *Yeqara* "was standing" before Jacob and spoke with him as a manifestation and agent of God. Likewise, the cloud of the *Yeqara*, which covered Mount Sinai, "called out to Moses" (ויקרא למשה) as the agent of God to deliver the Lord's message (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 24:16).[21] Like the other terms, *Yeqara* implies a deeper meaning based on its theological use in the Targums.

Just as *Memra* and *Shekinah* developed from Old Testament theology, *Yeqara* also finds its theological grounding in the Old Testament. God's glory (כבוד) is often manifested to God's people as a visible, weighty presence. The glory of the Lord dwelled on Mount Sinai in a thick cloud, and its appearance was like a "devouring fire" that all could see (Exod 24:16–17). At the completion of the tabernacle, the cloud of the glory of the Lord settled on the tabernacle, and Moses was unable to enter due to the

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[19]E.g., *Tg. Onq.* Gen 45:13; 49:6; *Tg. Onq.* Exod 16:7; 16:10; 29:43; *Tg. Onq.* Num 14:10; *Tg. Onq.* Deut 5:24. Also see BDB, 457 for the verbal form, כבד and 458–59 for the nominal כבוד.

[20]Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 593; Dalman, *Aramäisch-Neuherbräisches Handwörterbuch*, 187; Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic,* 54; idem, *Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, 541.

[21]In *Tg. Onq.* Exod 24:16, *Yeqara* is not the subject of the verb קרא. However it is the nearest antecedent and should be understood as the one who "called out" to Moses.

heaviness of God's presence (Exod 40:34–36). Exodus 40:38 says that the cloud of God's glory would settle on the tabernacle by day and fire would be visible there at night. In both cases, the weighty glory of God's presence was evident in the tabernacle. Just as the "glory" of God (כבוד יהוה) was seen in the temple, so also the *Yeqara* was the manifestation of God's honor and dignity in the temple (*Tg. 1 Kgs* 8:11). Like *Shekinah*, the Targums interpret these passages from the Hebrew Bible that God's *Yeqara* was the weighty manifestation of God.

The basic meaning of these terms, along with their subsequent theological development within the Targums, provides the grounding to pursue the use of these terms outside of the Targums. Indeed, where other literature suggests God's use of an agent, one could probably find references to the *Memra* functioning similarly. Likewise, where God manifests himself in the world, a parallel to the *Shekinah* or *Yeqara* could often be made in the Targums. Since the Targums were the official, synagogue interpretation of Scripture, the New Testament documents become a fascinating place to find the use of similar terms and concepts as those in the Targums. In fact, the New Testament authors appear to use these three targumic terms, as well as their theological concepts, to speak of Jesus as God's divine agent and manifestation. If, according to New Testament revelation, Jesus functions analogously to the *Memra, Shekinah*, or *Yeqara*, one can return to the Targums and probably find Christ in the Old Testament through these terms.

Apostolic Use of Terms Similar to *Memra, Shekinah*, and *Yeqara*

Using terms similar to the Targums was an exegetical method possibly used by the New Testament authors. Specifically, they used terms similar to the definitions of *Memra, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara* just discussed, and yet the New Testament authors extended the theological ramifications of these targumic terms by applying them to Jesus. In the New Testament, Jesus is the agent of God and the premier manifestation of God

just as the *Memra, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara* represent the same theological concepts in the Targums. The discussion of how the New Testament authors may have used the Targums can be separated into how they used similar *terms* and how they applied similar targumic *concepts* behind those terms. The following examples indicate how the New Testament authors may have used terms similar to *Memra, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara*.

The *Memra* and *Yeqara* in John's Prologue

John began his gospel with the statement that the Word (*Logos, Memra*) was in the beginning *with* God and that the Word *was* God.[22] Using terminology similar to the Targums, John immediately identified Jesus as "the Word" (λόγος). According to John, Jesus is God *and* he is distinct from God similarly to how the Targums describe the *Memra*.[23] After establishing Jesus' nature as God, John said that Jesus was God's agent in creation. "All things were made *through* him" (John 1:3, 10, πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο).[24] John reminded his audience of Genesis 1 with "In the beginning," and

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[22]The discussions in this dissertation accept that John's *Logos* was derived primarily from the Aramaic Targums. Since the Targums explained God's actions in the created order using terminology derived from a theology of the Hebrew Bible, one could also say that John's *Logos* is derived from the Hebrew דבר. However, other arguments exist regarding the background of John's *Logos* terminology, and few scholars conclude that it was derived from the Targums. For surveys of various views and arguments, see Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*, 1–9; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John* (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson, 2003), 339–63; E. L. Miller, "The Johannine Origins of the Johannine Logos," *JBL* 112, no. 3 (1993): 445–57. For the targumic parallels specifically, see Craig Evans, *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John's Prologue*, JSNTSup 89 (Sheffield: JSOT Press), 1993), 114–24.

[23]Part of the difficulty defining *Memra* is the debate about whether the term implies personality, personhood, or hypostasis. This debate has dominated the discussion of *Memra* because the *Memra* stands in the place of יהוה grammatically, but is often presented as distinct from God. Therefore, like the *Logos*, the *Memra* is distinct from God, but also identified as God.

[24]Using δι' plus the genitive (αὐτοῦ) to indicate agency, John teaches that God created all things "through" Jesus. Oepke says, "The formula 'through Christ' is also to be taken more often in the sense that Christ mediates the action of another, i.e., the action of God, namely, creation (Jn 1:3; 1 C. 8:6; Col 1:16)" (Albrecht Oepke, "διά," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964], 2:66–67). For other instances of διά plus the genitive indicating agency, see Matt 1:22; 2:5; John 3:17; Eph 3:10; Rom 5:9; Phil 1:11; Phlm 7. Daniel Wallace also argues that διά plus the genitive reflects intermediate agency. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament with Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes* (Grand

identified Jesus as the same God who created all things *ex nihilo*.

In Genesis, the Targums interpret the *Memra* as God's creative agent similarly to how John describes Jesus. In *Neofiti* Genesis 1, *Memra* occurs nineteen times related to creation.[25] At times, the *Memra* only speaks and yet his speech effects creation (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11). The *Memra* "creates" the two great lights that rule the day and night (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:16; וברא ממרא דייי). The *Memra* also authoritatively named the created order, calling the dry land "earth" and the waters the "seas" (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:10; וקרא ממרא דייי). Furthermore, when the Hebrew Bible says, "and it was so" (ויהי־כן), *Neofiti* and *Fragmentary Targum P* interpret this to mean "it was so according to his *Memra*" (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:7, והוה כן כמימריה).[26] In each of these verses, the *Memra* was active in creation as the agent of God.

Several passages in *Targum Isaiah* indicate that God created "by his *Memra*." *Targum Isaiah* 44:24 says, "Thus says the Lord, who redeemed you and who established you from the womb: I am the Lord, Maker of all things. I suspended the heavens by my *Memra*, I completed the earth by my power." *Targum Isaiah* 44:24 limits the *Memra's* activity in creation to suspending the heavens. However, the tradition agrees with *Neofiti's* creation narrative that the *Memra* decreed the creation of the firmament and it was so "according to his *Memra* (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:6–9). *Targum Isaiah* 45:12 also indicates that God created "by his *Memra*." The Targum interprets the repetition of the

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Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 368, 432–34.

[25]In 17 of the 19 occurrences of *Memra* in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 1, *Memra* is the subject of verbs indicating an active participation in creation. Also, the *Frg. Tg. P* Gen 1–2 has *Memra* as the subject of verbs 25 times. See John Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 21.

[26]Ronning, *The Jewish Targums*, 21. This way of speaking of the *Memra* could indicate a command or decree of the Lord rather than a personal agent. However, Ronning points to other passages in *Tg. Neof.* and *Frg. Tg. P* Gen 1 that indicate that the creation occurred "according to the decree of his *Memra*" (*Tg. Neof.* [mg.] Gen 1:3; *Frg. Tg. P* Gen 1:7). In addition, *Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:3 says there was light "according to the decree of his *Memra*, while *Frg. Tg. P* Gen 1:3 says, "there was light *through*/*by* his Word" (והוה נהור במימריה), indicating agency more than mere decree.

pronoun אנכי in the Hebrew Bible as a reference to the *Memra*.[27] The Targum reads, "I, by my *Memra*, I made the earth and I created mankind upon it."[28] *Targum Isaiah* uses the instrumental ב to indicate the *Memra* was the agent/instrument through whom God created the earth and established man upon it.[29]

Finally, the targumic tradition in the Psalter points to the *Memra* as the Creator. *Targum Psalms* 124:8 says, "Our help is in the name of the *Memra* of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Here, the Targum links the "name of the *Memra*" with יהוה, and ascribes the action of "making" the heavens and earth to the Lord's *Memra*.[30] As mentioned previously, some targumic manuscripts of Psalm 33:6 interpret the דבר יהוה as the *Memra*.[31] In some of the Targums, the *Memra* creates, and John directly links this vocabulary to Jesus, the *Logos*, through whom all things were made.

In addition to the *Memra* functioning as God's agent in creation, *Neofiti* presents the *Yeqara* as active in creation as well.[32] The *Yeqara* set the two great lights in

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[27]אנא במימרי עבדית ארעא ואנשא עלה. For emphasis, the Hebrew would read, אנכי עשיתי ארץ ואדם עליה בראתי ("I, I made the earth, and man upon it, I created").

[28]In *Tg. Isa.* 45:12b, the parallel structure interprets God's "hand" in the Hebrew Bible as his "strength" in the Targum. That the pronoun, "I," is interpreted in the targumic tradition to refer to an agent of God (*Memra*) whereas his hands refer to an attribute (strength) suggests that the *Memra* is equal to God. This interpretation does not require hypostasis in the Targums, but the apparent gulf that stands between John's *Logos* and the *Memra* diminishes when the *Memra* is identified with God by carrying out the actions of God alone. Likewise, the verbs "to create" (בריתי) and "to make" (עבדית) are interpreted to refer to the *Memra's* actions whereas God's hand "stretched out" (נטו) the heavens.

[29]The grammar here suggests an instrumental ב instead of a ב of agency. Even so, the distinction between instrument and agency is miniscule. See Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, §243 (instrumental ב) compared to §245 (ב of agent).

[30]The Targum maintains the divine name, יהוה, rather than using the typical targumic rendering, ייי.

[31]Stec, *Targum of Psalms*, 22–23, 73ng.

[32]While John does not directly ascribe creation to the "glory," he describes Jesus as having a visible glory from the Father (John 1:14). The "Word" who created all things displays the "glory" from the Father. That the Targums attribute creation to the *Yeqara* as well is indeed striking, especially when John combines these targumic terms in his prologue.

the heavens after the *Memra* had created them (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:17) indicating the active participation of the *Yeqara* in creation. The Targums also connect the *Yeqara* to the act of creation in *Neofiti* Genesis 2:3. The *Yeqara* "blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" because it was a Sabbath on which he rested "from all his work that the *Yeqara* of the Lord had done in creating" (מן כל עיבידתיה די ברה איקרה דייי למעבד).[33] In these verses, the *Yeqara* represents God's agent in creation similarly to the *Memra*.[34] In John 1:1–14, John labels Jesus as the creative Word and the one in whom the glory of God clearly resides.

The *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* in John 1:14

In John 1:14, John uses terminology similar to the targumic *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*. John recalls the title "Word" (corresponding to *Memra*), but describes the incarnation by saying that Jesus became flesh and "dwelt" (corresponding to *Shekinah*)

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[33]A similar phrase is used of the *Memra* in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 2:2. The *Memra* of the Lord "completed his work that he had created" (ואשלם . . . עיבידתיה די ברא) and then rested "from all his work that he had created" (מן כל עבדתיה די ברא). *Tg. Neof.* Gen 1–2 parallels the work of the *Memra* with the *Yeqara*. John, therefore, had no reason to distinguish between the creation work of the *Logos* and the visible "glory" shining from God's agent. Both are represented in the targumic tradition.

[34]Some have seen in the Targums a reference to God creating the universe "with/by wisdom." This interpretation is understandable, especially with the references to wisdom in Prov 8:25–31 (see also Ps 104:24; Prov 3:19). Wisdom "was beside him, like a master workman" (Prov 8:30). The simile used in Proverbs seems to indicate that wisdom was God's agent in creation, and even the Targums agree with this conclusion to some extent. *Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:1 says, "From the beginning, *with wisdom*, the Lord created and finished the heavens and the earth." The prepositional phrase, בחכמה, is an intentional targumic expansion that upholds God's unity and yet allows for another creative agent. However, *Tg. Neof.* explicitly identifies the agent(s) through the rest of the creation narrative as the *Memra* and the *Yeqara*, and yet in the first verse of the targumic literature, the synagogue leaders carefully upheld Jewish monotheism.

The New Testament primarily presents God's wisdom as wisdom related to salvation, not creation. In God's infinite wisdom, he sent Jesus to save. The New Testament also identifies Jesus as "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24; Χριστὸν θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ θεοῦ σοφίαν; cf. Col 2:3). The appositional phrases in 1 Cor 1:24 suggest that Jesus is the wisdom of God. Certainly this text is unrelated to Jesus as the Creator, and yet when combined with the Old Testament and targumic evidence, one could conclude that God created through Jesus as the wisdom of God. Therefore, the phrase in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:1 that God created "with wisdom" should not lead one to limit God's creative activity only through the agency of wisdom. Indeed, God created through the agency of Wisdom, who is Jesus, the *Memra*.

among men.[35] This manifestation of God in Jesus Christ displayed God's glory, a "glory

as of the only Son from the Father." In this verse, John says that Jesus is the

manifestation of divine glory that has made his dwelling among men. Mary Coloe says,

"These terms from the Targums used in the Jewish synagogue worship may have

provided the Johannine author with the theological tools to express the divinity they saw,

heard, and experienced in Jesus."[36]

Regarding *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* in John 1:14, Köstenberger says this language

is reminiscent of the tabernacle scene in Exodus 40:34–35.[37] In this passage, God's glory

(כבוד יהוה) filled the tabernacle. Köstenberger refers to this scene because of John's use

of ἐσκήνωσεν to say that the Word "tabernacled" among his people. That Jesus

"tabernacled" among men refers to the *Shekinah* presence of God. In addition, *Neofiti*

Exodus 40:34–36, 38 says that it was the "*Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* of the Lord" that

descended upon the tabernacle.[38] Similar to targumic terminology, John refers to the

presence of God in the tabernacle to speak of Jesus as the manifestation of God. God, in

Christ, dwelled among men and manifested his "weighty" presence through the glory of

the Son.

Further targumic evidence behind John's use of *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* is in

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[35]The association of *Shekinah* with "dwelt" is not intended to argue that John wrote in Aramaic. Indeed, the Aramaic *Shekinah* and the Hebrew *shakan* are related (see pgs. 41–42 above). The inclusion of *Shekinah* with "dwelt" terminology in John 1:14 is intended to show the similar language John uses rather than argue that he wrote in Aramaic.

[36]Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 61.

[37]Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 41. See also Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 92.

[38]Exod 40:34–36 is an example of the close relationship between *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*. Although these terms have distinct nuances in meaning, they often indicate the same concept, namely the manifestation of God in the world.

Pseudo-Jonathan Exodus 33:9.[39] The cloud that descended on the tent of meeting and

spoke with Moses was the "cloud of the Glory" (יקרא). The targumic interpretation of

God's manifest presence was that his *Yeqara* was visibly present in the tent of meeting.

With this scene in mind, it is not surprising that John says the Word has tabernacled

among men and "we have beheld his *glory*" (John 1:14). Jesus is both God's agent and

also his physical manifestation on earth. In order to explain Jesus' ontological identity as

God, John used terminology similar to the Targums to teach that Jesus was God's

glorious presence dwelling among men.

A final passage that connects *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* to John 1:14 is Exodus

34:6. In *Onqelos, Neofiti*, and *Pseudo-Jonathan* Exodus 34:6, the Targums interpret

Moses' exclamation of God's "steadfast love and faithfulness" as his "abundantly doing

kindness and *truth*." Combining the idea of God "doing truth" with him being a God,

"gracious and merciful," some scholars see this passage as the impetus for John saying

that the visible glory of God in Christ was "full of grace and truth."[40] In *Onqelos* and

Pseudo-Jonathan Exodus 34:6, God caused his *Shekinah* to pass before Moses eliciting

Moses' exclamation of God's grace and truth. In *Neofiti* Exodus 34:6, God caused the

Yeqara of his *Shekinah* to pass before Moses. John used language similar to the Targums

of Exodus 34:6 to indicate that Jesus manifests the Father's glory, "full of grace and

truth."

The *Memra* in Revelation 19:13

Another passage in which John uses terms similar to the Targums is Revelation

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[39]Köstenberger, *John*, 41; Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 92; George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 2nd ed., WBC 36 (Waco, TX; Word, 1999), 14; H. Mowvley, "John 1:14–18 in the Light of Exodus 33:7–34:35," *ExpTim* 95, no. 5 (1984): 135–37. These scholars point to Exod 33:9 as a background to John 1:14, but do not necessarily link John's prologue to the Targums.

[40]For a survey of studies on the relation between John 1:14 and Exod 34, see Anthony T. Hanson, "John 1:14–18 and Exodus 34," *NTS* 23, no. 1 (1976): 90–101. For how the targumic evidence bears on John's *Logos*, see Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*, 62–69.

19:13. In John's eschatological vision, he sees the rider on the white horse coming to wage war against God's enemies. The rider is called, "the Word of God" (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ), the familiar agent of the Targums (מימרא דייי). As the Word of God, Revelation 19:11–21 portrays Jesus as God's agent to execute justice through warfare. Jesus, who is faithful and true, sits upon his white horse to judge (κρίνει) and make war (πολεμεῖ; Rev 19:11; cf. Rev 3:14). To illustrate God's justice and warfare through the Word, John says that Jesus wears a robe dipped in blood, and he will tread the winepress of the wrath of God the Almighty (v. 15; cf. Matt 21:33). He is the King of kings and Lord of lords (v. 16; cf. 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14), who alone has authority to execute justice. In John's vision, the "Word of God" leads God's army in the final battle against Satan and the forces that oppose God's people (Rev 19:13b). All of these descriptions indicate that Jesus is God's agent to save God's people by distributing justice on their enemies. While the title "Word of God" may seem arbitrary, God's use of an agent to carry out warfare and justice is evident. Jesus sits atop the white horse poised to execute justice over his enemies as God's divine agent. According to John, the Word of God is none other than the *Memra* who is God's agent for justice and warfare in the Targums.

Memra and judgment. Similarly to how Jesus is God's agent to carry out justice (John 12:48; Rom 2:16), the *Memra* also executes retributive justice in the Targums. *Pseudo-Jonathan* Genesis 19:24 says that the *Memra* of the Lord poured out sulfur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah as an act of judgment.[41] *Neofiti* Exodus 15:1 attributes to the *Memra* the punishment delivered to Egypt at the exodus. The Targums suggest that God will deliver covenantal curses through the *Memra* as retribution for their

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[41]Cf. *Tg. Neof.*, *Tg. Ps.-J.*, and *Frg. Tg. PVNL* Gen 19:24. *Tg. Ps.-J.* and *Frg. Tg. PVNL* all interpret "raining down" of the Hebrew Bible as God's favorable opportunity for repentance followed by the fire and brimstone of judgment. *Tg. Neof.* Gen 19:24 omits the "favorable rains" and declares that "the *Memra* of the Lord made sulfur and fire come down upon Sodom and Gomorrah from before the Lord, from the heavens."

disobedience in *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy 28:20–22. Eschatologically, the *Memra* will destroy the nations in judgment according to *Targum Isaiah* 33:11. In each of these passages, the parallel between Jesus and the *Memra* as God's agent(s) to deliver judgment is clear. In John's final scene of God's active judgment in history, John used similar targumic language to portray Jesus as God's agent to deliver that judgment.

Several other targumic passages suggest that John may have understood Jesus as the *Memra* in his vision of divine judgment. *Targum Isaiah* 11:4 provides the background for several of the themes from Revelation 19, but attributes God's smiting judgment to the *Memra* rather than the "rod" from the Messiah's mouth.

Isaiah 11:1–4	There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Targum Isaiah 11:1–4	And the king will come forth from the sons of Jesse, and the Messiah will be raised up from his sons' sons. And a spirit will rest on him from before the Lord, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And the Lord shall bring him near to the fear of him. And he shall not be judging by the sight of his eyes, and he shall not be reproving by the hearing of the ears. And he will judge poor ones in truth, and he will reprove the poor of the people in faithfulness. But he will smite the sinners of the land by the *Memra* of his mouth, and by the speech of his lips he will kill the wicked.

Targum Isaiah interprets the "shoot" and "branch" from the Hebrew Bible as the "king" and "Messiah" to be raised up from the sons of Jesse. The Spirit-filled Messiah in Isaiah 11 will "smite the sinners of the land by the *Memra* of his mouth."[42]

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[42]The phrase "rod of his mouth" in Isa 11:4 parallels Rev 19:15 that Jesus rules with a "rod of

The Targum interprets a personal agent in the place of the "rod of his mouth." Isaiah

11:4, in both the Hebrew Bible and the Targum, presents a parallel construction in verse

4b.

Isaiah 11:4b	And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips, he shall kill the wicked.
MT Isaiah 11:4b[43]	והכה ארץ בשבט פיו וברוח שפתיו ימית רשע
Targum Isaiah 11:4b	And he shall smite the sinners of the land by the *Memra* of his mouth and by the decree of his lips, he will exist as one who kills the wicked.
Targum Isaiah 11:4b	וימחי חייבי ארעא במימר פומיה ובממלל ספותיה יהי מאית רשיעא

In the Hebrew Bible, the "rod of his mouth" is parallel to the "breath of his lips," both of

which are involved in judging the wicked. Using the ב preposition, both of these phrases

serve as instruments of judgment. The Targum highlights the *Memra's* agency in

judgment by inserting *Memra* in place of "the rod of his mouth," and then corroborates

this idea with a parallel instrument, "the speech of his lips."[44] Where the Hebrew Bible

parallels the instrument of judgment (שבט) with the decree of judgment (רוח), so also the

Targum parallels the instrument/agent of judgment (מימר) with the decree of judgment

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iron" and a sword protrudes from his mouth. However, that the Targums insert a personal agent, the *Memra*, in place of the rod suggests a closer link to Rev 19:13 and the use of "Word of God."

[43]All Hebrew and Aramaic texts are from Accordance Bible Software modules, BHS-W4, TARG-T, TARG2-T, TARG3-T, and TARGF-T. The passages designated as "MT," in this chart and others, assume the pointing of the Masoretic Text even though the provided text is unpointed.

[44]The phrase "speech of his lips" does not have to be understood as a decree only. Second Thess 2:8 says that when the lawless one appears, the Lord Jesus will kill him with the "breath of his mouth." Even in 2 Thess 2:8, this phrase could be understood metaphorically to refer to the effectual decree of judgment, and yet grammatically, the instrumental dative seems more likely. By interpreting 2 Thess 2:8 in this way, Paul's language is similar to *Tg. Isa* 11:4b, where Jesus stands as the personal agent/instrument of God to judge, but he does so by the "breath/speech of his lips." Alec Motyer connects "lips" and "mouth" in Isa 11:4 to Rev 19:15, 21 without any reference to the Targums indicating that he sees divine agency in this passage over mere speech. He says, "The king needs no other weapon than his word (Rev 19:15, 21), because his word is annexed to his *breath*, literally 'spirit' (as Ps. 33:6)." In J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 20 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999), 118.

(ממלל). In the Targum, one instrument of God's judgment is the *Memra*. In Revelation 19, the agent of God's final judgment is called "the Word of God."

The context of *Targum Isaiah* 11:4 also connects the *Memra* with Jesus in Revelation 19:11–16. *Targum Isaiah* 11:4 says that the *Memra* "will judge the poor ones *in truth*" and "reprove the poor of the people *in faithfulness*." These phrases refer to the Messiah judging the poor favorably in order to care for them, and yet the descriptors "truth" and "faithfulness" parallel the names of the rider on the white horse in Revelation 19:11. He is "called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war." The word used in the Targum for "truth" (קושטא) translates "righteousness" in the Hebrew Bible (צדק), and often means "righteousness" itself in the Targums.[45] That Revelation 19:11 says the one sitting on the white horse judges and makes war "in righteousness" (ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ) affirms a connection between the targumic agent and Jesus. Just as the *Memra* will judge in truth and faithfulness, so also Jesus will judge as the one who is called Faithful and True. John's use of "Word" in Revelation 19:13 once again seems to have a probable targumic background.

Targum Isaiah 63:1–8 also portrays the *Memra* in the context of judgment, and provides the background for other judgment themes found in Revelation 19:11–16. In *Targum Isaiah* 63:1, the Lord swore "by his *Memra*" to execute justice on the nations.[46] *Targum Isaiah* 63:3 describes this judgment sworn by the *Memra* as "stamping" (מתבעיט) the nations as in a winepress. In Revelation 19:13–15, Jesus' robe is red with blood because he has trodden the winepress of the wrath of God. Jesus, the Word of God, will carry out the judgment sworn by the *Memra*.

The broader context of Isaiah 58–63 suggests that God's agent will be Israel's

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[45]Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim,* 1429.

[46]Bruce Chilton says "military '*retribution*' is the principal issue" in *Tg. Isa* 63:1–3. In Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus, and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 11 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987), 121.

Savior by defeating their enemies in judgment. Not only is the *Memra* God's agent to

execute this justice, but by doing so, the *Memra* also becomes Israel's Savior. Because

no one was found righteous to execute justice (Isa 63:4), God's own arm brought

salvation and his wrath upheld him (Isa 63:5).[47] *Targum Isaiah* 63:5 interprets God's

wrath in the Hebrew as "by my pleasing *Memra*, I helped them" (ובמימר רעותי

סעדתינון). In other words, God's *Memra* will help Israel by being the very wrath that

slaughters the nations who oppose Israel. As Israel's Savior-Judge, *Targum Isaiah* 63:8

says, "Indeed they are my people, children who will not deceive, and my *Memra* has

become their Savior."[48] *Targum Isaiah* 63:1–8 provides the background that the *Memra*

of the Lord would execute justice by stamping God's enemies under foot. By doing so,

the *Memra* graciously helps God's people and becomes their Savior. John describes

Jesus similarly when he calls him the Word of God in Revelation 19:13.

Memra **and warfare.** Further evidence that John used concepts similar to the

targumic *Memra* in Revelation 19:13 is that the *Memra* is God's agent in warfare. Not

only do the Targums present the *Memra* as the eschatological judge, but they also portray

the *Memra* as the divine warrior who fights for Israel (cf. Rev 19:11b). When Israel was

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[47]Commenting on the Hebrew text of Isa 63:5, Alec Motyer says, "The whole work of judgment, like the whole work of salvation, is exclusively, uniquely, individually his" (Motyer, *Isaiah*, 434). In this sense, Motyer points out God's unilateral decision to uphold the salvation of his people *by* exacting justice on the nations who oppose them. In the Targum, the *Memra* decreed this judgment. This theme lines up well with Rev 19:11–16 in which Jesus, the Word, is God's agent to carry out the justice that the *Memra* decreed to carry out unilaterally. In addition, when one looks to the cross, again staining blood is involved and salvation comes to God's people through judgment on the Son, God's agent. See Grant Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 682–83, for the arguments that the blood on Jesus' robe in Rev 19:13 refers to the blood of the cross.

[48]The Aramaic of *Tg. Isa* 63:8 employs a *peal* participle as an accusative of situation to indicate occupation or perpetual behavior. In this sense, the *Memra's* occupation is a "Savior." *Tg. Neof.* Lev 22:32–33 combines this same terminology and grammar equating the Lord with the *Memra*, who "saves/redeems" (פרק). *Tg. Neof.* Lev 22:32–33 says, "And you should not desecrate my holy name, so that my honorable name may be sanctified among the children of Israel. I am the Lord who sanctified you, who redeemed you (פרקת) and brought you out of the land of Egypt redeemed (פריקין) so that my *Memra* might be to you a redeeming God (למיהוי במימרי לכון לאלה פרוק). I am the Lord who redeemed your fathers and will redeem you."

about to enter the promised land, Moses told them that the Lord's *Memra* will fight for them similarly to how he fought for them in Egypt (*Tg. Onq.* Deut 1:30). In *Targum Joshua*, the tradition indicates that the *Memra* fought the conquest battles for Israel (*Tg. Josh* 10:14). Likewise, *Targum Joshua* 23:3, 10 recounts the conquest by describing the *Memra* as the "fighter" for Israel.[49] *Targum Isaiah* 10:16 says "the Master of the Universe, the Lord of Hosts, will send a blow to his princes." In *Targum Isaiah* 10:17, God's "Holy One," namely his agent, is appositionally defined as "his mighty *Memra*" (*Tg. Isa* 10:17a; וקדישיה מימריה תקיף).[50] The *Memra* "will be like fire" and "slaughter and destroy" the Assyrians (*Tg. Isa* 10:17b; cf. Rev 19:12). After the defeat of Amalek in *Pseudo-Jonathan* Exodus 17, Moses built an altar and named it "The *Memra* of the Lord is my miracle" ascribing the miraculous defeat of the Amalekites to the *Memra* (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 17:15).[51] In *Pseudo-Jonathan* Exodus 17:16, Moses says that *Memra* swore by his glorious throne that he would "wage war" (יגיח) against Amalek "from the generation of this world, and from the generation of the Messiah, and from the generation of the world to come." The targumic tradition not only identifies the *Memra* as the one who wages war for Israel, but also the one who will act as God's agent in warfare and judgment in

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[49]The Aramaic construction of *Tg. Josh* 23:3, 10 uses an *aphel* participle (מגיח) as an accusative of situation. The grammar here suggests regular action or occupation. That the participle occurs in a nominal clause also highlights the role or "occupation" of the *Memra*.

[50]מימריה תקיף is an explicative appositional construction to קדישיה, further defining it. See Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §26; Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Grammar*, §70; Kautzch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar,* §131f–g; and Joüon, *Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, §131h–k. One could possibly argue that this is "substitution apposition" (Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §27) based on *Tg. Isa* 10:20 in which the apposition is flipped (מימרא דיוי קדישא דישראל). This construction could suggest an "all-for-all substitution" (ibid., §27b) in which these terms could be used interchangeably while not losing the meaning of either. Indeed, God's "Holy One" is "his *Memra*." For Jesus as the "Holy One of God," see John 6:69; Mark 1:24; Acts 3:14; 1 John 2:20; Rev 3:14.

[51]The Aramaic in *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 17:15 interprets "the Lord is my banner" (יהוה נסי) as "this *Memra* of the Lord is my miracle" (מימרא דייי דין ניסא דילי). The Targum preserves the same Semitic root (נוס), but with different meaning than the Hebrew. In this way, the Targum interprets Moses' altar as a reference to the miraculous and decisive battle the *Memra* won against Amalek.

the future generations, indeed into the eschaton.

In each of these examples, the Targums indicate that God will execute final judgment and warfare through his agent, the *Memra*. Just as the *Memra* fought for Israel during the conquest, so also, he will fight for God's people in the final eschatological war that brings judgment on the nations and salvation for those who follow the "Word of God" on the white horse. Using similar targumic terms, John described Jesus as the "Word of God," who acts as God's agent to bring salvation through active warfare and judgment.

The *Yeqara* in John 12:41

The New Testament authors also speak of Jesus using a term similar to *Yeqara* (δόξα). In John 12:41, John says that Isaiah spoke of Israel's unbelief because "he saw his [Jesus'] glory and spoke of him."[52] John refers to two Isaiah passages, Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 to point out Israel's inability to believe. John likely says that Isaiah saw Jesus' glory because *Targum Isaiah* 6:1 says that Isaiah saw the *Yeqara* of the Lord seated on the throne.[53]

Targum Isaiah 6:1 says, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the *Yeqara* of the Lord dwelling on a throne, high and lifted up in the highest heavens, and the temple was filled with the splendor of his *Yeqara*." In standard targumic method, the

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[52]Ronning, *Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*, 32–34; Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, AB 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 486–87.

[53]Isa 6:1–10 and John 12:41 show a close connection between John and the Targums. John quotes Isa 6:10 in his explanation of why people will not believe the Son of Man. In *Tg. Isa* 6:8–10, the Targum indicates that the *Memra* of the Lord is the one speaking to Isaiah. With this in mind, the Targum explains that Isaiah saw the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* of the Lord as the manifestation of God's presence. Additionally, the *Memra* functioned as God's agent to prophesy his purposes and intentions for those who would not believe the Son of Man. John may have understood this connection and when the Jewish leaders failed to believe the Son of Man, he referenced Isa 6 to say that Isaiah saw the glory of the Son and heard God's purposes from the mouth of the Son. When John sees this prophecy fulfilled in Christ, he describes it using terminology similar to *Tg. Isa* 6. In addition, *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 4:7 quotes Isa 6 to explain the difference between Yahweh and the gods of the nations. In this quote, *Tg. Ps.-J.* Duet 4:7 says, "The *Memra* of the Lord sits on his throne, high and exalted . . . ." Indeed, Isaiah prophesied about Israel's inability to believe because he saw the Son's glory in the heavenly throne room.

tradition explains how Isaiah saw the Lord directly. Isaiah saw his "glory" (יקרא דיוי).

God's revelation was a weighty manifestation of his glory according to the Targum.

Similarly, *Targum Isaiah* 6:5 says that Isaiah saw the "*Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* of the

King of eternity, the Lord of Hosts" (יקר שכינת מלך עלמיא יוי צבאות).[54] To explain how

Isaiah saw God, the Targum substitutes that Isaiah saw the weighty manifestation of the

King, his *Yeqara*.

　　　After seeing God's *Yeqara*, Isaiah is told that he will go to a people who hear

but do not understand (Isa 6:10). Like the people to whom Isaiah prophesied, the people

John refers to in John 12:37–38 also failed to hear and believe Jesus' message. Although

Jesus manifested God to the world through his miracles, the people still would not

believe. Their eyes were blinded and their hearts were hardened (John 12:40).

According to John, Isaiah said these things because he saw Jesus' glory (John 12:41).

The *Yeqara* in 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6

　　　In 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul uses terminology similar to *Yeqara* to speak of

Jesus. He calls Jesus the "image of God," which suggests the manifestation of God. As

God's premier image, Christ displays a "glory" (τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ) that can be found

in the gospel. In 2 Corinthians 4:6, Paul elaborates on what he means by the glory of

Christ in 4:4. In the gospel, God shines into the hearts of believers so that they clearly

see "the glory of God" (τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ). However, this glory is not just ethereal honor

or dignity; rather, it is the manifest radiance of God found "in the face of Jesus Christ"

(ἐν προσώπῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).[55] In Paul's understanding of the gospel, God causes people

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　　　[54]In the Aramaic cited, *Yeqara* does not have the definite article because it is a construct form. However, the final noun in the entire construct package is definite (עלמיא) making the whole package definite.

　　　[55]Thomas Schreiner explains the centrality and supremacy of Christ in 2 Cor 4:4–6, but he also says that the focus on Christ fails to "push God to the margins, for God's glory is maximized 'in the face of Jesus Christ'" (Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008], 307). In this sense, Jesus is not just *a* manifestation of God; rather, he is *the* premier

to see Christ for who he really is. Jesus is the image of God who displays the manifest glory of God in the world. When God shines the light of the gospel into human hearts, the glory of God radiates from the face of Christ.

The Targums do not provide a specific Old Testament parallel to 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6 as in *Targum Isaiah* 6:1 and John 12:41, and yet the overall meaning and context of *Yeqara* developed previously suggests that Paul may have understood Jesus to be the manifestation of God's *Yeqara*.[56] Just as the *Yeqara* was revealed to Israel when God gave them the Law (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 20:17–18), so also, in the New Covenant, Jesus manifests God's visible glory in the gospel. Indeed, Jesus *is* the glory of God in the gospel.

The *Yeqara* in Hebrews 1:3

The author of Hebrews also uses terminology similar to *Yeqara* when speaking of Jesus. In Hebrews 1:3, the author says that the Son through whom God has spoken to the world is "the radiance of the glory of God." As "the exact imprint of his [God's] nature," Jesus manifests God's character and radiates the divine glory of God. Commenting on the word ἀπαύγασμα in Hebrews 1:3, Donald MacLeod concludes that as the "radiance" of the glory of God, Jesus manifested the glory of the Father to the world.[57] Jesus sometimes is given the title, "Glory" (e.g., Jas 2:1), but here, the author of Hebrews says that Jesus reflects or displays the glory of God to the world. MacLeod

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manifestation of God's glory.

[56]To say that Paul certainly had in mind the targumic *Yeqara* is impossible to prove. Indeed, Paul may have had in mind the Hebrew כבוד. However, previous arguments showed that *Yeqara* was theologically derived from the Hebrew idea of God's weighty glory (כבוד), and so the words could be thought of interchangeably for Paul, a Pharisee, who was likely familiar with the targumic traditions on the Hebrew Bible. In addition, *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* seems to exhibit a specific role to manifest God's activity in the world rather than an ethereal "glory." Indeed, the functional roles of Jesus and the *Yeqara* bear striking similarities.

[57]Donald MacLeod, *The Person of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998), 80.

concludes,

> Christ is the Light from that Light, God's glory radiated and was made accessible to men, so that they were able to see his glory: glory as of an only begotten from a father (Jn. 1:14). He is the glory made visible; not a different glory from the Father's but the same glory in another form. The Father is the glory hidden: the Son is the glory revealed. The Son is the Father repeated, but in a different way.[58]

As in 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6, the author of Hebrews uses "glory" vocabulary similar to the Targums. The *Yeqara* is God's weighty glory just as Jesus is the "radiance of the glory of God."

Shekinah in the New Testament

Unlike *Memra* and *Yeqara,* where New Testament terms like "Word" and "glory" correspond well, the New Testament authors do not use Greek equivalents to the term *Shekinah* often. However, the New Testament regularly speaks of Jesus as being God in the flesh (e.g., John 1:14; Phil 2; Col 1:20), indicating God's manifest presence in the world. Whereas *Memra* and *Yeqara* had specific Greek parallels, *Shekinah* must be understood according to its targumic meaning as the dwelling presence of God. Even so, a few New Testament passages use the language of "dwelling" to show that Jesus is the *Shekinah* presence of God (e.g., John 1:14, ἐσκήνωσεν).

Paul uses "dwelling" terminology in Ephesians 3:17 to illustrate the idea of Jesus "dwelling" in the hearts of those who put their faith in him. Paul prays that God's Spirit will strengthen believers "so that Christ may dwell (κατοικῆσαι) in [their] hearts through faith." Jesus certainly manifested God's presence among men while he was living on earth, but even after his ascension, Paul indicates that Christ continues to dwell in the hearts of believers as God's perpetual presence with his people.

As in Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 1:27 also points to the indwelling of Christ

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[58]Ibid.

after his ascension. Paul describes the glory of God's mystery, that the Gentiles would receive the same blessing of salvation as the Jews. This mystery is not just that Gentiles would receive a message of salvation, but that they would receive the very presence of God through Christ dwelling in them. Paul further defines the mystery as "Christ in you, the hope of glory."[59] While no direct transliteration of *Shekinah* exists in Colossians 1:27, Paul uses parallel targumic language to say that Jesus is the *Shekinah*. Indeed, Jesus *indwells* believers as the presence of God with them.

Using "dwelling" terminology, Revelation 21–22 also suggests that Jesus is the *Shekinah* presence of God. In the new heavens and the new earth, God will dwell (σκηνώσει) with his people because his dwelling place (ἡ σκηνή) is with man (Rev 21:3). As John continues to describe his vision, he says that the new Jerusalem will have no temple because the presence of God *and of the Lamb* will be in the city. The glory of God will provide the city with its light (Rev 21:23), but the lamp from which this light shines is the physical manifestation of God, the Lamb (Jesus). Revelation 22:3–4 says that "the throne of God and of the Lamb" will be in the city and that God's people will see his face. In Revelation 22:5, John once again says that there will be no need for light of a lamp because the radiant glory of God found in the face of Christ will be the city's light. Although the grammar indicates that *God's* presence is among men, John's context points to the presence of God *in Christ* dwelling among men throughout eternity. The *Shekinah* presence of God will be forever displayed in the person of Jesus Christ.

In addition to "dwelling" terminology, the New Testament also speaks of Jesus as "light," another reference to the *Shekinah*. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* points to *Onqelos* Numbers 6:25 as a reference to the *Shekinah* "shining" (ינהר) as visible light.[60] *Onqelos*

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[59]The relative clause, ὅ ἐστιν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς δόξης, further explains the mystery in Paul's discussion. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar,* 336–37, 659–61 for relative pronouns and relative clauses respectively.

[60]Ludwig Blau, "Shekinah," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History,*

Numbers 6:25 says, "May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you—May the Lord make his *Shekinah* to shine upon you and may he have mercy on you." Here, the *Shekinah* represents God's presence manifested as light. Using this targumic analogy of the *Shekinah* as visible light, one can find more explicit references to Jesus as the *Shekinah* in the New Testament. The author of Hebrews describes Jesus as the "radiance" (ἀπαύγασμα) of the glory of God, highlighting the brightness of God's glory in Jesus (Heb 1:3). In John 8:12 and 9:5, Jesus called himself "the Light of the world." John says in his prologue, "The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world" (John 1:9). As mentioned previously, the light that illumines the new heavens and new earth is from the Lamb (Rev 21:23; 22:5). Using "light" terminology, John labels Jesus as the *Shekinah* of God. Jesus is not a distant manifestation of God; rather, he is the *Memra* made flesh (cf. John 1:14).[61]

Although a consistent Greek equivalent for *Shekinah* is not used in the New Testament for Jesus, these examples show the range of meaning of *Shekinah* applied to Jesus. As the God-Man, Jesus dwells among and in his people, displaying the visible light of God's presence, just as the *Shekinah* in the Targums.

The Targumic Concepts of *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* Corresponding to the Offices and Roles of Jesus

In addition to using terminology similar to the Targums, the New Testament authors also employed similar *concepts* to speak about Jesus. The New Testament

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Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day, ed. Isidore Singer and Cyrus Adler (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1901) 11:260.

[61]The consistency and diversity of John's use of these targumic terms in the prologue further highlights the connection between these terms and the New Testament. John was able to move from *Memra* to *Yeqara* to *Shekinah* using various nuances of each term. Jesus is the *Memra* made flesh, who dwells (*Shekinah*) with his people as the *Yeqara* of God. He shines as light (*Shekinah*) in the world, displaying God's active, manifest presence. John employs these terms as if they were the normal background images anyone would use to speak of God's manifest agent in the world.

authors spoke about Jesus' *role* as God's agent and manifestation similarly to how the Targums portray *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara*.

Divine Agency

   Divine agency in creation. In the previous section, the targumic passages in which the *Memra* and *Yeqara* act as God's agent(s) in creation were discussed. *Neofiti* Genesis 1:3–31 interpreted the *Memra* as God's agent in creation, whereas *Neofiti* Genesis 1:17 and 2:3 highlighted the *Yeqara's* role in creation. The New Testament demonstrates how the authors expanded the concept of an agent in creation to refer to Jesus. While John may have used targumic terminology (*Memra*, 'Word') to teach that Jesus created all things (John 1:3, 10), the other New Testament authors employed the similar targumic *concept* of God creating through an agent in order to describe Jesus' role as Creator. In the New Testament, God's agent in creation is Jesus Christ.

   In 1 Corinthians 8:6, Paul recalls Malachi 2:10 to argue that Jesus is "the Lord" through whom all things exist.[62] The structure of 1 Corinthians 8:6 is split by the conjunctive, καί, and all that follows the conjunctive refers to Christ.[63] With this structure, 1 Corinthians 8:6b teaches that God the Father is the source of creation and Jesus is the agent.[64] Paul, like John, uses δι' plus the genitives οὗ and αὐτοῦ respectively,

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  [62]1 Cor 8:6 reads, "yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist." Mal 2:10 says, "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?"

  [63]Gordon Fee says, "Although Paul does not here call Christ God, the formula is so constructed that only the most obdurate would deny its Trinitarian implications. In the same breath that he can assert that there is only one God, he equally asserts that the designation 'Lord,' which in the OT belongs to the one God, is the proper designation of the divine Son." In Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 375.

  [64]For ἐξ as source, see Matt 1:3 and 21:19. See also Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 371–72. For a discussion of these varying prepositions, see N. Richardson, *Paul's Language about God* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 296–304; Vincent Taylor, *The Person of Christ in NT Teaching* (London: Macmillan, 1958), 51; Oscar Cullman, *Christology of the NT* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), 197 and 247.

to indicate intermediate agency.[65] Paul highlights Jesus' ontological identity with the

Father, especially since Malachi 2:10 teaches there is "one God who created us" (אל אחד

בראנו). Paul seems to apply Malachi 2:10 to Jesus, as God's agent who brought all

things into existence. In this passage, Paul suggests that the "one God" from Malachi

2:10 created through his agent, Jesus.

In Colossians 1:16, Paul affirms more directly that Jesus created all things.[66]

Early in the verse, Paul uses the instrumental dative (ἐν αὐτῷ) rather than the typical διά

plus a genitive.[67] To distinguish between instrument and agent is quite unnecessary,

especially in this passage.[68] Paul clarifies that Jesus is God's agent when he says, "all

things were created through him and for him" (τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται)

using the typical construction of agency, δι' αὐτοῦ.[69] Using the instrumental dative *and*

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[65]See Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 636, for his discussion of Jesus as the "mediate creator." See also Murray Harris' discussion of the interplay between the two prepositions ἐξ and διά in Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 70–71.

[66]F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 61–62.

[67]Mark 1:8 and 1 Cor 12:13 are possible examples of ἐν plus the dative indicating agency. However, these examples are uncertain, and the distinction between agency and instrument related to Jesus' work in the world is unnecessary (see Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 373–74). F. F. Bruce argues that ἐν αὐτῷ in Col 1:16 refers to the sphere in which God created, referencing a parallel construction in Eph 1:4 (Bruce, *Epistle to the Colossians,* 61). However, because of the proximity of δι' αὐτοῦ in Col 1:16, the instrumental dative is more likely. See the discussion in Peter O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, WBC 44 (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 45–47 for the various arguments between sphere and agency in the use of ἐν αὐτῷ.

[68]Commenting on Heb 1:2c, Ellingworth says that the construction in Col 1:16 is a "synonymous use of διά and ἐν" (Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 96). See also Schreiner's discussion of the phrase "in Christ" in Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 314–17.

[69]Other examples of διά plus the genitive indicating agency with a passive verb include Matt 1:22 (τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου, 'what *was spoken* by the Lord *through* the prophet'), John 3:17 (σωθῇ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ, 'the world *might be saved through* him'), Gal 3:19 (ὁ νόμος . . . διαταγεὶς δι' ἀγγέλων, 'the law . . . *was put in place through* angels'), and Eph 3:10 (ἵνα γνωρισθῇ . . . διὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἡ πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ, 'in order that the manifold wisdom of God *might be made known through* the church'). For a discussion of διά plus the genitive with a passive verb indicating intermediate agency, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 433–34.

διά plus the genitive, Paul intensifies his description of Jesus' role as God's agent in creation.[70] God is the Creator and Sustainer of the cosmos, and yet he created and sustains *through* the Son.

The author of Hebrews, like John and Paul, also introduces Jesus as God's agent in creation. In Hebrews 1:2, the author affirms that God created the world "through" the Son (ἐν υἱῷ . . . δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας).[71] In this first chapter of Hebrews, the author highlights Jesus' supremacy over angels and other messengers so that the church would pay close attention to what they have heard from Jesus through the apostles and prophets (cf. Heb 2:1). Part of Jesus' supremacy above angels is that he was not created like them. Instead, he is their Creator. At the beginning of his epistle, the author of Hebrews shows that Jesus was God's agent in creation similarly to the *Memra* and *Yeqara* of the Targums.

While these New Testament passages teach about Jesus' role in the original creation (Gen 1–2), the New Testament also extends Jesus' creative agency into the eschaton. In the book of Revelation, heavenly visions allude to Christ's work as Creator of new heavens and a new earth (Rev 3:12; 21:1; cf. 2 Pet 3:13). In Revelation 3:14, Jesus is given the title "the Amen," probably alluding to Isaiah 65:16–17, where God is called the "God of truth" (באלהי אמן).[72] Isaiah indicates that the "God of truth" will "create new heavens and a new earth," while Revelation 3:14, teaches that Jesus, who is

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[70]As the divine Creator, Jesus also upholds the created order as God's agent in preservation (Col 1:17). Paul uses another instrumental dative in Col 1:17 to indicate agency in preservation. As before, a strict distinction between the instrumental dative and personal agency is unnecessary. Both highlight Jesus' role as God's agent/instrument in creation and preservation.

[71]Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 591; William Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, WBC 47A (Waco, TX: Word, 1991), 12; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 47.

[72]Osborne, *Revelation*, 204–5.

the Amen, is the "beginning of God's creation."[73] The New Testament clarifies and explains the creation process through an agent by ascribing creation to Jesus, the new "Amen." Grant Osborne argues that Laodicea would have been uniquely familiar with this language since their sister church, Colossae, was given the same message regarding Christ and creation (cf. Col 1:15–16, 18).[74] What was once an adjectival modifier for God the Father (אמן) has become a title for the Son of God (ὁ ἀμήν).[75] From Jesus, God's agent in the first creation, will come the second creation as he continues his role as God's creative agent.

Divine agency in redemption. The Targums often describe the *Memra* with the title "redeeming God" (אלה פריק).[76] *Neofiti* Genesis 17:8 says that God will be for Israel a redeeming God by his *Memra* (ואהוי בממרי להון לאלה פריק).[77] *Neofiti*

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[73]Grant Osborne says, "God's truthfulness is particularly seen in his control of creation, and here this is also a major attribute of Jesus as the Son of God" (ibid., 204). The phrase ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ is somewhat problematic regarding whether it is temporal or indicative of source or origin. Osborne draws from the similar meaning of ἡ ἀρχή in Colossians 1:18 to refer to preeminence, but he continues, "Αρχή means not only preeminence or ruler but also "source" or "origin," and that is a likely connotation here" (ibid., 205). David Aune refers to the temporal aspect of ἀρχή, to say that Jesus has temporal priority over creation (David Edward Aune, *Revelation*, WBC 52A [Dallas: Word, 1997], 256). However one takes the idea of "beginning," that it is linked to Col 1, John 1, and Gen 1 suggests that Jesus, the Amen, is the faithful Creator who was formerly identified as אלהי אמן in Isa 65:17.

[74]Osborne, *Revelation*, 205.

[75]Osborne says, "Jesus is the beginning and source of 'God's creation'" (ibid.). If Jesus is the source (headwaters) of creation, then he is the preeminent Son from whom the creation poured forth. When one combines this idea with economic subordination within the Trinity, Jesus must be understood as an agent. Jesus is the source of creation ontologically as God; and yet he is the agent of creation functionally as the Son of God.

[76]The Aramaic construction here is again the *peal* participle indicating occupation or divine title. To exist as a "Redeemer" is part of the *Memra's* nature in this sense.

[77]The title "Redeemer God" (אלה פריק) functions as an accusative of situation. With the participle (פריק), this phrase suggests God's regular and repeated behavior or occupation. To link this title to the *Memra, Tg. Neof.* Gen 17:3 indicates that the *Memra* was the one speaking with Abraham, describing himself as "existing in the status of a Redeemer God" for future Israel. The ב attached to בממרי could be understood as an instrumental ב or a ב *essentiae* (Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, §249; GCK, §119; JM, §133c.). The instrumental ב would indicate that God exists as a Redeemer God *through* his *Memra*. The ב *essentiae* would suggest that God exists as a Redeemer God *as* the *Memra*, namely God's nature

Leviticus 22:33 and 25:38 both suggest the purpose of God redeeming Israel from Egypt was "so that my *Memra* would exist in the status of a Redeemer God for you" (*Tg. Neof.* Lev 25:38, למיהוי ממרי לכון לאלה פרוק).[78] In addition, *Targum Psalms* 55:17 [MT Ps 55:16] says that the psalmist's confidence is that the *Memra* of the Lord will redeem him (ומימרא דיהוה פרוקי יתי). Here, the *Memra* is the grammatical subject of the verb, יפרוק, highlighting his role as God's agent to redeem. *Targum Psalms* 143:9 interprets the psalmist finding refuge in the Lord as reckoning the *Memra* to be a redeemer (פריק).[79] Finally, the prophets also explain the *Memra* as a redeeming agent for Israel (*Tg. Hos* 3:2; *Tg. Joel* 2:17; *Tg. Zech* 10:12). Whether using the participle to indicate occupation or the *Memra* as a grammatical subject of the verb פרק, the Targums show that God used an agent in redemption.[80]

The exodus event stands as God's great redemption of his people in the Old Testament, and the Targums attribute this rescue to the *Memra*. In *Neofiti* Exodus 14:30–

(essence) actively involved in the created order. In either case, the targumic interpretation suggests that God redeems through his *Memra*.

[78]*Tg. Neof.* Lev 22:33 includes the ב before *Memra* indicating more directly the idea of "by" or "as." It reads, מיהוי במימרי לכון לאלה פרוק.

[79]פצי יתי מבעלי דבבי יהוה מימרך מניתי לפריק, ('Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord; your *Memra*, I have considered as a redeemer'). Again, the Targum uses the participle with a ל preposition as an accusative of situation indicating occupation. Literally, the Targum could be translated, "I have reckoned your *Memra* in the status of a redeemer." As opposed to other uses of the participle, in *Tg. Ps* 143:9, *Memra* lacks the ב preposition so that it functions as the accusative object of the psalmist's "reckoning." Therefore, the *Memra* is the redeemer in this passage as opposed to God existing as a redeemer *by* his *Memra* in other passages. Indeed, the *Memra* is God's agent in redemption and the psalmist finds refuge in this agent.

[80]Another nuance to the idea of *Memra* functioning as a redeemer is that he is described in the Targums as a "Savior God." The Aramaic term is still פרק, which can mean "salvation" or "redemption." *Tg. Neof.* Lev 26:45 attaches the ב *essentiae* to the noun *Memra* to highlight the person or manifestation of God "as" his *Memra*. As the predicate in the sentence, God's *Memra* is the person or manifestation of God who is Israel's "Savior God." Likewise, *Tg. Neof.* Exod 29:45 labels the *Memra* as a "Savior God," but foregoes the ב *essentiae*, leaving *Memra* as the subject of היה. Here, לאלה פרק functions as an accusative of situation so that the *Memra* "exists in the status of (as) a redeemer God." *Tg. Zech* 12:5 says that "deliverance/salvation" (פורקן) has been found "in the *Memra* of the Lord of hosts, their God" (במימרא דיוי צבאות אלההון). In this sense, the *Memra* is Israel's Savior similarly to how Jesus is the Savior of the world (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14).

31, targumic tradition summarizes the exodus event by saying,

> On that day, the *Memra* of the Lord redeemed (פרק) and delivered (שזיב) Israel from the power of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dying, cast upon the shore of the sea. And Israel saw the mighty hand that the Lord acted with in Egypt, and the people feared from before the Lord. And they believed in the name of the *Memra* of the Lord and in the prophecy of Moses his servant.

Neofiti says that the *Memra* was God's agent to redeem Israel from the hand of the Egyptians by substituting מימרא יהוה for יהוה as the subject of the verbs. When God promised Moses that he would redeem Israel out of Egypt, he said that the *Memra* would be Moses' help (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 3:12). *Pseudo-Jonathan* Exodus 13:8 says the *Memra* performed signs and wonders when Israel came out of Egypt, and *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy 29:1 specifically ascribes the plagues against Pharaoh to the *Memra*. (cf. *Tg. Neof.* Deut 6:22; 11:4). In *Onqelos* Deuteronomy 4:37, Moses told Israel that because of God's love for them, the Lord brought them out of Egypt "by his *Memra*."[81] *Targum Ezekiel* 16:8 says that the *Memra* "protected" (אגינית) and "redeemed" (קיימית במימרי למפרק יתכון) Israel during the exodus event. In each of these examples, the *Memra* fulfilled various roles as God's agent to bring about Israel's redemption from Egypt. As such, the *Memra* is God's divine agent to redeem.

In the New Testament, Jude may have used terminology similar to the Targums to say that Jesus was God's agent in the exodus redemption. In Jude's appeal for believers to stand firm in their faith, he reminds his audience that Jesus "saved a people out of Egypt, and afterward destroyed those who did not believe" (Jude 5). The manuscripts vary on whether Jude wrote "Jesus" saved God's people from Egypt or whether it was "the Lord," but good evidence exists for Ἰησοῦς as the favored reading.[82]

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[81]The Hebrew of Deut 4:37 says that God brought Israel out of Egypt "by his own presence." The Targum interprets this phrase as "by my *Memra*" indicating that God's presence in Egypt to deliver Israel was his agent. In this passage, the *Memra* is both God's agent and manifest presence, demonstrating how closely the Targums viewed *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara*.

[82]For Ἰησοῦς in Jude 5, the manuscript evidence includes A B 33 81 322 323 424ᶜ 665 1241 1739 1881 2298 2344 vg copˢᵃ, ᵇᵒ eth Origen Cyril Jerome Bede (Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on*

If "Jesus" is the correct reading, Jude may have applied the redemptive work of the *Memra* to Jesus (cf. *Tg. Neof.* Exod 14:30).

The broader context of Jude's statement in Jude 5 also fits well with *Neofiti* Exodus 14:30–31. *Neofiti* Exodus 14:31b highlights Israel's belief in the *Memra* as an important part of their rescue and continued preservation in the wilderness. Jude highlights the requirement of Israel's faith by saying that those who *did not believe* were destroyed.[83] The Old Testament passages Jude possibly refers to are Numbers 14 and 20, both of which have targumic traditions that indicate Israel's grumbling was due to a lack of belief in the *Memra* (*Tg. Onq.* Num 14:11–12; *Tg. Onq.* Num 20:12).[84] The exodus generation failed to enter the promised land because of their lack of faith. Jude teaches that in spite of Jesus redeeming Israel from Egypt, grumbling revealed their lack of faith and caused their demise. Jude warns believers of falling away from the "faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" by providing an example of the great work of redemption God's agent performed at the exodus. Jude appropriately identifies God's agent as Jesus.

Like Jude, Paul also identifies Jesus as God's agent in redemption. In

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the Greek New Testament, 2nd ed. [New York: United Bible Societies, 1971], 657). In *The Greek New Testament*, ed. Barbara Aland, et al., 4th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001), the text reads κύριος, but with a {D} rating by the text critical committee. Metzger prefers the reading Ἰησοῦς, arguing it is "the best attested reading among Greek and versional witnesses" (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 657). Metzger also points out that this unique reference to Jesus, similar to 1 Cor 10:4, may have led copyists to substitute κύριος (ibid.). See Philipp F. Bartholomä, "Did Jesus Save the People out of Egypt? A Re-Examination of a Textual Problem in Jude 5," *NT* 50, no. 2 (2008): 143–58, for his discussion of the textual evidence along with arguments both for and against the reading Ἰησοῦς. See also Jarl Fossum, "Kyrios Jesus as the Angel of the Lord in Jude 5–7," *NTS* 33, no. 2 (1987): 226–43.

[83]Several targumic passages also attribute the judgment on the wilderness generation to the *Memra* (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 16:11, 26; *Tg. Neof.* [mg.] Num 16:30; *Tg. Neof.* [mg.] 21:6).

[84]*Tgs. Onq.* and *Ps.-J.* Deut 9:23 combine several metaphors for Israel's lack of faith. *Tg. Onq.* Deut 9:23 says, "And when the Lord sent you up from Reqem Geah, saying, 'Go up and inherit the land that I have given you,' then you refused the *Memra* of the Lord your God, and you did not believe him, and you did not receive his *Memra*." Refusing the *Memra*, not believing the *Memra*, and failing to receive the *Memra* all have parallels in the wilderness journeys that indicate the generation destroyed in the wilderness failed to believe just as Jude affirms.

Ephesians 1:7, he says "in [Christ] we have redemption through his blood" (Εν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ). Paul uses the typical construction for agency, διά plus the genitive, to teach that believers have redemption through the blood of God's agent.[85] The pronoun, αὐτοῦ, refers to "the Beloved" of Ephesians 1:6, and therefore, God redeems "through" the Beloved's blood.[86] Therefore, Jesus is God's agent of redemption as Christians are united by faith "in Christ."

Whereas Ephesians 1:7 links Jesus' blood and redemption, Colossians 1:14 implies that Jesus' blood functionally secures redemption. In order to convince the Colossian church that they have the ability and motivation to "bear fruit in every good work," Paul reminds them that God the Father has delivered them "from the domain of darkness and transferred [them] to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Col 1:13). The Colossians stand as passive recipients of this transfer, and Paul attaches the prepositional phrase, εν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, to further define the Son's work in this transfer. God transfers believers into the kingdom of Christ by means of redemption in Christ (εν

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[85]Col 1:20 and Heb 13:12 provide further examples of διά plus the genitive to suggest agency through Jesus' blood. Col 1:20 relates reconciliation "through the blood of his [Jesus'] cross" (διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ). Heb 13:12 connects sanctification to the agency of Jesus' blood saying, "Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify a people through his blood" (Διὸ καὶ Ἰησοῦς, ἵνα ἁγιάσῃ διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος τὸν λαόν, ἔξω τῆς πύλης ἔπαθεν). For agency in Eph 1:7 specifically, see Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 106.

[86]Eph 1:6–7 alludes to an intricate relationship between Jesus' person and blood. The Scriptures couple blood and redemption regularly, especially in the exodus narrative. The Old Testament describes the exodus from Egypt using redemption language (Exod 6:6; Deut 7:8). That the redemption from slavery in Egypt is closely connected to the blood on the doorposts and lintels of Israelite houses is no coincidence. God rescued Israel from the destroyer during the Passover when he "saw" the blood of the paschal lamb (Exod 12:13, 23). Therefore, the Old Testament prefigures redemption by means of blood, and the New Testament makes the connection to Jesus' person clear (1 Cor 5:7). In God's redemptive plan, he redeems by means of blood. Similarly to how God redeemed Israel from Egypt by the blood of the Passover lamb, God has redeemed believers who are integrally related to Jesus' blood by faith. Jesus' person provides the blood that is the means of redemption, and without the person, there would be no blood. Since Jesus' blood and his person are so closely related, one can see that when Jesus' blood functions as a grammatical agent, the implication stands that Jesus is the agent. J. Behm says, "The interest of the NT is not in the material blood of Christ, but in His shed blood as the life violently taken from Him. Like the cross, the 'blood of Christ' is simply another and even more graphic phrase for the death of Christ in its soteriological significance." In Johannes Behm, "αἷμα," in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:174.

ᾧ). Although Paul omits διά plus the genitive as grammatical agency of Christ's blood in

Colossians 1:14, the Colossian church likely knew this connection to redemption,

especially with "blood of the cross" later in Colossians 1:20. Like Ephesians 1:7, Paul

once again implies that the Son is God's agent in personal redemption. To be "in Christ,"

means that believers are in the "sphere" of his care through his redemptive work on the

cross. However, since this redemptive work required a person, Paul implies that Jesus

functions as God's active agent to secure redemption through his blood.

      Like Paul's arguments above, the author of Hebrews also teaches Jesus'

redemptive agency in Hebrews 9:12. Jesus entered the holy places "by his own blood"

(διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος), not by the blood of bulls and goats from the Old Covenant.

The result of Jesus entering the holy places by means of his blood is that he secured an

"eternal redemption" (αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν) for those united to him by faith (Heb 9:12c).

According to Hebrews, Jesus secured redemption through his own blood.[87] Slavery to sin

has been abolished and God's people have been redeemed through Jesus' blood. Christ,

God's agent, secured an eternal redemption for those united by faith to his work.

      Divine agency in judgment. Just as the *Memra* was God's agent in creation

and redemption, he also functioned as God's agent in judgment. Several targumic

passages were discussed earlier to show that John used targumic terminology to describe

Jesus as the "Word of God" in the context of judgment (Rev 19:13). Other targumic

passages indicate that the *Memra* was God's agent to exact justice, and the New

Testament authors expanded this concept to speak of Jesus' role as God's agent in

retributive justice. *Neofiti* Genesis 19:24 attributes the judgment on Sodom and

Gomorrah to the *Memra*. Although God heard Moses' prayer on Israel's behalf and

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[87]Speaking of the English translations of Heb 9:12, which seem to distinguish Jesus' blood from his person, Ellingworth says that these translations "should not be misunderstood as distinguishing between Christ's blood and Christ himself." In Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 452.

relented from his anger, *Neofiti* Deuteronomy 9:19 indicates that the people feared the wrath that the *Memra* of the Lord had against them to destroy them. Several passages in *Targum Ezekiel* suggest that the *Memra* decreed retribution on Israel because of their sins (e.g., *Tg. Ezek* 28:10; 38:19). These passages, combined with the ones discussed earlier, confirm that the *Memra* was God's agent to deliver justice.

Throughout the Old Testament, readers are reminded that Yahweh is the judge (Deut 32:4; 1 Sam 2:10; Ps 7:8, 11; 9:8; 96:13; Isa 3:13; 33:22), and yet Jesus fulfills this role in the New Testament. Jesus indicates in John 12:48 that the words he has spoken will judge men on the last day (ὁ λόγος ὃν ἐλάλησα ἐκεῖνος κρινεῖ αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ). Jesus proclaimed the words that will judge those who reject him similarly to how the *Memra* decreed judgment in the Targums (e.g., *Tg. Jer* 4:28; *Tg. Ezek* 5:15; 21:22; 38:19). According to Paul, *God* will judge the secrets of men's hearts *through* Jesus' agency (Rom 2:16, διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ). These two passages affirm that Jesus is God's agent to judge, and other New Testament passages refer to Jesus as the authoritative King who will judge the nations in the eschaton.

In Jesus' discussion of eschatological judgment (Matt 25:31–46), he draws attention to Joel's prophecy of judgment on the nations (Joel 3:1–12). Whereas Joel indicates that Yahweh will gather the nations for judgment (Joel 3:2; 12), Jesus says that the Son of Man sits on his throne and judges the nations (Matt 25:31–32). In Matthew's gospel, Jesus is the King who rightly executes justice from his throne. Paul combines these two categories of justice/judgment when he tells the church that Jesus has been raised and seated far above all rule and authority and has had all things placed under his feet (Eph 1:20–21; cf. Dan 7:13–14). Jesus is God's agent who accomplished justice, confirmed by his resurrection, and will eventually judge the nations from his throne (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11–15).

Paul draws attention to the day of Jesus' final appearing as a day of

judgment.[88] In Paul's letters to the Corinthians and Thessalonians, Paul speaks of the

"day of the Lord" referring to Jesus' second coming. Because the day of the Lord Jesus

will be a day of judgment (2 Cor 1:14; 5:10; 2 Thess 1:7–10), Paul prays that God will

keep the church blameless so that judgment will be mild, or perhaps God will even offer

a reward (1 Thess 3:13; 5:23b). Either result indicates that Jesus is the judge who

distributes both recompense and commendation. In 1 Corinthians 4:4–5, Paul states that

judgment will come from God through an agent. Paul teaches that it is "the Lord who

judges" (1 Cor 4:4), likely implying it is Yahweh who judges. Because Yahweh is the

judge, Paul exhorts the Corinthians not to judge him "before the Lord comes" (1 Cor

4:5). Paul means that the Corinthians should not judge before *Jesus* comes to execute

justice.[89] When Jesus comes to "disclose the purposes of the heart," "each one will

receive his commendation *from God*" (1 Cor 4:5b). In this section of the letter, Paul

indicates that Jesus (the Lord) is God's agent through whom men are judged and will

receive their commendation. God is the source of judgment; Jesus is his agent.

In these examples, Jesus functions as God's agent to deliver justice. Just as the

Memra was God's agent to deliver justice, so also Jesus sits on his heavenly throne ready

to execute judgment on God's enemies on the final day of the Lord (Rev 5:1–14).

Divine Manifestation

Jesus as the divine manifestation. In the Targums, *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*

represent different nuances of God's self-manifestation. The *Shekinah* is God's dwelling

presence, while the *Yeqara* is God's weighty glory revealed to men. The New Testament

demonstrates that Jesus is the manifestation of God by using terminology like σκηνόω

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[88]Millard J. Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh: A Contemporary Incarnational Christology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 473–74.

[89]Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 162. Contra Carl R. Holladay, *The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians* (Austin, TX: Sweet Publishing Company, 1979), 60, who sees "the Lord" as God.

(e.g., John 1:14) and δόξα (e.g., Heb 1:3), which is similar to the Targums. In addition to using terms similar to the targumic *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*, the New Testament also employed the theological concept of divine manifestation to speak of Jesus as the premier revelation of God (cf. Heb 1:1–2). Jesus performed the works that God sent him to do as well as exhibiting divine characteristics that were ascribed only to God in the Old Testament. By using concepts similar to the targumic *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*, the New Testament shows that Jesus was God's presence, indeed his very nature, dwelling among men.

In several passages, the New Testament teaches that Jesus is the revelation of God. Matthew says that as the authoritative representative of the Father, Jesus actively chose to reveal him (Matt 11:27 [Luke 10:21–22]). After affirming that no one has seen the Father (John 5:37; 6:46), John says those who have seen the Son have also seen the Father (John 12:45; 14:9).[90] In 1 John 1:1–4, John reiterates several themes from the prologue to his gospel, indicating that Jesus (the Life) had been heard (ἀκηκόαμεν), seen (ἑωράκαμεν), looked upon (ἑωράκαμεν), and touched (ἐψηλάφησαν). The Life, who was with the Father, was made manifest so that the world would know the fellowship believers have with the Father (1 John 1:3–4).[91] John Frame says, "Even apart from his humanity, the Son is the perfect reflection of his Father and therefore the Father's perfect representative . . . . Jesus is the supreme theophany of God."[92] As the "supreme

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[90]In this twist of literary irony, John expresses both strict monotheism and Jesus' agency in manifesting the Father. God the Father is transcendent, and yet the Son, as the divine manifestation, perfectly reveals the Father's nature to the world. In this sense, no one can see the Father, and yet the whole world sees the Father's nature through/in Christ.

[91]Colin Kruse notes that the Word of life here focuses on a distinct notion of the Word in John 1 that existed with the Father in eternity past. Here, John focuses primarily on the Word of life that has been revealed through flesh and blood in the person of Jesus Christ rather than the Son of God in relation to the ontological Trinity of eternity past. In Colin Kruse, *The Letters of John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 51–52.

[92]John Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013), 893.

theophany of God," Jesus manifested God through his incarnation.

Jesus also manifested the Father by appealing to his ontological identity with God. Jesus' claims to divine status indicate that he displays the nature of God to the world. In John 10:30, Jesus said, "I and the Father are one," pointing his disciples to the display of the Father's attributes through his person and work. Likewise, Jesus claimed to have existed eternally as and with God in John 17:24, having a glory identical to the Father. Jesus' "I AM" statements also imply a claim to deity, and therefore, suggest that he is the manifestation of God by means of the incarnation.[93] As God in the flesh, Jesus manifested God's ontological nature to the world. Jesus and the Father share identical natures just as Jastrow equates the מימרא דייי with יהוה.

In addition to ontological identity, Jesus manifested divine attributes that were exclusive to God in the Old Testament. Jesus is described as eternal (John 5:26; Rev 1:8; 22:12–12; cf. Ps 90:1–2; Isa 9:6), immutable (Heb 1:5, 10–12; 13:8; cf. Ps 102:25–27), omnipotent (Phil 3:20–21; Col 1:17; Heb 1:3; cf. Gen 18:14, Matt 19:25–26), omniscient (Mark 2:8; John 1:48; 6:64; 16:30; cf. Isa 41:21), and omnipresent (Matt 18:20; 28:20; cf. Jer 23:23–24). In all of these attributes, Jesus expressed the very nature of the Father (Heb 1:3; χαρακτήρ).

Finally, Jesus manifested God through his work in the world (Acts 2:22). The New Testament teaches that Jesus accomplished works that were previously attributed to God in the Old Testament. Creation (John 1:3; Col 1:16; cf. Gen 1:1), preservation (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3; cf. Neh 9:6), giving eternal life (John 10:28; 17:2; 1 John 2:25), and

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[93]See for example, B. Witherington, *John's Wisdom* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 156–58; A. M. Okorie, "The Self-Revelation of Jesus in the 'I Am' Sayings of John's Gospel," *CurTM* 28, no. 5 (2001): 486–90. See further, David Daube's discussion of "I am" in rabbinic Judaism as indicative of God's divine presence (David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* [London: Athlone Press, 1956], 325–29). The example Daube discusses from Deut 26 in the Passover Haggadah suggests that "I am" refers to God's direct presence to redeem Israel during the exodus (ibid., 328). Daube relates this phrase to instances in the New Testament where Jesus is the "I am" and is God's direct presence to redeem.

forgiving sins (Mark 2:5–7; Luke 7:47–49; Col 1:14; 3:13; cf. Isa 43:25) are various works of God alone that Jesus performed according to New Testament revelation. Not only was Jesus God's agent in these works, but also, by performing these works, he manifested the nature and character of God. Jesus encouraged his disciples to believe the *works* that he had done *so that* they would understand that he and the Father are one (John 10:38; cf. John 14:10). In these works, Jesus made the Father known.

The title "Image of God" indicative of divine manifestation. The New Testament picture of Jesus as the "image of God" provides a helpful summary of many of the conclusions drawn so far. In passages where Jesus is described as the "image of God," he also acts as God's agent or manifests God through his agency. In his humanity, Jesus is the fulfillment of the *imago Dei* instilled in Adam and Eve. Furthermore, in his deity, Jesus is the "image of God," who perfectly displays the Father to the world by carrying out the work the Father sent him to do. In the passages where Jesus is the "image of God," one will find similar targumic themes to those delineated previously regarding divine agency and manifestation.

In Colossians 1:15, Paul provides the most explicit reference to Jesus as the image of God. Here, Paul calls Jesus the "image of the invisible God" (cf. 1 Tim 1:17). Judaism's God, who is transcendently invisible, is now conspicuously clear in the person of Jesus Christ.[94] In addition to recalling the "image of God" theme from Genesis 1:26–27, Paul also refers to Jesus as the "firstborn of all creation." Using these epithets for Jesus, Paul identified Christ as the quintessential human, who expressed the image of God perfectly (Ps 89:27; cf. Gen 1:26–27; 9:6). Whereas humanity failed, Christ displayed all the perfections of rule and authority indicative of God's character. In doing

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[94]Hermann Kleinknecht says, "Thus εἰκών does not imply a weakening or a feeble copy of something. It implies the illumination of its inner core and essence." In Hermann Kleinknecht, "εἰκών," in *TDNT,* ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 2:389.

so, Jesus displayed to the world God's intent for mankind as the image of God. Jesus perfectly displayed the Father's "image," a task that humanity failed to accomplish. In this way then, Jesus is the premier manifestation of God, the image to which all humanity should strive (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49).

In the surrounding context of Colossians 1:15, Paul highlights the roles that Jesus accomplished as the "image of God." In Colossians 1:13–14, Paul declared that God "delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." As the image of God, Jesus is God's agent in redemption much like the pillar of cloud and fire was at the exodus (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 13:21; 14:19). Paul continues in Colossians 1:16–20, that Jesus is God's agent in creation, preservation, and reconciliation. All things were created "through him" (Col 1:16b, δι' αὐτοῦ), "in him" (ἐν αὐτῷ) all things hold together (Col 1:17), and "through him" (δι' αὐτοῦ) God reconciled to himself all things (Col 1:20) because in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell (Col 1:19).[95] These aspects of Jesus' roles are similar to the roles of the *Memra, Shekinah,* and *Yeqara* previously discussed in this chapter. Using terms and concepts similar to the Targums, Paul taught that Jesus is God's agent and manifestation with the title "image of God."

In 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul again identifies Jesus as the "image of God." The god of this world, Satan, has blinded the minds of those who fail to believe in Christ, and they are unable to see the "light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor 4:4).[96] Using the relative clause, ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, Paul further explains Χριστοῦ, calling Jesus

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[95]Paul's title of Jesus as the "image of God" and his teaching that in Jesus, all the fullness of deity dwells are the grounds for Jesus' work as God's agent. Where God's agent is active, God is manifest. Therefore, in this short section of the letter to the Colossians, Paul teaches that Jesus is both God's divine agent and the preeminent divine manifestation using the title, "image of God."

[96]Τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ is understood as a possessive genitive. This glory "belongs to" Christ. See Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 46–47.

the "image of God." In verse 6, Paul indicates that Jesus' glory is a reflection of the glory of God. For Paul, Jesus is the "image of God" because he reveals God's glory to the world. Just as the *Memra* and *Shekinah* shine the radiance of God in the Targums (*Tg. Neof.* Exod 12:42; *Tg. Onq.* Num 6:25), so also Jesus has shone "the light . . . of the glory of God" in the hearts of Christians. The glory of Christ in the gospel *is* the glory of God because Jesus is the image of God.

Finally, the author of Hebrews teaches that Jesus is the image of God using a parallel term, χαρακτήρ. According to Hebrews 1:3, Jesus is "the exact imprint (χαρακτήρ) of his [God's] nature."[97] While this term refers to Jesus' ontological identity with the Father, the author of Hebrews also points to Jesus' fulfillment of functional roles. As the χαρακτήρ of God, Jesus "upholds the universe by the word of his power" (Heb 1:3b). The Son, who created the world (Heb 1:2), also preserves it. Like Paul, the author of Hebrews relates these agent-roles to Jesus as the image of God. Using different theological terminology than Paul, the author of Hebrews portrays the same functional aspects of Jesus' person as in Colossians 1:15 and 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6. Jesus, the image of God, displays the Father's χαρακτήρ to the world as God's agent in creation, preservation, and salvation.

Belief in God's agent as divine manifestation. One aspect of divine manifestation that appears in the Targums is that people believe in the *Memra* when he manifests God's active presence. In *Onqelos* Genesis 15:6, Abraham "believed in the *Memra* of the Lord" after God appeared to him. *Pseudo-Jonathan* Genesis 21:33

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[97]Ellingworth relates χαρακτήρ to εἰκών indicating that these terms have a similar range of meaning. He concludes, "In the present verse, χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ reinforces ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης in describing the essential unity and *exact resemblance* between God and his Son" (Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 99, italics added). See also, Bruce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 48, and Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 13, who says, "In v *3a* he used the word χαρακτήρ to convey as emphatically as he could his conviction that in Jesus Christ there had been provided a perfect, visible expression of the reality of God."

interprets Abraham planting a tamarisk tree as his setting up a garden in which he would implore others to believe in the name of the *Memra* of the Lord who appeared to him. In *Pseudo-Jonathan* Exodus 14:31, Israel believed in the name of the *Memra* of the Lord who appeared to fight against the Egyptians during the exodus (cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 14:25; cf. *Tg. Ps* 106:12). King Hezekiah "trusted" (אתרחיץ) in the *Memra* of the Lord who was his help (*Tg. 2 Kgs* 18:5, 7). In *Targum Jeremiah* 2:2, God remembers the faith of Israel's fathers, "who believed in my *Memra*" during the years they followed Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The belief Jeremiah refers to was due to the manifestation of the *Memra* during the wilderness journeys (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 13:21; 17:1; *Tg. Onq.* Num 9:18–20, 23). Finally, the Ninevites "believed the *Memra* of the Lord" (*Tg. Jonah* 3:5).[98] Each of these examples shows that belief in the *Memra* was the result of the Lord's action through the *Memra* or a manifestation of God in the *Memra*.

In the same way that the *Memra* manifests God and elicits faith, so also Jesus is God's agent in whom men should believe. According to Paul, Scripture makes people wise unto salvation "through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 3:15; διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Elsewhere, Paul teaches that one is justified by faith in Christ Jesus apart from works of the Law (Rom 3:28; Gal 2:16). Additionally, God deflects his wrath away from those who have faith in Jesus so that God would be just and the justifier of those united to Christ (Rom 3:25–26). God imputes righteousness to believers, not because of their deeds, but through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:22, 4:5; Phil 3:9).[99] Belief in Jesus

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[98]*Tg. Jonah* says that a "word of prophecy" (פתגם) from the Lord was with Jonah so that he would go preach repentance to the Ninevites. Upon going, the people believed in the *Memra*. What was once a פתגם ('word') of prophecy elicited belief in God's agent, the *Memra*, similarly to how the word of God (Scripture) elicits belief in God's agent, the Word of God.

[99]In many of these passages, faith is grammatically defined as "faith *of* Christ." See Daniel Wallace's discussion of the objective/subjective genitive specifically regarding πίστις Χριστοῦ (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 114–16). Wallace argues ultimately that these texts should be read as subjective genitives referring to Jesus' faithfulness. However, he also says, "the faith/faithfulness of Christ is not a denial of faith *in* Christ as a Pauline concept, but implies that the object of faith is a worthy object, for he himself is faithful" (ibid., 116). For a sampling of the literature related to πίστις Χριστοῦ, see Michael R. Whitenton,

produces eternal life (John 3:16, 36; 6:40), and John links faithful obedience (sanctification) to the gift of the Spirit received by faith in Jesus (John 7:38). Finally, Paul links the believer's perseverance to faith in Jesus (Gal 2:20; cf. Rev 14:12). As God's manifest, active agent, Jesus is the one in whom men should believe. His manifestation and ministry on earth, recorded in Scripture, illustrates the mighty works of God by which men put their faith in Jesus.

The πιστεύω word group in the New Testament further demonstrates that Jesus is the appropriate object of faith. Those who believe in Jesus' name are given the right to become children of God (John 1:12). Indeed, Jesus came into the world to bear witness about the light so that all would believe through him (John 1:7; ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι᾽ αὐτοῦ). Because of faith in Jesus, Peter calls Christians "believers in God" (1 Pet 1:21; cf. John 12:44; 14:1). Finally, belief in Jesus is often what heals the sick and the lame in the gospels and Acts (Matt 9:22; Mark 10:52; Luke 18:42; Acts 3:16).[100]

Other passages imply faith in Jesus but without a direct vocabulary (Rom 5:1–2; Gal 3:14, 26; Col 2:12; Jas 2:1; 1 Pet 1:21). Some New Testament authors indicate the importance of faith in Jesus as a commendation for those who believe, or as a warning if one does not believe in Jesus. Paul encouraged the churches because he had heard of their faith in Jesus (Eph 1:15; Col 1:4; 2:5; Phlm 5). Alternatively, Jesus reviled his

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"After Pistis Christou: Evidence from the Apostolic Fathers," *JTS* 61, no. 1 (2010): 82–109; Josef Smolík, "Christ: The Foundation of Faith for Our Salvation," *Communio viatorum* 31, no. 1 (1988): 47–55; Todd D. Still, "Christos as Pistos: The Faith(fulness) of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *CBQ* 69, no. 4 (2007): 746–55; David J. Downs, "Faith(fulness) in Christ Jesus in 2 Timothy 3:15," *JBL* 131, no. 1 (2012): 143–160; Jermo van Nes, "'Faith(fulness) of the Son of God'? Galatians 2:20b Reconsidered," *NT* 55, no. 2 (2013): 127–39; Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "Is It the Case That Christ Is the Same Object of Faith in the Old Testament? (Genesis 15:1–6)," *JETS* 55, no. 2 (2012): 291–98; Roy A. Harrisville, "Pistis Christou and the New Perspective on Paul," *Logia* 19, no. 2 (2010): 19–28; Paul Pollard, "The 'Faith of Christ' in Current Discussion," *Concordia Journal* 23, no. 3 (1997): 213–28; Brian A. Gerrish, "What Do We Mean by Faith in Jesus Christ," *ChrCent* 116, no. 26 (1999): 932–37.

[100]In many of the healing instances, faith/belief is referred to generally rather than specifically as faith *in Jesus*. However, the implication is that those in these stories are healed because they believed that Jesus was the one who could heal them. They had faith in Jesus, the proper object of such a religious affection, and their faith healed them.

audience for *not* believing that he was the one sent by the Father to reveal the Father (John 5:38; 10:37–38). Elsewhere, Jesus taught that the "work" people should do was to believe in the one the Father had sent (John 6:29). Jesus taught that he came into the world as light so that those who live in darkness would believe in him while they had the light with them (John 12:36, 46). Finally, in the book of Acts, the apostles preached the gospel by exhorting people to believe in Jesus (Acts 16:31; 19:4) similarly to how Abraham exhorted those in Beersheba to believe in the *Memra* (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 21:33). In all of these instances, faith in Jesus is acceptable, effectual, and encouraged. Just as the manifestation of God through the *Memra* required faith, so also the manifestation of God in Christ requires faith.[101]

Worship of God's agent as divine manifestation. Worship of the *Memra* is similar to belief in the *Memra* of the previous section. When God manifests himself through his *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara*, people worship. *Neofiti* Genesis 21:33 says that Abraham would "worship and pray in the name of the *Memra* of the Lord, God of eternity" (פלח וצלי בשם ממריה דייי אלהה דעלמא) at Beersheba.[102] *Neofiti* Leviticus 9:4 provides instructions for a peace offering "because today the *Memra* of the Lord is about to be revealed to you."[103] *Pseudo-Jonathan* Leviticus 9:23 elaborates on the worship in the tent of meeting saying that the "*Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* was revealed over all of the people." God's manifestation in the tent of meeting elicited worship. In *Targum Psalms* 63:5, David will bless the Lord in this age and "in the name of your *Memra* I will spread my hands in prayer in the age to come." These pictures of Old Testament worship were a result of God's agent(s) acting on behalf of Israel or

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[101]For a survey of other links between believing in the *Memra* and believing in Jesus, see Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*, 174–93.

[102]*Tg. Onq.* Gen 21:33 says that Abraham "prayed" to the Lord at Beersheba.

[103]*Tg. Ps.-J.* Lev 9:4 says that the "*Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* was about to be revealed" to Israel.

manifesting God to Israel.

As God's agent and manifestation, Jesus also elicits and accepts worship.[104] When the wise men visited Jesus, they desired to worship him, and Mary and Joseph did not object (Matt 2:2, 11). The wise men recognized Jesus as a unique manifestation of the God of Israel and that realization elicited worship. When Jesus manifested the power of God over creation by calming the storm, those in the boat realized that he was the Son of God and worshipped (Matt 14:23). On several occasions, people and spirits knelt before Jesus indicating a posture of worship (Matt 9:18; 15:25; 20:20; Mark 3:11; 5:6; Rev 5:8). When Jesus rode into Jerusalem during his final week, the crowds met him with great exuberance of praise (Matt 21:9; Mark 11:9–10; John 12:13), and after Jesus' resurrection, the disciples worshiped him (Matt 28:9, 16–17; Luke 24:52). When Jesus manifested the power of God by healing the blind man, he believed and worshiped (John 9:38). Just as *Targum Psalms* 63:5 suggests worship of God's agent in the future, so also, at the eschatological judgment, every knee will bow to Jesus and worship him (Phil 2:10–11). Likewise, in the book of Revelation, many scenes portray worship of the Lamb (Rev 5:9, 11–14; 7:10). In each of these verses, Jesus freely receives worship and never objects as the angels do (Rev 19:8–10; 22:8–9; cf. Acts 10:25–26; 14:11–15).

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[104]Larry W. Hurtado, "The Binitarian Shape of Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 24 (1985): 377–91; Hak Chol Kim, "The Worship of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew," *Bib* 93, no. 2 (2012): 227–41; Crispin Fletcher-Louis, "The Worship of Divine Humanity as God's Image and the Worship of Jesus," in *Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus,* ed. Carey C. Newman, James Davila, and Gladys S. Lewis (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 112–28; Kenneth Schenck, "The Worship of Jesus among Early Christians: The Evidence of Hebrews," in *Jesus and Paul: Global Perspectives in Honor of James D. G. Dunn for his 70th Birthday,* ed. James D. G. Dunn, et al. (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 114–24; Richard Bauckham, "The Throne of God and the Worship of Jesus," in *Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus,* ed. Carey C. Newman, James Davila, and Gladys S. Lewis (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 43–69; Richard Bauckham, "The Worship of Jesus in Philippians 2:9–11," in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 128–39; R. T. France, "The Worship of Jesus: A Neglected Factor in Christological Debate?," in *Christ the Lord: Studies in Christology Presented to Donald Guthrie*, ed. Donald Guthrie and Harold H. Rowdon (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982), 17–36.

In addition to specific vocabulary indicating worship, several New Testament doxologies are addressed to Jesus as worship.[105] In Romans 9:5, Paul elaborates on who Christ is, namely, "God over all, blessed forever." Peter ascribes similar honor and glory to Christ in 2 Peter 3:18. What is normally a general expression of blessing, Peter specifically ascribes to "our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." These passages are somewhat ironic since the Old Testament claims that God alone should be worshiped (Exod 34:14; 20:5). Jesus himself affirmed that only God should be worshiped when he quoted Deuteronomy 6:13 in the wilderness temptation pericope. However, as the previous passages indicate, Jesus freely accepted worship (Matt 2:11; 21:9–16; 28:9–10, 17; John 9:35–39). Indeed, even God commanded that Jesus be worshiped (Heb 1:6; cf. Deut 32:43).

Conclusion

The way in which the New Testament authors spoke about Jesus shows a usage of terms and concepts similar to the targumic presentation of the *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara*. Indeed, Jesus fulfills offices and roles similar to the *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* as God's agent and manifestation. By understanding the meaning of these targumic terms in their original context, one can see how the New Testament authors may have appropriated these ideas to speak of Jesus in the New Testament. Like the *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara*, Jesus is God's agent in the world, and he is the manifestation of God's nature. Once the New Testament authors apply similar targumic concepts to Jesus, they provide an exegetical method by which one can approach the Targums to find Christ in the Old Testament. Where the *Memra, Shekinah,* or *Yeqara* function as God's agent(s) or manifestation(s), one can probably find Christ, God's premier agent and manifestation.

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[105]Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh*, 470–71.

CHAPTER 3

FINDING CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
THROUGH THE ARAMAIC *MEMRA*

The New Testament authors' use of targumic terms and concepts suggests that

the Aramaic *Memra* (מימרא) exhibits Christological implications. However, not all

targumic references portray Christ with the same clarity. The *Memra* as God's agent

does not necessarily imply a one-to-one relationship between the *Memra* and Jesus.

Rather, where the *Memra* carries out similar functions to Jesus' offices or roles, one may

find Christ in the Old Testament.[1] Although some passages point to Christ more clearly

than others, when the targumic *Memra* functions as God's agent or manifestation, one

may find Christ in the Old Testament.

Some targumic passages seem to highlight Christ in the Old Testament clearly.

The *Memra* functions as God's agent or manifestation, and one can often draw a clear

connection to the New Testament offices and roles of Jesus. In the targumic passages

where the *Memra* is God's agent *and* a direct connection to Jesus exists, these passages

certainly refer to Jesus and are discussed in the first category below.

While some passages clearly refer to Jesus, others *probably* refer to Jesus.

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[1]Often, the similarities between the *Memra* and Jesus fall into the categories of Jesus' offices
of Prophet, Priest, and King. For example, the *Memra* functions as the "help/aid" (סעד) of Israel, and these
occurrences imply an agent-mediator, i.e., a priest. When the *Memra* functions as Israel's agent in
redemption (office of Priest, *Tg. Neof.* Exod 18:4; *Tg. Jer* 15:15–20; 30:11; cf. Eph 1:7), agent of revelation
(office of Prophet, *Tg. Neof.* Gen 17:1; *Tg. Neof.* Exod 19:9; cf. Col 1:19), or agent-King (office of King,
Tg. Neof. Deut 26:17–18; cf. John 1:49) one can probably find references to Christ. In addition to Christ's
offices, the *Memra* often carries out *roles* similar to Jesus. The *Memra* functions as God's agent-warrior in
battle (*Tg. Zech* 10:5; cf. Rev 19:13), he is Israel's provider (*Tg. Josh* 6:27; cf. John 6:25–26), and he
serves as the stumbling block for Israel (*Tg. Isa* 8:14). Each of these passages highlights similarities in *role*
between the *Memra* and Jesus.

These passages are discussed as passages that *probably* refer to Christ because the *Memra* functions as God's agent or manifestation, but a connection to the New Testament may not be as direct. In other words, the role of the *Memra* may point to a conceptual role or office of Jesus, but the connection to the New Testament is more indirect. Nevertheless, these passages *probably* help one find Christ in the Old Testament because the *Memra* functions as God's agent or manifestation similarly to Jesus.

The third category of the occurrences of *Memra* includes those that *do not* refer to Jesus. Generally, these passages fail to use מימר as an agent or manifestation altogether. Many of these occurrences include the words of a human being or refer to another euphemism that clearly is not Jesus. Therefore, final category in this chapter discusses those passages in which *Memra* does not refer to Jesus.

Based on the previous chapter, the New Testament authors have provided a paradigm by which to read the Targums in order to find Jesus in the Old Testament. The New Testament authors did not intend to provide a singular method for finding Christ in the Old Testament. Even so, they seem to have used terms and concepts similar to the ancient synagogue to teach about the Messiah, who functioned similarly to the targumic *Memra*. This targumic character, which represented God's agent and manifestation, may point to Christ in the Old Testament.

Occurrences of *Memra* That Certainly Refer to Jesus

The targumic passages in this section depict the *Memra* of the Lord as God's agent or manifestation. In addition, these passages portray the *Memra* in a role similar to an office or role Jesus fulfilled as God's premier agent. Therefore, these targumic passages help one find Christ in the Old Testament.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Numbers 21:8–9:
God's Agent as the Object of Faith

Numbers 21:8–9   And the Lord said to Moses, "Make for yourself a fiery

serpent and set it on a standard, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look to the bronze serpent and live.

MT Numbers 21:8–9

ויאמר יהוה אל משה עשה לך שרף ושים אתו על נס והיה
כל הנשוך וראה אתו וחי
ויעש משה נחש נחשת וישמהו על הנס והיה אם נשך הנחש
את איש והביט אל נחש הנחשת וחי

Pseudo-Jonathan
Numbers 21:8–9

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make for yourself a poisonous serpent of bronze, and put it on a high place. And it shall come about that all whom the serpent bites should look at it and live, if he turns his heart to the name of the *Memra* of the Lord. Then Moses made the serpent of bronze and put it on a high place. And it came about when the serpent would bite a man, and he would look at the serpent of bronze, and set his heart on the name of the *Memra* of the Lord, then he would live.

Pseudo-Jonathan
Numbers 21:8–9

ואמר ייי למשה עיבד לך חיווי חורמן דנחש ושוי יתיה על
אתר תלי ויהי כל דנכות יתיה חיויא ויהוי מסתכל ביה וחאי
אין מכוין ליביה לשום מימרא דייי
ועבד משה חיויא דנחשא ושוי יתיה על אתר תלי והוי כד
נכית חיויא ית גברא והוה מסתכל בחויא דנחשא ומכוין
ליביה לשום מימרא דייי וחאי

The bronze serpent passage in Numbers 21 connects to the New Testament at multiple points. In John 3, Jesus teaches that he will be lifted up similarly to the bronze serpent. In 1 Corinthians 10:9–10, Paul draws attention to those who grumbled against Christ in the wilderness and were destroyed by the serpents.[2] Finally, the author of

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[2]*Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 21:8–9 highlights the *Memra's* association with the bronze serpent passage and connects to 1 Cor 10:9 that says Israel put Christ to the test by grumbling against him. *Tg. Neof.* Num 21:5 is reminiscent of the broader context of 1 Cor 10 by saying, "And the people spoke against the *Memra* of the Lord" (מלילו עמה בתר ממרה דייי). Gordon Fee says, "Paul once again, as in v. 4, is purposely tying the situations of Israel and Corinth together christologically. It was Christ whom Israel was testing in the desert. At the same time it is Christ whom the Corinthians were putting to the test by trying to eat both at his table and at the table of demons" (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 457). The targumic background to 1 Cor 10 continues in *Ps.-J.* Num 20:11 where "Moses raised his hand and smote the rock with this staff twice: the first time blood dripped, but the second time much water came forth, and he gave the congregation and their livestock water to drink" (cf. John 19:34). The whole of Paul's argument in 1 Cor 10 possibly finds its background in the targumic wilderness narratives. See also the discussion in John Ronning, *The Jewish*

Hebrews used the wilderness rebellion as an illustration so that those who believe would enter God's rest (Heb 3–4).[3] These connections to the New Testament provide a broad precedent to examine this targumic passage to find Christ in the Old Testament.

In Numbers 21:8–9, Moses fashioned a bronze serpent in order to save those who had been afflicted by the fiery serpents. *Pseudo-Jonathan* Numbers 21:8–9 explains that looking at the bronze serpent was insufficient to save.[4] The Hebrew Bible says that "looking at" (ראה) or "seeing" (הביט) the bronze serpent provided life for the wounded. However, the Targum states that in order to be healed, one must "turn his heart to the name of the *Memra* of the Lord."[5] According to *Pseudo-Jonathan*, the *Memra* functions as God's agent to save because he is the one in whom men must believe.[6]

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Targums and John's Logos Theology (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 244–46.

[3]That the idea of faith is central to Hebrews' illustration is clear from Heb 3:19 where he states that the reason Israel was unable to enter God's rest was from unbelief rather than grumbling. Grumbling was the outward behavior demonstrating unbelief.

[4]Robert Hayward, "A Targumic Interpretation in the Mishnah? Or a Case of Mistaken Identity?" *Aramaic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2013): 197–210. Hayward points to the interpretation of the necessity of faith in this passage and in Exod 17:11, and he shows how *The Epistle of Barnabas* draws the same connection as the *Frg. Tg.* and the Mishnah (*m. Roš Haš.* 3:8). Hayward only devotes one sentence of his article to the *Memra*, merely mentioning that the other Targums say that the required faith should be "in the name of the *Memra* of the Lord."

[5]Jacob Milgrom points to the Targum to say that faithful obedience was required for healing (Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, JPSTC [Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 174). Looking to the bronze serpent was the command, and obedience to the command would elicit healing. However, he also cites the Mishnah, which says, "Could the snake slay or keep alive? It is, rather, to teach you that whenever the Israelites directed their thoughts on high and kept their hearts in subjection to their Father in heaven, they were healed; otherwise, they pined away" (*m. Roš Haš.* 3:8). Although the Mishnah does not include faith in God's agent in this tradition, it still teaches that the crux of the matter in Num 21:1–10 was Israel having hearts that trusted their Father in heaven.

[6]Even though and understanding of the Deuteronomic "Name" theology has shifted in recent years (see Michael Hundley, "To Be or Not to Be: A Reexamination of Name Language in Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic History," *VT* 59, no. 4 [2009]: 533–55; Roberto Ouro, "Divine Presence Theology versus Name Theology in Deuteronomy," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 51, no. 1 [2014]: 5–29), the Targums suggest that God's name implies presence. For example, *Tg. Onq.* Deut 12:11; 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11, all explain the dwelling place of God's "name" as the place where he caused his *Shekinah* to dwell. In other words, the "name" of God represents his divine presence in these passages. Therefore, in *Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 21:8-9, one may rightly conclude that to believe in the "name" of the *Memra* is to believe in the *Memra*. Likewise, Acts 4:12 says, "And there is salvation in *no one* else (person), for there is no other *name* under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." David Peterson adds that "The Greek

Similarly, the New Testament presents Jesus as God's agent in whom men must believe for salvation. In his conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:14–15), Jesus refers to Numbers 21 because the Son of Man would be lifted up similarly to the bronze serpent.[7] Nicodemus, a Pharisee (John 3:1) and "the teacher of Israel" (John 3:9), approached Jesus to learn of his identity and power.[8] Jesus concluded that *belief* in the Son of Man is how one gains eternal life just as the Targums teach that one must turn his heart to God's agent in order to survive the serpent bite (John 3:15). Salvation was conditioned upon turning one's heart to the *Memra* in *Pseudo-Jonathan* Numbers 21:8–9.[9] Likewise, the New Testament conditions salvation upon belief in Jesus (e.g., John

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includes the expression *en anthrōpois* (KJV, NKJV, ESV 'among men'), perhaps to indicate that behind the name stands a person, who lived among us as the agent of God's salvation" (David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 192n27). Indeed, to believe in Jesus' name is to believe in his person similarly to believing in the name of the *Memra* is believing in the *Memra*.

[7]Köstenberger and Hollis draw attention the use of נשא ('lifted up') in Gen 40:13, 19 and Gen 40:19–22 to show the use of ὑψωθῆναι in John 3:14 as a reference both to exaltation and death by hanging on a tree. See Andreas Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 127n40; and H. Hollis, "The Root of Johannine Pun— Ὑψωθῆναι," *NTS* 35, no. 3 (1989): 475–78. John Ronning also connects the "lifted up" language of John 3:14 to the Isaiah Targum to show that God will wage war by being "lifted up" (Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology,* 127–30). Likewise, *Tg. Onq.* Deut 21:23 interprets that the man who is hanged on a tree is "cursed" because he has sinned against the Lord. Paul connects this passage to Jesus being "hanged on a tree" because he "became a curse for us" (Gal 3:13). The purpose of Jesus' becoming a curse is so that by faith (Gal 3:8), he would bring the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant to the Gentiles (Gal 3:14), an exaltation as Lord and Savior of the world. For others who see the dual meaning to "lifted up," see Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 282–83; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC 36 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 131–32; and D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 345.

[8]In John 3:10, Jesus calls Nicodemus "the teacher of Israel" (ὁ διδάσκαλος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ) suggesting that Nicodemus was a significant leader (cf. 3:1, ἄρχων τῶν Ἰουδαίων) in the Jewish community. The bronze serpent passage that Jesus refers to would have been well known by "*the* teacher of Israel."

[9]According to the grammar, turning one's heart toward the *Memra* was not just the act that saved the Israelites, but it was the condition to gain life in v. 8. אין is used in Targums to Psalms and Job to introduce a conditional clause (e.g., *Tg. Ps* 7:4). See also *y. Mak.* 2:3d; *y. Naz.* 6:54d; *Qoh. Rab.* to 10:5 (Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005], 52). The particle אין often translates the Hebrew particles אם or כי (e.g., *Tg. Ps* 7:4; 11:3; 27:3), which also introduce conditional clauses (Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax: A Traditional Semitic Approach* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, forthcoming], §77a–f).

3:36; 14:1), indeed belief in his name (cf. John 1:12; Acts 4:12).[10] Just as those who were wounded by the serpents in the wilderness gained life by turning their hearts to the *Memra* of the Lord, so also, all humanity gains eternal life by believing in the Son of Man.[11]

The similarities between *Pseudo-Jonathan* Numbers 21:8–9 and Jesus' teaching in John 3 appear to point to Christ in the Old Testament. According to Jesus, and even targumic tradition, the requirement for God's people to attain life is faith in God's agent. In the targumic tradition, belief in the *Memra* healed God's people. In the New Testament, Jesus taught a Pharisee (Nicodemus) that God's agent is now both the sacrifice to be lifted up and also the one in whom men believe for eternal life.

Targum Neofiti Exodus 29:45:
God's Agent as Savior

Exodus 29:45	I will dwell among the children of Israel and I will exist for them as God.
MT Exodus 29:45	ושכנתי בתוך בני ישראל והייתי להם לאלהים
Neofiti Exodus 29:45	And I will put the *Yeqara* of my *Shekinah* in the midst of the children of Israel, and my *Memra* will exist for them as a Savior God.

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[10]A similar expression to "believing in" Jesus is "receiving" Jesus (Matt 10:40, John 13:20; Mark 9:27; Luke 9:48; John 5:43; 12:44–45). In fact, John 1:11–12 juxtaposes the two ideas. The Jews did not receive Jesus, but "all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." Similarly, Abraham is promised blessing because he "received" the *Memra* (*Tg. Onq.* Gen 22:18). *Tgs. Onq.* and *Ps.-J.* Deut 4:30 say that in times of distress, Israel should "receive" the *Memra* of the Lord, whereas *Tg. Neof.* Deut 4:30 says Israel should "obey the voice of the *Memra* of the Lord" (תשמעון בקל מימרה דייי).

[11]Jesus highlights faith/belief in the Son of Man because merely looking at Jesus lifted up would be insufficient to grant eternal life. Jesus would be lifted up just as the serpent was lifted up and would provide life for those who would look to him for salvation. However, merely gazing on the serpent or Christ lifted up would not provide eternal life. Rather, faith in God's agent, the *Memra*/Christ, would be required for eternal life. The Targum highlights faith in God's agent, and Jesus teaches the same regarding his crucifixion. Nicodemus, a Pharisee and the teacher of Israel would have been familiar with this tradition, so it was appropriate for Jesus to appeal to the bronze serpent passage to highlight faith in God's agent. Köstenberger does not refer to the Targums when commenting on John 3:14, but he still affirms the parallel between *looking at* the bronze serpent and *faith* in the Son of Man (Köstenberger, *John*, 128).

Neofiti Exodus 29:45   ואשרי איקר שכינתי בגו בני ישראל ויהוי ממרי להון לאלה פריק

In Exodus 29:45, God uses covenantal language to affirm his presence with his people and his commitment to be the God of Israel.[12] *Neofiti* Exodus 29:45 interprets God's presence with his people as the *Yeqara* of his *Shekinah* dwelling with them, and explains that the *Memra* will be their God "in the status of" a redeemer.[13]

The Targum expresses the ontological identity of the *Memra* with God by the translating the implied אני as ממרי. *Memra* is the subject of the verb היה just as אני is implied as the subject in Hebrew. *Neofiti* equates the *Memra* with God, indicating an ontological identity between the two. Other targumic passages explain God's active presence as a redeemer using the ב preposition to say that God exists "in/by His *Memra*" to redeem Israel (cf. *Tg. Onq.* Lev 22:33). However, *Neofiti* Exodus 29:45 translates *Memra* as the subject of היה without a ב preposition.[14] In this targumic translation, the *Memra* is God.

The Targum highlights an ontological equality between God and the *Memra* similarly to how Jesus is ontologically identical to the Father in the New Testament (cf. John 10:30). As God, Jesus performed works that only the Father does, and he displayed

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[12]This covenantal language emphasizes divine manifestation through mighty acts and continual preservation (Gen 17:8; Jer 31:33; Ezek 11:20; 2 Cor 6:16). For a further discussion of the *Memra* related to the covenant oath, see Robert Hayward, *Divine Name and Presence: The Memra* (Totowa, NJ: Allanheld, Osmun, 1981), 57–70.

[13]For the accusative of situation, see Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax,* §16l. In *Tg. Neof.* Lev 26:12, an almost identical phrase occurs. In *Tg. Neof.* Lev 26:12, God says, "And I will cause my *Memra* to dwell among you, and my *Memra* will be to you for a Savior God." This difference in translation between *Tg. Neof.* Lev 26:12 and *Tg. Neof.* Exod 29:45 equates the *Memra* with the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah*, and emphasizes the *Memra's* role as God's manifest agent.

[14]Several other passages use the same construction (ויהוי ממרי) to highlight the ontological identity between God in the Hebrew Bible and the *Memra* in the Targums. *Tg. Onq.* Gen 26:3 says, "My *Memra* will exist as your help" (ויהי מימרי בסעדך) whereas in the Hebrew, God says, "I will be with you" (ואהיה עמך). Similarly, *Tg. Isa* 63:8 identifies the *Memra* as Israel's Savior, replacing "God" with *Memra* in a one-to-one correlation. *Tg. Neof.* Exod 6:7 also identifies *Memra* as God (ויהוי מימרי לכון לאלה פרוק), using covenantal language similar to *Tg. Neof.* Exod 29:45.

attributes that only God displays.[15] Jesus' "I AM" sayings point to his ontological

identity with the Father (John 8:12; 10:7, 11; 11:25; et al.), and Jesus shares an identical

glory with the Father that has existed from before the incarnation (John 17).[16] Similar to

the Targums, the New Testament teaches that God's agent is God himself, active and

present in the created order. The New Testament, however, identifies this agent as Jesus.

Not only does this passage relate to Jesus by identifying the *Memra* as God,

but it also connects to Jesus as God's agent in redemption. In *Neofiti* Exodus 29:45, the

Memra exists as Israel's covenant God, indeed, he is Israel's "Redeemer God" (לאלה

פריק). The participle (פריק) portrays repetitive action and specifies a characteristic of

God's *Memra*. In other words, the *Memra* is God specifically in his role as a "Savior."

This portrait of the *Memra* points to Jesus' role as Savior in the New Testament. Jesus,

who is God in the flesh, is the Savior of the world (John 3:17; 4:42; 1 John 4:14), and has

brought redemption to those formerly enslaved to sin (Rom 3:24).

The final aspect of this verse that points to Jesus in the Old Testament is the

covenantal language. *Neofiti* Exodus 29:45 interprets the *Memra* as God within the

covenant declaration that God will be Israel's God and they will be his people.[17] In this

sense, the *Memra*, who is God's mediating agent in the world, is also the God of the

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[15]One such attribute is his eternal nature. In the Targums, the *Memra* is also eternal, an ontological characteristic of God that is also ascribed to Jesus. *Tg. Isa* 46:4 says, "Forever I am he, and for ever and ever my *Memra* is alive." *Tg. Hos* 3:13 concludes the verse with the exclamation, "Your *Memra* endures forever" after declaring God's revelation of himself to redeem his anointed. *Tg. Hos* 11:9 interprets that God is not a man as "my *Memra* exists forever." The distinction that God is God and not a man is that his manifest agent, the one who fully displays the image of God, exists eternally. The attribute of eternality given to the *Memra* connects to Jesus in that he also has existed with the Father in eternity past (John 8:58; 17:24).

[16]See B. Witherington, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 156–58, for a discussion of the "I AM" sayings of Jesus.   See Köstenberger, *John*, 253, for how Jesus' "I am the Light of the world" statement equates him with the God of the Old Testament.

[17]See Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, JPSTC (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 32, 192–93.

covenant. God says, "I will be their [covenant] God," and the Targum translates, "My *Memra* will be their [covenant] God." Therefore, the connection to Jesus as the "mediator of a New Covenant" (Heb 9:15; 12:24) seems reasonable.

Like *Neofiti* Exodus 29:45, other targumic passages teach that the *Memra* functions as God's mediator of the covenants. *Onqelos*, *Neofiti*, and *Pseudo-Jonathan* Genesis 9:12–13 all indicate that the rainbow was a covenant sign "between my *Memra* and you [Noah]." In the Abrahamic Covenant, *Onqelos* Genesis 17:2, 7 says that God will establish his covenant (*Tg. Onq.* Gen 17:2 ואיתין קימי/*Tg. Onq.* Gen 17:7 ואקים ית קימי) between Abraham and his *Memra*.[18] God confirms the Abrahamic covenant with Isaac and Jacob, promising that the *Memra* will be with them (*Tg. Onq.* Gen 26:3; *Tg. Neof.* Gen 28:15). Regarding the Sinai covenant, targumic tradition suggests that the *Memra* was the vocal agent of God to deliver the covenant stipulations (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 19:17; *Tg. Neof.* Exod 19:9, 20; *Tg. Neof.* Lev 26:46). Likewise, targumic tradition in Deuteronomy teaches that the *Memra* spoke the words of the Sinai covenant to Israel (*Tg. Neof.* Deut 1:1; *Tg. Onq.* Deut 4:33). In the Davidic covenant, the Targums explain that the *Memra* will bring near a child from the house of David to establish his kingdom by the *Memra* (*Tg. Ezek* 17:21-22).[19] In addition, *Targum 1 Chronicles* 14:2 explains that David "knew that the *Memra* of the Lord had established him as king over Israel." Finally, *Targum Ezekiel* 37:14 translates that the *Memra* decreed God's intention to put his Spirit within the New Covenant people.

Just as the *Memra* is closely associated with the covenants in the Targums, so also Jesus is central to the covenants. All of the covenant promises find their fulfillment

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[18]Like the Noahic covenant, a sign (circumcision) was given as evidence of a covenant between the *Memra* and Abraham (*Tg. Onq.* Gen 17:11).

[19]*Tg. Ezek* 34:24 says that the Davidic kingship had been decreed by the *Memra*. This interpretation is not as explicit as the Noahic and Abrahamic covenants, but still demonstrates the *Memra's* role in establishing the Davidic kingship.

in Jesus (2 Cor 1:19–20), and he is the mediator of the New Covenant (Heb 9:15). Jesus established a New Covenant in his blood (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25) as the fulfillment of God's covenantal relationship with his people. Just as Jesus is God's agent-mediator of the New Covenant, so also the *Memra* was God's agent-mediator in the previous covenants between God and his people.

In *Neofiti* Exodus 29:45, God affirms his presence with his covenant people as the promise of his redeeming agent being their God. The *Memra* is God similarly to how Jesus is ontologically identical to God and dwells among, and in, his people (Col 1:27). Just as Jesus was God's agent to redeem, so also the *Memra* was Israel's "Redeemer God." The covenantal language that God would be the God of his people further affirms that God's covenants have always been established through his agent. Therefore, the *Memra* of *Neofiti* Exodus 29:45 helps one find Christ in the Old Testament.

Targum Isaiah 8:14:
God's Agent as a Stumbling Block

Isaiah 8:14	And he will exist as a sanctuary and as a stone of offense and as a rock of stumbling to the two houses of Israel, as a trap and as a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
MT Isaiah 8:14	והיה למקדש ולאבן נגף ולצור מכשול לשני בתי ישראל לפח ולמוקש ליושב ירושלם
Targum Isaiah 8:14	But if you do not receive it, his *Memra* will exist among you as an avenger, and as a stone of smiting and as a rock to stumble for the two houses of the leaders of Israel; as a defeat and as a stumbling block, because the house of Israel is divided against the house of Judah who dwell in Jerusalem.
Targum Isaiah 8:14	ואם לא תקבלון ויהי מימריה בכון לפורען ולאבן מחי ולכיף מתקל לתרין בתי רברבי ישראל לתבר ולתקלא על דאתפליגו בית ישראל על דבית יהודה דיתבין בירושלם

The occurrence of *Memra* in *Targum Isaiah* 8:14 seems to point to Jesus almost immediately. The parallel to Romans 9:33 and 1 Peter 2:6–7 suggests that Jesus is this stone of stumbling for both houses of Israel. Furthermore, the broader targumic

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theology of a stumbling stone also ascribes to the *Memra* the role of kingship and authority against those who fail to believe. The *Memra,* as a stone of stumbling, judges Israel through a kingly role just as Jesus' kingship allows him to judge Israel by being "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense."

Isaiah 8:14 (MT) teaches that God will become a stone of offense and a reason for Israel's stumbling. Paul applies this passage to Jesus in Romans 9:33 as a prophecy that Israel would not believe because salvation is by faith in Jesus instead of by works. Likewise, Peter integrates Isaiah 8:14 in a list of passages that include the stumbling stone, identifying Jesus as the stone.[20] *Targum Isaiah* 8:14 clearly labels this "stone of smiting" and "rock that causes offense" as the *Memra* suggesting that God's agent will carry out this role.[21] Therefore the Targum explains that God's agent will be the stone of stumbling rather than the Father.

In addition to identifying Jesus as the stumbling stone, the New Testament also teaches that Israel's unbelief and stumbling were predestined to take place through God's agent. Schreiner says that Paul's patchwork citation of Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16 in Romans 9:33 is evidence of the predestined outcome for the Jews.[22] Peter cites Isaiah 8:14 in the

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[20]Ronning, *The Jewish Targums*, 249–50. See also Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC 37 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 103–14, who says, "The use of the Old Testament is significant Christologically since it demonstrates that what is true of Yahweh is also true of Jesus the Christ" (ibid., 103). Norman Hillyer cites *Gen. Rab.* 70:9 and Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* to argue that the "stone" was a Messianic title in Jewish circles (Norman Hillyer, "'Rock-Stone' Imagery in I Peter," *TynBul* 22 [1971]: 59, 69).

[21]See Schreiner, *Romans*, 541, who is not persuaded by the targumic evidence only because of the late date of the written documents (see also Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 [New York: Doubleday, 1993], 580). Schreiner, however, cites several scholars who point to a collection of written texts that connect the stone with Jesus, but argues that these point to "an oral collection at most." Regarding these textual and oral connections of Jesus to the stone of stumbling, Schreiner says, "the messianic interpretation of the stone was quite common in rabbinic literature, and this suggests that the connection was pre-Christian" (Schreiner, *Romans*, 541; see also J. Jeremias, "λίθος," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and trans. Geoffrey Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964], 4:272–73).

[22]Schreiner, *Romans*, 540. Cf. Christian Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk: Eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9–11* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 36; James D. G. Dunn,

same context saying, "They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do (1 Peter 2:8).[23] The importance of this connection is that the Targums point to God's agent as the one who *will* cause Israel to stumble as a predestined result. In fact, *Targum Isaiah* 6:8–10 says that the *Memra* of the Lord told Isaiah that he would preach to a people who hear but cannot understand. As history unfolds, this predestined result is, indeed, carried out by God's agent, Jesus (e.g., Mark 4:12).[24]

Since *Targum Isaiah* 8:14 identified the *Memra* as God's agent causing Israel to stumble, one can also look to *Targum Isaiah* 28:16 for further connections to Jesus.[25] Isaiah 28:16 says that God will lay a foundation stone in Zion that is tested and sure. The Targum interprets the foundation stone as a future King of Israel who will bring judgment on those who fail to believe. In targumic tradition, the stone that the builders rejected "was among the sons of Jesse; and he was worthy to be appointed king and ruler" (*Tg. Ps* 118:22). Jesus, the one who was to be ruler in Israel (Mic 5:2; Matt 2:6), is also the stone of stumbling that the builders of the house of Israel rejected.[26] Israel's King was the chief cornerstone, and as King, Jesus had the authority to judge their unbelief (*Tg. Isa*

Romans 9–16, WBC 38B (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988), 584; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 42.

[23]Cf. Matt 13:10–17; Mark 4:10–12; Luke 8:10; Acts 28:24–28; and Rom 11:7–8, which all seem to indicate that the unbelief of the Jews was a prophesied, predestined result.

[24]On Jesus' use of this idea in Mark 4:12, see Bruce Chilton, *A Galilean Rabbi and His Bible: Jesus' Use of the Interpreted Scripture of His Time* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984), 90–98.

[25]*Tg. Isa* 28:16 does not include the *Memra* in its interpretation, and yet because *Tg. Isa* 8:14 has already labeled the *Memra* as the stone of stumbling, the idea corresponds in Isaiah. This conclusion is especially supported by the way the New Testament authors combine all of the "stone" passages (Isa 8:14; 28:16; Ps 118:22) in their writings on the subject. In their minds, these passages all seem to be related to God's agent.

[26]*Tg. Mic* 5:2 says, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrath, you were as too small to be numbered among the thousands of the house of Judah. From you shall come forth before me the Messiah to be executing rule over Israel, whose name is uttered from former times, from the days of antiquity." For other references to the Messiah related to the Davidic kingship in the Targums, see *Tg. Onq.* Gen 49:10 and *Tg. Isa* 9:6. In *Tg. Isa* 9:7, the "*Memra* of the Lord of Hosts" is the one who will establish the Davidic throne. In other words, the King, the stone, and the Messiah are all connected in the person of Jesus and the targumic tradition supports these conclusions regarding Jesus.

28:16; cf. Acts 10:42; Rom 2:16).

Just as the New Testament teaches Jesus was the stone of stumbling for Israel, the Targums identify the stone as God's *Memra* to bring judgment on his people. Though one cannot prove the New Testament authors had the targumic tradition in mind, the similarities between the Targums and the New Testament are striking. God's agent, the *Memra*, will be a stone of stumbling just as God's agent, Jesus, was identified as the stone over which Israel was predestined to stumble. In both cases, God's agent judges Israel according to his royal authority, because Israel failed to believe in God's Messiah.

***Targum 2 Chronicles* 7:12:
God's Manifestation and
Mediating Intercessor**

2 Chronicles 7:12	Then the Lord appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him, "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice."
MT 2 Chronicles 7:12	וירא יהוה אל שלמה בלילה ויאמר לו שמעתי את תפלתך ובחרתי במקום הזה לי לבית זבח
Targum 2 Chronicles 7:12	The *Memra* of the Lord was revealed to Solomon in the night, and said to him, "Your prayer has been heard before me, and I have chosen this place to exist for me as a house of the sacrifice of offerings."
Targum 2 Chronicles 7:12	ואתגלי מימרא דייי לשלמה בליליא ואמר ליה שמיעא קדמי ית צלותך ואתרעיתי באתרא הדין למהוי לי לבית דבח קורבניא

Targum 2 Chronicles 7:12 provides examples of the *Memra* as God's manifestation and as a mediating intercessor for Solomon. As God's manifestation, the *Memra* "was revealed" (אתגלי) to deliver a message to Solomon.[27] In addition, the *Memra* spoke (ואמר ליה) to Solomon suggesting the presence of a personal agent or

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[27]To explain God's visible manifestation, the Targums often use the passive *ithpeel* of גלה. In *Tg. 2 Chr* 7:12, the Targum substitutes God's agent as well as the passive verb construction. Therefore, the "*Memra* of the Lord was revealed."

perhaps even a personal being. The Targums do not always substitute the *Memra* when

the Lord speaks, but ואתגלי מימרא דייי . . . ואמר is the typical construction of God

speaking through the manifestation of his *Memra*.[28]

That Jesus is the premier manifestation of God has been rehearsed several

times, and the Targums again point to God's agent as his visible manifestation. Where

God acts or speaks in time and space, he does so through his physical agent, Jesus.

Therefore, the revelation of God's agent in *Targum 2 Chronicles* 7:12 helps point to

Christ in the Old Testament.

The message that the *Memra* delivered to Solomon may also point to Christ in

the Old Testament. In *Targum 2 Chronicles* 7:12, the *Memra* tells Solomon that he has

heard his prayer. In this sense, the *Memra* functions as an intercessor in prayer. As such,

Solomon prayed to God through the *Memra*. In addition, the *Memra* told Solomon that

the temple had become a place of worship "for me." This translation follows the Hebrew

literally, and yet having been spoken by the *Memra*, the implication is that the temple is a

place to worship God's agent, the *Memra*.

Like the *Memra*, Jesus also hears the prayers of his people, and intercedes for

them before the Father (Rom 8:34). In the New Testament, Jesus is the mediator between

God and man (1 Tim 2:5), and his mediation includes hearing prayer. Jesus said that if

you ask anything "in my name" he would do it so that the Father would receive glory

(John 14:13; 15:16; 16:24–24, 26).[29] John also teaches that confidence in the Son comes

because Jesus hears the requests of those who believe in his name (1 John 5:13–15). Paul

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[28]For examples that leave God speaking see *Tg. Onq.* Gen 3:13; *Tg. Onq.* Exod 3:15. For examples that have the *Memra* speaking on behalf of God, see *Tg. Onq.* Gen 8:21; *Tg. Neof.* Gen 12:7; 17:1; 20:3; *Tg. Neof.* Num 22:9; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 32:39. The typical construction for the *Memra* speaking includes the *Memra* being "revealed."

[29]For targumic passages that emphasize prayer "in the name of the *Memra* of the Lord," see *Tg. Neof.* Gen 12:8; 13:4; 16:13; 21:33; 22:14; 26:25; *Tg. Neof.* Exod 17:15; 34:5; *Tg. Ps* 63:5; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 26:28; 36:33; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 4:7.

instructs the Ephesians to give thanks to God the Father "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 5:20), again teaching that God's agent mediates the supplication of God's people.

While the *Memra* received Solomon's prayer, he also told Solomon that the temple had become a place of worship to the *Memra*. Just as the *Memra* accepted worship in the temple, Jesus accepted worship in the New Testament.[30] Where Jesus' miraculous signs were seen, people worshiped (e.g., Matt 14:23; John 9:38). Even into eternity, the nations will worship Jesus (Phil 2:10–11; Rev 5:9, 11–14; 7:10). As God's agent, Jesus is the proper object of Christian worship just as the *Memra* was the proper object of temple worship. Since the Targums identify God's agent as equal to God, worshiping God and worshiping his agent become one and the same. As God's manifest agent, Jesus rightly accepted worship. Likewise, the *Memra* could tell Solomon that the temple was a place of worship for him.

In *Targum 2 Chronicles* 7:12, God manifested himself to Solomon through his agent, and the *Memra* audibly told Solomon that he heard his prayer and that temple worship was established to honor him. Similarly, Jesus manifests the Father, rightly receives worship, and mediates believers' prayers to the Father.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
Deuteronomy 32:39: God's Manifest
Agent as Redeemer and Giver of Life

Deuteronomy 32:39	See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
MT Deuteronomy 32:39	ראו עתה כי אני אני הוא ואין אלהים עמדי אני אמית ואחיה מחצתי ואני ארפא ואין מידי מציל

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[30]In chap. 2, Jesus' accepting worship was described as a result of divine manifestation. When the glory of God is manifest through Jesus, men recognize his majesty and must worship him. Similarly, the glory of the *Memra* in the temple required worship (*Tg. Neof.* Exod 25:22).

Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 32:39	When the *Memra* of the Lord will be revealed to deliver his people, he will say to all the nations, "See now that I am he who is and was, and I am he who will be, and there is no other god apart from me. I, by my *Memra*, kill and indeed make alive the people of the house of Israel. And I will heal them at the end of days, and there will be none who can deliver Gog and his army from my hand, [Gog] who will come to arrange in battle array against them.
Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 32:39	כד יתגלי מימרא דייי למפרוק ית עמיה יימר לכל עממייא חמון כדון ארום אנא הוא דהוויי והוית ואנא הוא דעתיד למהוי ולית אלקא חורן בר מיני אנא במימרי ממית ומחי מחיתי ית עמא בית ישראל ואניא אסי יתהון בסוף יומיא ולית דמשזיב מן ידי גוג ומשיריתיה דאתן למסדרא סדרי קרבא עמהון

    Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 32:39 expands upon the Hebrew "I, even I, am he." The targumic expansion explains that Yahweh alone is God because of his eternal nature. He is the only God who "is and was, and he who will be." *Pseudo-Jonathan* also explains that this declaration will come when the *Memra* of the Lord is revealed to deliver (למפרוק) his people. *Neofiti* also interprets Deuteronomy 32:39 as a reference to the *Memra*, but provides an ontological identity between the *Memra* and God.[31] Based on these two targumic traditions, the *Memra* is God, who when he is revealed to redeem his people, will be called the "one who is and was, and who is to come."

    The first connection to Jesus in *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy 32:39 is that

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[31]The Hebrew text repeats the pronoun אני to emphasize monotheism and God's exclusive ability to kill and make alive, wound and heal (for אני as a verbal corroborative, see Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §24b). *Tg. Neof.* Deut 32:39 identifies the second pronoun (אנה) as the *Memra*, but still retains both pronouns as in the Hebrew. This construction *explains* the repetition of the pronoun as a reference to God killing and making alive through his agent. The ב on בממרי is likely an instrumental ב, but may be understood as a כ *essentiae*. As an instrumental ב, *Tg. Neof.* Deut 32:39 would teach that God exists, manifested through his agent. As a כ *essentiae*, *Tg. Neof.* Deut 32:39 teaches that God exists "in the person" of his *Memra* (for the כ *essentiae*, see BDB, 88a, If; JM, 133c; GCK, §119f). In either case, the Targum equates the *Memra* with God suggesting that where God acts, the *Memra* acts. The ontological identity of the *Memra* with the Father is similar to the ontological identity of Jesus with the Father. Jesus said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30), and prayed that believers would be one just as he and the Father are one (John 17:11, 22). Jesus' works were a reflection of the Father's works, and the Son only does what the Father does (John 5:19). Finally, Jesus taught that whoever has seen the Son has seen the nature and essence of the Father (John 14:9). Indeed, the Jews sought to kill Jesus because he made himself equal with God (John 5:18).

the *Memra* will be revealed "to redeem" (למפרוק). Similarly, Jesus delivered God's

people at the exodus (e.g., Jude 5) and will finally appear to rescue his people from a

fallen world (cf. Rev 19:13). The reference in *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy 32:39 to a

future day when the *Memra* will be revealed perhaps points to the day of redemption

when King Messiah will be anointed (*Tg. Ps* 61:9; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 40:9; cf. Luke 4:18;

Acts 4:26; 10:38).

Another connection to Jesus in *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy 32:39, is that

the *Memra* says, "I am the one who is and was, and I am he who will be."[32] This phrase

interprets the first pronoun of the Hebrew text with an expansion not found in the

Hebrew, and identifies the *Memra* as the eternal God (cf. *Tg. Isa* 44:6; Rev 1:4, 21:6;

22:13). Similarly, Jesus is the eternal God "who is, and who was, and who is to come,

the Almighty" (Rev 1:8). [33] In Luke 7:19, John's disciples ask if Jesus is "the one who is

to come." After healing many people, Jesus returns a message to John that he is the one

who makes alive ('the dead are raised up,' Luke 7:22; cf. *Tg. Neof.* Deut 32:39). Jesus

demonstrates that he is the one who is to come by healing and raising the dead similarly

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[32]For a discussion of this translation see Ernest G. Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Deuteronomy: Translated, With Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 5B (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 95n139 and his references. See also Bernard Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Exodus: Translated, with Apparatus and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 7 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988), 8n16, for his discussion of the translation (transliteration) of היה אשר היה in the Targums and ancient versions. In addition, see John Ronning's discussion of how the "I am he" sayings of John's gospel equate Jesus with God (Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*, 194–223). In his discussion of *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 32:39, Ronning shows how John 8:24, 28, and 58 point to Jesus' equality with God in the present (8:24), future (8:28), and past (8:58) using the phrase, "I am he" (ibid., 81–83). These New Testament references are striking when compared to *Tg. Ps.-J.'s* interpretation of the *Memra* as "he who is and was, and he who will be." Ronning concludes, "Since this verse [*Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 32:39] goes on to say, 'there is no god besides me', it is clear that in calling Jesus the Word as a way of stressing the full deity of the Son, John is not advocating belief in another god; rather, he is advocating the notion that Jesus is One with the Father" (ibid., 223). Furthermore, *Tg. Neof.* Deut 32:39 says, "I, *I in my Word*, am he," again pointing to Jesus' "I am he" sayings as evidence of his deity as the Word of the Lord.

[33]Although his discussion is targeted at different verses, John Ronning's discussions of "I am he" in *Tg. Isa* 43:10 prove helpful for the present context as well (John L. Ronning, "The *Targum of Isaiah* and the Johannine Literature, *WTJ* 69 [2007]: 247–78).

to how the *Memra* will "make alive" at his revelation.[34] Indeed, Jesus is identical to the

eternal God just as the *Memra* is "he who is and was and who is to come." As such,

Jesus healed the sick during his earthly ministry and will make alive at his final

revelation.[35]

A third connection to Jesus in *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy 32:39 is that no

one will be able to deliver Gog and his army from the *Memra's* hand.[36] He is God's

agent to judge Satan and his cohort. Likewise, Jesus will not allow the armies of Gog

and Magog to escape the final judgment (Rev 20:7–10). Gog and Magog will arrange in

battle array against Jesus (Rev 20:9a), and he will destroy then with fire from heaven

(Rev 20:9b). Just as the *Memra* rained fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah (*Tg.

Neof.* Gen 19:24), Jesus is God's agent to defeat Gog. Following the defeat of Israel's

enemies, Jesus will raise the dead (Rev 20:11–15) just as *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy

32:39 implies.[37]

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[34]Cf. *Tg. Neof.* Deut 32:39 in which God, by his *Memra*, heals (ואנה הוא דמסי) and makes
alive in the world to come (ומחיי מיתי בעלמא דאתי).

[35]The idea of Jesus "making alive" is not limited to Jesus' final revelation. Indeed, Jesus
promised eternal life to those who would believe in God's agent (John 3:15–16; 3:36; 5:24; 6:40, 47; 10:28;
17:2; Acts 13:48; Rom 5:21; 6:23; 1 Tim 1:16; 1 John 1:2; 5:11, 13, 20).

[36]Cf. *Tg. 1 Sam* 2:10 that says the Lord will execute vengeance on Gog in the context of the
kingdom of the Messiah. Likewise, *Tg. Neof.* Num 11:26 and 24:20 place the triumph over Gog and
Magog "at the end of days" and "in the hands of King Messiah." *Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 24:17 looks forward to a
"strong king [who] will reign from those of the house of Jacob, and the Messiah will be anointed . . . and
will banish all the children of Seth, the army of Gog who will arrange in battle against Israel." *Tg. Ps.-J.*
Lev 26:44 highlights that the *Memra* will not reject Israel in the days of their exile, but will "have mercy"
(ארחים יתהון) on them and will not reject them in the days of Gog. *Tg. Ps.-J.* Lev 26:44 similarly
describes the vengeance of God's agent against Israel's enemies as an act of mercy toward God's people in
the days of Gog. Michael Maher, commenting on *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 40:11, points to rabbinic references to
Gog, again with a connection to the Messiah at the end of days (Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan:
Exodus: Translated with Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 2 [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994], 273n27).
Cf. *b. Sanh.* 97b; *b. Abod. Zar.* 3b; *Gen. Rab.* 88:5.

[37]This connection of Gog and Magog to *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 32:39 does not dismiss the prophecy of
Ezekiel regarding Gog and Magog (Ezek 38–39). In fact, Grant Osborne rehearses Ezekiel's prophecy to
show the parallels to Rev 20 and lists *Tg. Ps.-J.* as a Jewish source that interprets Ezekiel's prophecy
messianically (Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 711–12.

Not only is Jesus God's agent to judge Gog, Magog, and Satan, but also, he is God's agent to make alive in the age to come. Indeed, he is the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25, ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή).[38] In Acts 4, Peter and John upset the Sadducees by preaching "in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:2).[39] In 1 Corinthians 6:14, Paul teaches that God will raise up believers by Christ's power. Paul also taught the Corinthians that just as Adam brought death into the world, so also, Christ would effect the resurrection from the dead (1 Cor 15:21).[40] As God's revealed agent, Jesus will raise the dead just as the *Memra* will make alive the people of the house of Israel.[41]

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
Deuteronomy 32:43:
God's Agent in Atonement

Deuteronomy 32:43	Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people's land.
MT Deuteronomy 32:43	הרנינו גוים עמו כי דם עבדיו יקום ונקם ישיב לצריו וכפר אדמתו עמו
Pseudo-Jonathan	Praise his people, O peoples, for the blood of his servants

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[38]Even though Jesus' identification as the Resurrection and the Life recalls Pharisaic belief in the end-time resurrection (cf. Acts 23:8; Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1.3 §14; *Jewish Wars* 2.8.14 §163; C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* [London: SPCK, 1978]*,* 395), Köstenberger points out how Jesus turns Martha's attention away from a general idea of resurrection to the *person* who can effect resurrection from the dead. See Köstenberger, *John*, 335.

[39]See David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 188 for the discussion of "in Jesus" as an *example* of future resurrection or as the *means* of resurrection. Here, "in Jesus" is taken as means. Jesus is God's agent *in whom* believers find life.

[40]Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 749–51.

[41]In Paul's argument that "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:26), he tells the church that if Israel's rejection of God meant salvation for the world, then their acceptance of the gospel will mean "life from the dead" (Rom 11:15). Paul appears to connect resurrection from the dead with the salvation of "the people of the house of Israel," and their salvation and resurrection occur in Christ.

Deuteronomy 32:43	that was shed he will avenge and keep, and the vengeance of retribution he will return on his enemies, and he, by his *Memra*, will atone for the sins of his land and his people.
Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 32:43	שבחו אומיא עמיה בית ישראל ארום אדם עבדוי דאשתדי הוא פרע ונטר וניקמא דפורענותא יחזר על בעלי דבבוי והוא במימריה יכפר על חובי ארעיה ועמיה

Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 32:43 provides a targumic interpretation of a poetic passage. Often, the poetry of the Pentateuch refers to future fulfillments, and the Targums interpret these fulfillments accordingly.[42] *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy 32:43 explains that God will avenge the blood of his servants. After he returns vengeance on his enemies, God will atone for the sins of the land "by his *Memra*" (במימריה). The ב preposition is most likely an instrumental ב indicating the means through whom God will atone for the sins of the land.[43] In addition, the explicit pronoun (הוא) supports the use of the instrumental ב suggesting that God himself will atone for Israel's sins, but he will do so "through/by his *Memra*."[44] The Targums maintain that God will rescue his people, but he works in the created order through his agent(s).

Whereas *Pseudo-Jonathan* teaches that the *Memra* will atone for sins, the New

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[42]For the idea of future fulfillment generally, Peter Craigie says, "Through the darkness of the judgment expressed so vividly in the Song of Moses, there lay beyond a more distant hope of atonement, and a restoration of the relationship between God, his people, and their promised land" (Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976], 389). Luyten described the perspective of this verse as "eschatological" (J. Luyten, "Primeval and Eschatological Overtones in the Song of Moses [Dt 32:1–43]," in *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt und Botschaft*, ed. N. Lohfink [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985], 344–45).

[43]BDB, 89b III 2; Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, §243; GCK §119o; JM §132e. Another interpretive addition of the Targums is the insertion of "sins" (חובי). The Hebrew indicates that God will cleanse the land, but the Targums interpret this cleansing as a reference to God atoning specifically for the *sins* of the people and the land. This addition shows that something specific existed in the people of Israel that needed cleansing/atoning. *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 32:43 teaches that God's vengeance and cleansing is a necessary result of sin and that the corrective is the *Memra's* atonement.

[44]The use of the independent pronoun (הוא) with the imperfect (יכפר) is somewhat expected, but can also be emphatic (Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §19h; GCK §32b, k, §135a–c; JM §146a). That the Aramaic adds the pronoun not found in the Hebrew text, in addition to the agent through whom the pronoun works, points to the interpretive freedom to apply the work of atonement to God's agent. The one who atones indeed is God, but it is God through his agent.

Testament teaches that Jesus fulfilled the old sacrificial system in order to atone for sins. In the Old Covenant sacrificial system, blood was shed (Lev 8:15; 16:11; 17:11), and forgiveness extended (Lev 4:20, 5:16).[45] These images find their fulfillment in Jesus, who offered himself as the atoning sacrifice once for all (Heb 7:27; 9:26; 10:10). The author of Hebrews (Heb 9–10) taught that the old system gave way so that the true fulfillment would come. Similar to the blood atonement in the sacrificial system (Lev 17:11), Jesus' blood was poured out for forgiveness (Matt 26:28). The Old Covenant required repeated sacrifices for atonement (Heb 10:1), but "as it is, he [Christ] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin *by the sacrifice of himself*." Through Jesus' atoning sacrifice, he established a new and better covenant (Heb 8:6) in which forgiveness of sins leads to the cessation of the sacrificial system (Heb 10:18). Although *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy 32:43 fails to include the image of blood, that God will atone for the sins of his people "by his *Memra*" points to the future fulfillment when God will atone for the sins of his people through the blood of his agent, Jesus Christ.

While the comparison with the sacrificial system provides a sufficient portrait of Jesus' role in atonement, Paul also uses atonement images in Ephesians 1:3–14. He teaches that all of the spiritual blessings given to those who believe come in/through Christ (Eph 1:3, ἐν Χριστῷ). Paul highlights the atonement theme in Ephesians 1:7 by saying that redemption and the forgiveness of sins comes "in him [Christ]" and "through his [Christ's] blood" (cf. Rom 3:24; 1 Cor 1:30). Paul's teaching is also similar to *Neofiti* Deuteronomy 32:43 with the phrase, "according to the riches of his grace" (Eph 1:7). *Pseudo-Jonathan* says that God will atone for the sins of his people "by his *Memra*," whereas *Neofiti* teaches that God will atone for the sins of the people "by his good

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[45]For rabbinic references to blood that "effects atonement" see *m. Zebah.* 4.1; 8.11; *m. Šebu.* 1.4; *m. Neg.* 14.10.

mercies" (ברחמוי טביה).[46] Paul, a Pharisee (Acts 26:5; Phlm 3:5), used language similar to the traditions of *Pseudo-Jonathan* and *Neofiti*, combining the ideas of God redeeming through his agent *and* according to the riches of his grace. Indeed, as God's agent, Jesus atoned for the sins of his people "according to the riches of his [God's] grace." *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy 32:43 teaches that the *Memra* will atone for the sins of his people. Similarly, Jesus stands as God's agent offering atonement to those who will believe (Acts 10:43).

Targum Neofiti Deuteronomy 26:17–18: God's Agent as King

Deuteronomy 26:17–18	You have declared today for the Lord to exist for you as God, so that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, his commandments, and his rules, and will obey his voice. And the Lord has declared today that you exist for him as a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all of his commandments.
MT Deuteronomy 26:17–18	את יהוה האמרת היום להיות לך לאלהים וללכת בדרכיו ולשמר חקיו ומצותיו ומשפטיו ולשמע בקלו ויהוה האמירך היום להיות לו לעם סגלה כאשר דבר לך ולשמר כל מצותיו
Neofiti Deuteronomy 26:17–18	Today you have made the *Memra* of the Lord to be king over you, to be your redeeming God, to walk in upright ways before him, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his legal decisions, and to heed the voice of his *Memra*. And the *Memra* of the Lord has made you kings today to be for the Name a beloved people as a treasure just as he spoke to you, and to keep all his commandments.
Neofiti Deuteronomy 26:17–18	ית מימרה דייי אמלכתון עליכון יומא הדין למיהווי

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[46]In the Targums, God did other things did "by his good mercies." He protected those who entered the ark (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 7:16), remembered Abraham after destroying the cities of the valley (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 19:29), remembered Rachel to give her children (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 30:22), and brought Israel out of Egypt, eliciting belief in the *Memra* (*Tg. Neof.* Exod 4:31). Moses prayed that God, by his good mercies, would overlook the sins of Israel, asking for atonement without the sacrifice (*Tg. Neof.* Deut 9:27; cf. Rom 3:25).

לכון לאלה פרוק למהלכה באורחן דתקנן קדמוי
ולמטור קיימוי ומצוותיה וסדרי דינוי ולמשמע בקל
מימריה
ומימרא דייי אמלך יתכון יומא הדין למהווי לשמא
לעם חביבין היך סגולה היך מה די מלל לכון ולמיטר
כל מצוותיה

Neofiti Deuteronomy 26:17 interprets Israel's decision to have the Lord as their God as Israel making the *Memra* king over them. As Israel's king, God's people should obey the *Memra* (ולמשמע בקל מימריה). Finally, as king, the *Memra* also makes Israel kings according to the Targum. As God's final Davidic king, Jesus fulfills these roles attributed to the *Memra*.

First, the New Testament presents Jesus as the long-awaited king of Israel, just as Israel made the *Memra* king in *Neofiti* Deuteronomy 26:17. The wise men sought the one who had been "born King of the Jews" (Matt 2:1), and in John 1:49, Nathanael identified Jesus as a teacher of Israel (Rabbi), the Son of God, and the king of Israel. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, he fulfilled Zechariah 9:9 pointing to the arrival of Israel's king (Matt 21:5; John 12:15).[47] During his interrogation, Pilate asked Jesus if he was the king of the Jews. Jesus answered, "You have said so" (Matt 27:11; cf. John 18:33). The crowds later mocked Jesus as the king of the Jews (Matt 27:29, 37, 42; John 19:19), not knowing that they were judging themselves by hailing their king.[48] Paul exalted Jesus as the "King of the ages" in his letter to Timothy (1 Tim 1:17; 6:15). In the Song of the Lamb, God's people will hail Jesus as the "King of the nations," highlighting his just and true ways (Rev 15:3). At the precipice of God's final battle, the Lamb is

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[47]Luke and John include that the crowds hailed Jesus as their king when they joyously exclaimed the refrain from Ps 118:26, "Blessed is the *King* who comes in the name of the Lord" (Luke 19:38; cf. John 12:13).

[48]The chief priests perhaps feared the people would begin to see Jesus as the king of the Jews and so they told Pilate not to write on the cross, "The King of the Jews," but rather, "This man said, 'I am the King of the Jews'" (John 19:21).

identified as "Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev 17:14; 19:16). Just as the *Memra*

was made king over Israel, the New Testament abounds with references to Jesus as king

over his people.

A second connection to Jesus is that the result of Israel's making the *Memra*

king over them is that they would heed the voice of the *Memra* (ולמשמע בקל מימריה).

The targumic expansion relates obedience to God in the Hebrew Bible to obedience to the

Memra, God's agent. Likewise, the New Testament teaches that Jesus should be

obeyed.[49] Peter inferred that the elect exiles to whom he wrote existed "for obedience to

Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:1–2). The Apostle John equated the commandments of the

Father (2 John 4, 6) with the "teaching of Christ" (τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ) in 2 John 9.[50]

John rejoiced that the community was walking in the truth as they were "commanded by

the Father" (2 John 4, ἐντολὴν ἐλάβομεν παρὰ τοῦ πατρός). John commends obeying the

commands of the Father because it is obedience to the "teaching of Christ." Just as

"heeding the voice of the *Memra*" was the proper response to his kingship, so also

obedience to Jesus is the proper response from those who are members of his kingdom.

A third connection to Jesus in *Neofiti* Deuteronomy 26:17–18 is that the

Memra has made Israel kings to be a "beloved people" and a "treasure" for God (עם

חביבין היך סגולה). In Peter's exhortation to remain obedient (1 Pet 1:13–2:12) in a

"foreign land" ('sojourners' in 1 Pet 2:11), he affirms that the church is a "chosen race,

royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his [God's] own possession" (1 Pet 2:9).

The purpose of God, in Christ, making his people a treasured possession is so that they

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[49]The New Testament connections to Jesus extend even to those passages in which Jesus should be "listened to" or one should "receive" his teaching (Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; John 1:11–12; 10:16; 12:48). These passages imply obedience to Jesus as well.

[50]Colin Kruse points out that whoever obeys the teaching of Christ "has both the Father and the Son." He cites John 14:23, where Jesus equates love for him as obeying his teaching. To be found in God the Father and Christ the Son, one must obey the teaching of the Son. See Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 212–13.

would "abstain from the passions of the flesh" and "keep [their] conduct pure among the Gentiles" (1 Pet 2:11–12; cf. 1 Peter 1:2). Like the Targums, Peter teaches that God's agent made his people kings so that they would be obedient rather than stumble over God's chief cornerstone as Israel did (1 Pet 2:8). Just as the *Memra* made God's people a royal, treasured possession, so also in Christ, believers are a people for his own possession.[51]

The New Testaments contains further reference to Jesus making God's people kings. Revelation 1:6 teaches that the one who "freed us from our sins by his blood" also "made us a kingdom." Before the Lamb opens the scroll, the living creatures and elders praise the Lamb as the one who "made them a kingdom and priests to our God" (Rev 5:10). In order to encourage the Corinthians to live out the fullness of the Christian life, Paul tells them that they have already become kings (1 Cor 4:8), and are therefore able to obey. Throughout the New Testament, those who are in Christ are encouraged to obey because they have a royal status in Christ's kingdom. Likewise, the *Memra* made Israel kings so that they would heed the voice of God's agent.

The abundance of these connections suggests that *Neofiti* Deuteronomy 26:17– 18 refers to Jesus. As Israel's "Redeemer God," the *Memra* is king over Israel, and made God's people to be kings as his beloved possession so that they would obey. Likewise, Jesus is God's final king and agent through whom God purchased a royal priesthood as his treasured possession. As a result, God's people should heed the voice of God's agent.

Occurrences of *Memra* That Probably Refer to Jesus

Some targumic passages present the *Memra* as God's agent or manifestation,

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[51]Exod 19:5 connects Israel's obedience to their status as a treasured possession and *Tg. Onq.* Exod 19:5 interprets their obedience as "receiving my *Memra*." In order to be God's treasured possession, Israel must obey the *Memra*, an obedience that only comes to full fruition under the New Covenant, in the power of the Spirit, and with new hearts (cf. Jer 31; Ezek 36).

but do not have a clear connection to the roles of Jesus in the New Testament. These

passages *may* refer to Christ.

Targum Onqelos Genesis 3:8:
God's Manifestation

Genesis 3:8	And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from before the Lord God among the trees of the garden.
MT Genesis 3:8	וישמעו את קול יהוה אלהים מתהלך בגן לרוח היום ויתחבא האדם ואשתו מפני יהוה אלהים בתוך עץ הגן
Onqelos Genesis 3:8	And they heard the sound of the *Memra* of the Lord God walking in the garden as the day was ending, then Adam and his wife hid from before the Lord God in the midst of the tress of the garden.
Onqelos Genesis 3:8	ושמעו ית קל מימרא דיוי אלהים מהליך בגינתא למנח יומא ואיטמר אדם ואיתתיה מן קדם יוי אלהים בגו אילן גינתא

In Genesis 3:8, 10, Adam and Eve heard the sound (קול) of the Lord walking

in the garden.[52] As such, the passage presents the theophany of God and the appearance

of a visible manifestation of the Lord. *Onqelos* Genesis 3:8 interprets the visible

manifestation of God's presence as the *Memra* of the Lord.[53] According to *Onqelos*, the

sound (קל) that Adam and Eve heard was the sound of the *Memra*, God's manifest agent.

Some may argue that Adam and Eve heard the "voice" (also קול in Hebrew) of the Lord.

However, the idea of a "voice" walking (מתהלך) in the garden seems untenable.

Onqelos interpreted the meaning of Genesis 3:8 as God's manifest presence, indeed his

agent, existed in the status of a "walker" in the garden.[54] Even the skeptic C. K. Barrett,

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[52]For קול as "sound" see BDB, 876.

[53]For the textual variants in the targumic tradition to Gen 3:8, see Ronning, *The Jewish Targums*, 51.

[54]The *pael* participle מתהלך is best understood as an accusative of situation describing the status of the *Memra* rather than a verb indicating what he was doing. As such, the *Memra* existed in the

who said the *Memra* is "a blind alley in the study of biblical background to John's logos doctrine," points to *Onqelos* Genesis 3:8 as a passage that "might erroneously be taken as a hypostasis."[55]

In chapter 2, it was determined that Jesus is the final and ultimate manifestation of God in the created world. As such, Jesus is similar to the *Memra* in *Onqelos* Genesis 3:8 by being God's manifestation. Likewise, scholars sometimes see christophanies in the Old Testament (Gen 18:2, 32:24–25; Dan 3:25), and *Onqelos* Genesis 3:8 may be one of these.[56] However, because the *Memra* in *Onqelos* Genesis 3:8 does not exhibit any offices or roles of Jesus, this passage falls into the category of occurrences that *probably* refer to Jesus.

Targum Onqelos Exodus 32:13: God's Agent is Closely Connected to the Covenants

Exodus 32:13	Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, "I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised, I will give to your offspring and they shall inherit it forever."
MT Exodus 32:13	זכר לאברהם ליצחק ולישראל עבדיך אשר נשבעת להם בך ותדבר אלהם ארבה את זרעכם ככוכבי השמים וכל הארץ הזאת אשר אמרתי אתן לזרעכם ונחלו לעלם
Onqelos Exodus 32:13	Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, with whom you swore by your *Memra*, and with whom you spoke, "I will increase your children as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken, I will

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status of a "walker" (see Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax,* §16l).

[55]Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 153.

[56]James A. Borland, *Christ in the Old Testament: Old Testament Appearances of Christ in Human Form* (1999); Andrew S. Malone, "John Owen and Old Testament Christophanies," *RTR* 63 (2004): 138–54. See also the church fathers, who argue for the *Logos* in Gen 3:8 (e.g., Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolycus* XXII, ed. and trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, in *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria*, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001], 2:219).

give to your children that they might inherit forever."

Onqelos Exodus 32:13
אידכר לאברהם ליצחק ולישראל עבדך דקיימתא להון
במימרך וממילתא עמהון אסגי ית בניכון ככוכבי שמיא
וכל ארעא הדא דאמרית אתין לבניכון ויחסנון לעלם

Onqelos Exodus 32:13 *probably* refers to Jesus because the *Memra* is closely associated to the covenant sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. *Onqelos* Exodus 32:13 primarily refers to the Abrahamic covenant, leading one to ask about the *Memra's* connection to God's covenant with Abraham. In *Onqelos* Genesis 17:2, 7, 10, God told Abraham that the covenant was between his *Memra* and Abraham.[57] In *Onqelos* Exodus 6:8, God confirmed his covenant with Moses, saying that he swore (*pael* perfect 1cs of קום) to all of the forefathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) that he would bring Israel into their land.[58] Likewise, *Targum Isaiah* 48:15 says, "I, by my *Memra*, cut a covenant with Abraham." These passages suggest that the Targums understood the *Memra* to be closely associated with the Abrahamic covenant.

Onqelos Exodus 32:13 *probably* refers to Jesus because the New Testament does not speak of Jesus as the mediator of the *Abrahamic* covenant. Jesus is, however, the mediator of the New Covenant (Heb 9:15; 12:24), and therefore one may see the *Memra* in *Onqelos* Exodus 32:13 as Jesus in the Old Testament. Indeed, the author of Hebrews teaches that the New Covenant is mediated through Jesus "so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance" (Heb 9:15). In the New Covenant, the "promised eternal inheritance" is amplified beyond geographical land, but God's agent still mediates the blessings of the covenant (Gal 3:14). God provides covenant

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[57]The term for "covenant" in *Tg. Onq.* Gen 17:2, 7, and 10 is from the root קום, which is the same root used for "swore" in *Tg. Onq.* Exod 32:13.

[58]The word *Memra* explains the anthropomorphism of God "raising his hand" in *Tg. Onq.* Exod 6:8, see Grossfeld, *Targum Onqelos to Exodus*, 15n8. See also Heb 6:12–20, which suggests that believers have the "sure and steadfast anchor of the soul" because Jesus has become a mediating "high priest." The author of Hebrews begins this section that God swore by himself since there was none greater to swear by, and it ends with Jesus as the mediating high priest of that oath just as in the Targums.

blessings to those who are Abraham's offspring through Jesus Christ (Gal 3:29), but this is a New Covenant blessing. Certainly, Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant and offers an inheritance that Abraham's covenant foreshadowed.

These passages in the New Testament teach that Jesus is the mediator and guarantor of the inheritance under the New Covenant. However, the New Testament fails to teach explicitly that Jesus mediated the promises of the *Abrahamic* covenant. These targumic passages may connect to Jesus as the one who swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the blessings of offspring and land. However, without clear New Testament connections between Jesus and the Abrahamic covenant, *Onqelos* Exodus 32:13 *probably* refers to Jesus. And yet, Jesus certainly functions as the mediator for a covenant people initiated through Abraham (cf. Acts 3:25; 13:26; Rom 4:13, 16; 2 Cor 11:22; Gal 3:16).

Targum Neofiti Genesis 26:5:
Obedience to God's Agent

Genesis 26:5	. . . because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.
MT Genesis 26:5	עקב אשר שמע אברהם בקלי וישמר משמרתי מצותי חקותי ותורתי
Neofiti Genesis 26:5	. . . because Abraham listened to the voice of my *Memra* and kept my charge, my commandments, my covenants, and my legal decisions.
Neofiti Genesis 26:5	חלף די שמע אברהם בקל מימרי ונטר מטרתי מצותי וקיימי וסדרי דייני

In *Neofiti* Genesis 26:5, the Targums interpret that Abraham's obedience was due to his listening to the *Memra*. The same verb is used in both the Hebrew and Aramaic (שמע), but the Targum highlights that Abraham obeyed God's agent, the *Memra*. As mentioned before, the Abrahamic covenant was between God's *Memra* and Abraham in the targumic tradition (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 17:2, 7, 10). Therefore, the Targums teach that Abraham's obedience to the covenant was obedience to God's agent, the

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mediator of the covenant.

The idea of Abraham "listening to" the *Memra* does not portray agency or manifestation, and therefore, this passage falls in the category that *probably* helps one to find Christ in the Old Testament. Like the *Memra*, Jesus should be listened to/obeyed according to the New Testament. At the transfiguration, God's voice from heaven gave the command to "listen to" (ἀκούετε) the Son (Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35). Jesus taught that his sheep would listen to his voice (John 10:16), suggesting a requirement, not an option. Jesus told Pilate that those who are of the truth (i.e. God's people) "listen" to his voice because Jesus' very existence was intended to bear witness about the truth of the Father (John 18:37). These passages at least indicate that God's agent should be listened to and obeyed.

Peter's sermon in Solomon's portico (Acts 3:11–26) suggests that Jesus was the prophet of whom Moses spoke in Deuteronomy 18:15, and therefore the men of Israel should listen to Jesus. After Peter introduced the idea that the Christ would come (Acts 3:20), he referred to Deuteronomy 18:15, suggesting that Jesus was this prophet to whom men should listen. The consequence of failing to listen to "that prophet" (τοῦ προφήτου ἐκείνου) is that he will be destroyed from the people (Acts 3:23). The Targums also refer to the consequences of failing to listen to the *Memra*, and Peter relays these consequences accurately (*Tg. Neof.* Deut 8:20; *Tg. Jer* 16:12; 22:21; 43:7; *Tg. Zech* 1:3–4). As Peter continues, he suggests that the men of Israel are Abraham's offspring according to the covenant and are even more accountable to obeying God's servant whom God "raised up," and "sent to you first" (Acts 3:25–26). God approved of Abraham because he listened to God's servant, the same prophet whom Moses foreshadowed.[59]

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[59]Lest these references seem anachronistic, the Abrahamic narrative in the Targums to Genesis 12, 15, and 17 suggests conversations with the *Memra* or a covenant between the *Memra* and Abraham. Therefore, one can say that Abraham obeyed God's agent, who may foreshadow the same prophet Moses spoke of. As God's premier agent and prophet (Heb 1:1–2), Jesus should be obeyed just as Abraham

Although New Testament parallels exist to connect Jesus to the *Memra*, these connections are not explicit. In *Neofiti* Genesis 26:5, the *Memra* does not function as an agent or manifestation of God. Instead, he is obeyed. While one could argue, through the various targumic connections, that Abraham listened to God's agent, the Hebrew Bible does not necessarily require a reference to God's agent. Indeed, the New Testament also teaches that *God* should be obeyed (e.g., Acts 5:29; 1 John 5:2). Even though connections exist to other passages in which the *Memra* communicates what *must be* obeyed, *Neofiti* Genesis 26:5 fails to portray agency or manifestation directly. Therefore this passage *probably* refers to Jesus.

Targum Psalms 19:3:
Creation Speaks of God's Agent

Psalm 19:2[3]	Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.
MT Psalm 19:3	יום ליום יביע אמר ולילה ללילה יחוה דעת
Targum Psalms 19:3	Day to day tells more of the *Memra*; but night to night tells less knowledge.
Targum Psalms 19:3	יומא ליומא מוסיף מימרא ולילא לליליא פחית ומחוי מנדעא

Psalm 19 exclaims the glory of God found in the created order. Based on the New Testament interpretation that Jesus created the universe, one could argue that the heavens declare the glory of the Son (cf. John 1:3; Col 1:16). Indeed, according to *Targum Psalms* 19:3, the astronomical progression of days declares more of God's agent, the *Memra*.[60]

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obeyed God's agent in the Targums.

[60]David Stec translates מימרא in *Tg. Ps* 19:3 as "word," but footnotes that the Aramaic is *mymr'* (David M. Stec, *The Targum of Psalms: Translated, With a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 16 [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004], 54n2).

Although the context of the Targum relates to creation and God's agent, *Targum Psalms* 19:3 does not necessarily provide a reference to Jesus in the Old Testament. First, *Memra* translates "speech" in the MT literally. Second, the overall trajectory of the psalm portrays God's activity without an agent. The heavens reveal a general knowledge of God rather than a personal aspect of his being (Ps 19:2; cf. Rom 1:10). מימר occurs again in *Targum Psalms* 19:4 but in construct with דתורעמתא ('complaint'), clearly not God's agent. "Speech" in 19:3 (MT) parallels "speech" in 19:4 (MT). Therefore, the "word" (מימרא) of 19:3 (*Tg.*) and "utterance of complaint" (מימר דתורעמתא) in 19:4 (*Tg.*) are also parallel. Based on the grammatical structure, the parallel meaning of מימרא and מימר רעמתאדתו indicate that *Memra* of 19:3 (*Tg.*) may simply mean "word."

Even with this evidence for why the *Memra* does not refer to Jesus in *Targum Psalms* 19:3, one could also argue that this occurrence does refer to Jesus. The definite article on מימר in 19:3 could indicate more than just "speech." Perhaps the psalmist has in mind a specific "Word" of which the days tell. Since the *Memra* was God's agent to separate between night and day (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:5, ממרא דייי) and to create the two great lights to rule the day and night (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:16, ממרא דייי), the Targum teaches that each day declares more of God's agent, the *Memra*. As the two heavenly luminaries, created by the *Memra*, proceed along their charted course, the astronomical progression of day and night declare the glory of God's agent. The author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 102:25 to say that the heavens were the work of the Son's hands (Heb 1:10).[61] Therefore, the heavens, though general revelation, indeed tell of God's agent who created them.

Within the broader context of the *Memra's* role in creation, *Targum Psalms*

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[61]*Tg. Ps* 102:25 maintains the anthropomorphic "hands," and thus does not provide a reference to God's agent in creation.

19:3 suggests that each day tells more about God's agent through whom he created the universe. However, the main point of Psalm 19 refers to God's general revelation rather than the revelation of God's agent. Therefore, *Targum Psalms* 19:3 fits into the category of references that *probably* refers to Jesus.

Occurrences of *Memra* That Do Not Refer to Jesus

This final set of targumic references fail to portray the *Memra* as God's manifestation or agent. מימר refers to the words of a human, a body of commands, or inner deliberation, but agency and manifestation are clearly missing. These targumic passages *do not* refer to Jesus.

Targum 1 Samuel 15:1: "Word" as a Command

1 Samuel 15:1	And Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you as king over his people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the sound of the words of the Lord."
MT 1 Samuel 15:1	ויאמר שמואל אל שאול אתי שלח יהוה למשחך למלך על עמו על ישראל ועתה שמע לקול דברי יהוה
Targum 1 Samuel 15:1	Then Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord has sent me to anoint you to exist as king over his people, over Israel, but now receive the *command* of the word of the Lord."
Targum 1 Samuel 15:1	ואמר שמואל לשאול יתי שלח יי לרביותך למהוי מלכא על עמיה על ישראל וכען קביל למימר פתגמא דיי

In *Targum 1 Samuel* 15:1, the targumic tradition explains the uncertain Hebrew. In the MT, Samuel commands Saul to listen to the "sound of the words of the Lord" (שמע לקול דברי יהוה). The Targum interprets this phrase as the מימר פתגמא דיי, translating קול as מימר. Other targumic passages translate קול using מימרא in such a way that an agent could be implied (e.g., *Tg. Onq.* Deut 28:1–2). However, because the context implies a body of God's commandments for the king, the use of מימר likely

refers to the commandments of God rather than an agent.

Besides the lack of the definite article and the context, the plural construct of

דבר in the MT also fails to indicate singular agency. The targumist translated דברי יהוה

as the פתגמא ידי. Of the occurrences of דברי יהוה in the Hebrew Bible, nearly all of the

Targums translate them using פתגמא/פתגמיא indicating that the דברי יהוה were simply

the "words" of the Lord (e.g., Exod 4:28; 24:3–4; Num 11:24; Josh 3:9; 1 Sam 8:10; Jer

36:4; Ezek 11:25; Amos 8:11). The only occurrence of קול דברי יהוה is in 1 Samuel

15:1, and the addition of קול does not change the meaning of דברי יהוה. Elsewhere, the

Targums translate קול as מימר, and it refers to the מימר ('voice') of a person rather than

an agent of the Lord.[62] *Targum 1 Samuel* 15:1 likely refers to a body of commands rather

than an individual agent. Therefore, *Targum 1 Samuel* 15:1 uses common translational

technique to refer to a general message from the Lord to which Saul should listen rather

than a particular agent or personality. Just as God commanded Samuel to obey the

קול העם (MT 1 Sam 8:7; מימר עמא [*Tg. 1 Sam* 8:7]), Samuel commanded Saul to listen

to the מימר פתגמא דיי.

***Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*
Deuteronomy 17:10–11:
"Word" of the Torah**

Deuteronomy 17:10–11	Then you shall do according to what they declare to you from that place that the Lord will choose. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they direct you. According to the instructions that they give you, and according to the decision, which they

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[62]See *Tg. Onq.* Gen 3:17, where מימר translates the קול of Eve. *Tg. Neof.* and *Frg. Tg. P* retain קול in Gen 3:17 providing further evidence that מימר can refer generally to the "word" of a human. Similarly, *Tg. Onq.* Gen 16:2 says that Abram listened to the מימר of his wife, Sarai, where מימר is used to translate קול in the MT. These occurrences can be compared to *Tg. Onq.* Gen 3:8, where קול is a reference to the "sound" of the Lord walking in the garden. In *Tg. Onq.* Gen 3:8, the Targums translate קול יהוה using קל מימרא דיוי with the definite article *and* with the inclusion of קל, likely referring to a specific personality who walked in the garden with Adam and Eve (cf. *Tg. Onq.* Deut 5:24). In *Tg. Onq.* Gen 3:8, מימרא implies agency as a manifestation of God whereas *Tg. Onq.* Gen 16:2 and *Tg. 1 Sam* 15:1 fail to include agency or personality.

pronounce to you, you shall do. You shall not turn aside from the word that they declare to you, either to the right hand or to the left.

MT Deuteronomy 17:10–11	ועשית על פי הדבר אשר יגידו לך מן המקום ההוא אשר יבחר יהוה ושמרת לעשות ככל אשר יורוך על פי התורה אשר יורוך ועל המשפט אשר יאמרו לך תעשה לא תסור מן הדבר אשר יגידו לך ימין ושמאל
Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 17:10–11	And you shall do according to the *word* of the custom of the Torah that they declare to you from the place with which the Lord is pleased, and you shall diligently do according to all that they teach you. You shall act according to the *word* of the Torah that they teach you, and according to the custom of the judgment that they say to you; you shall not turn aside from the word that they tell you, to the right or to the left.
Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 17:10–11	ותעבדון על מימר הילכת אורייתא דיחוון לכון מן אתרא ההוא דיתרעי יײ ותיטרון למעבד ככל דילפונכון על מימר אורייתא דילפונכון ועל הילכת דינא דיימרון לכון תעבדון לא תיסטון מן פיתגמא דיחוון לכון ימינא ושמאלא

In Deuteronomy 17:8–13, Moses addresses legal disputes involving homicide and assault. After the Levitical priests and judges make a decision, the person "shall do according to what they [the priests and judges] declare" (Deut 17:10). The assumption is that the Levitical priests and judges will judge according to the law, and therefore the Targum explains their judgment to be according to the "word of the custom of the Torah."

Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 17:10–11 emphasizes the Torah in both verses. In verse 10, the Targums interpret the judgment given by the Levitical priests as "the word of the custom of the Torah" (מימר הילכת אורייתא). In verse 11, the Targum calls

the source of judgment the "word of the Torah (מימר אורייתא)."[63] The targumic

emphasis on the written Torah shows that this passage does not indicate agency or

manifestation with מימר.

In addition to the emphasis on the written Torah in *Pseudo-Jonathan*, the other

Targums use vocabulary that indicates a non-agent use of מימר. *Neofiti* Deuteronomy

17:10–11 avoids מימר altogether saying that the offender "shall do according to the word

(פם פתגמא) that they tell you." This construction is typical throughout the Hebrew Bible

to indicate a command.[64] *Onqelos* employs the construct phrase "word of the command"

(מימר פיתגמא), annexing מימר to the genitive פיתגמא, which limits and specifies the

type of מימר.[65] This construction indicates the close relationship between פיתגמא and

מימר when used as a "word" or "command." Finally, *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy

17:11 uses פיתגמא in the final exhortation, equating the פיתגמא, the מימר הילכת

אורייתא ('word of the custom of the Torah') and the מימר אורייתא ('word of the

Torah'). The synonymous use of these Aramaic terms suggests that this use of מימר is a

mere word or command for the offender to obey. Therefore, *Pseudo-Jonathan*

Deuteronomy 17:10–11 does not help one find Christ in the Old Testament.

Targum Joshua 1:18:
"Word" of a Human

Joshua 1:18	Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, according to all which you command him, he shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.

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[63]For אורייתא as a reference to the written Torah, see Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim*, 34. He lists there *B. Bat.* 9:16a; *y. Ta'an.* 3:66c; *y. Sanh.* 1:18c; and others in rabbinic literature that use the term similarly.

[64]For the use of the Hebrew פי הדבר to indicate a command, see Gen 43:7 and Exod 34:27. For the use of על־פי to indicate a command see Gen 41:40; 45:21; Exod 17:1; 38:21; Num 3:16 (cf. Num 3:39). These passages in the Targums use מימר and פתגם interchangeably without a clear distinction in meaning.

[65]Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax,* §12b.

MT Joshua 1:18   כל איש אשר ימרה את פיך ולא ישמע את דבריך לכל אשר
תצונו יומת רק חזק ואמץ

Targum Joshua 1:18   Every man who refuses your *word* and will not receive your command with regard to all that you should command him, he shall be executed. Only, be strong and courageous.

Targum Joshua 1:18   כל גבר דיסריב על מימרך ולא יקביל ית פתגמך לכל
דתפקדניה יתקטיל לחוד תקף ועילם

In the first chapter of Joshua, people affirm Joshua's leadership. In doing so, they declare that they will obey his commands (פיך), indicating that the context of this passage refers to human commands rather than an agent of the Lord. In Joshua 1:18, the people self-declare the consequences if anyone should disobey Joshua's command. In the Hebrew, "commands" (פיך) and "words" (דבריך) are parallel terms with synonymous meaning. Thus, Joshua's "commands" are the same as his "words" and both should be obeyed.

Targum Joshua 1:18 presents a similar construction, but with Aramaic vocabulary. Like פיך and דבריך in Hebrew, מימר and פתגם are used interchangeably to mean a word or command. The parallel construction in the Targums mirrors the parallel of the Hebrew text, so מימר and פתגם should be understood as synonymous terms, indicating Joshua's command.

Not only are the terms grammatically synonymous, but the context also indicates that מימר is the command of a human, not a divine agent.[66] Israel affirms Joshua's leadership by saying that they will obey his "word" similarly to how they obeyed Moses. Israel does not say that they will obey God's *Memra* as other passages imply (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 15:26). The *Memra* was present at Sinai when Moses received the law (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 19:17), but the *Memra* at Sinai stood as the agent of God to deliver

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[66]Other passages in which the context implies the word(s) of a human include *Tg. Onq.* Gen 4:23 (words of Lamech); *Tg. Onq.* Gen 9:6 (words of human judges); *Tg. Onq.* Gen 16:2 (word of Sarai); *Tg. Onq.* Gen 26:35 (word of Isaac and Rebekah).

the law. In Joshua 1:18, Israel commits to obey this law under the leadership of Joshua.

Even so, in *Targum Joshua* 1:18, the people commit to obey *Joshua's* "command," not

God's agent.

Targum Neofiti Exodus 34:27:
The "Utterance" of the Covenant Law

Exodus 34:27	And the Lord said to Moses, "Write for yourself these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel."
MT Exodus 34:27	ויאמר יהוה אל משה כתב לך את הדברים האלה כי על פי הדברים האלה כרתי אתך ברית ואת ישראל
Neofiti Exodus 34:27	And the Lord said to Moses, "Write for yourself these words, for by the *utterance* of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel."
Neofiti Exodus 34:27	ואמר ייי למשה כתב לך ית פתגמיא האליין ארום על מימר פתגמיא האליין קיימית עמך קיים ועם ישראל

Neofiti Exodus 34:27 provides another instance of מימר in construct with a

genitive noun that fails to imply the Lord. Here, the Lord instructs Moses to write down

"these words" (פתגמיא האליין), a reference to the commands of the covenant law.

Neofiti Exodus 34:27 repeats פתגם in the next clause as the genitive noun, suggesting the

parallelism between פתגם used independently versus its use in the construct package.

Therefore, מימר פתגמיא likely means the same thing as פתגמיא used earlier in the verse.

Durham argues that "these words" in Hebrew refer to "the whole of Yahweh's

explanatory revelation regarding the application of the principles set forth in his own

'Ten Words.'"[67]

That מימר פתגמיא refers to the written application of the Ten Commandments

is affirmed in both the Hebrew and Aramaic texts of Exodus 34:28. The Hebrew

highlights that Moses wrote down the דברי הברית ('words of the covenant') followed by

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[67]John Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 462.

the appositional עשרת הדברים ('the Ten Words'). This construction further specifies

the "words of the covenant."[68] *Neofiti* Exodus 34:28 interprets the Hebrew closely,

translating "words of the covenant" with מילי קיימא followed by עשירתי דבריה in

apposition. מילי is never used in the Targums to indicate agency, and here parallels

פתגמיא and מימר פתגמיא, suggesting that they all refer to the same thing. *Neofiti*

Exodus 34:27–28 translates the Hebrew literally and fails to indicate agency or

manifestation of Yahweh. Instead, God instructs Moses to write down the words of the

covenant that he has made with Israel so that Israel would know what God requires and

be able to obey.

Targum Qoheleth 6:3:
"Word" as Inner Deliberation

Ecclesiastes 6:3	I say that a stillborn child is better off than he.
MT Ecclesiastes 6:3	אמרתי טוב ממנו הנפל
Targum Qoheleth 6:3	I said to myself [lit. I said in *my word*] that better than he is a stillborn baby that has not seen this world.
Targum Qoheleth 6:3	אמרית במימרי דטב מיניה שלילא דלא חמא עלמא הדין

    Targum Qoheleth 6:3 is an example of אמרית במימרי referring to an inner

deliberation.[69] In *Targum Qoheleth*, the phrase occurs in the first person in 2:1, 6:3, 7:23,

8:14, and 9:16 (אמרית במימרי). It occurs in the third person in 1:2, 8:17, and 12:8

(אמר במימריה). In each of these cases, the phrase is used to interpret Qoheleth

deliberating a wisdom issue. Peter Knobel points out that the phrase is equivalent to the

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[68]For the "explicative apposition" see Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, §70; GCK, §131f–g; Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §26.

[69]At times, this phrase is used of God's deliberations (*Tg. Onq.* Gen 22:16; 2:25; 15:2; 15:10; *Tg. Isa* 12:2), and may refer to an action through his agent, thus referring to Jesus. The same Aramaic construction is used in these instances, but when God "says by his *Memra*," whatever God is saying and whether the *Memra* will carry out God's deliberation as his agent may demonstrate a similarity to Jesus. In *Tg. Qoh* 6:3, *Tg. 2 Chr* 25:19, and *Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 15:32, the phrase refers to the internal deliberations of a person.

Hebrew אמר בלב.[70] As such, this use of מימר serves as a euphemism for, "I said to myself."

Although this use of *Memra* is prominent in *Targum Qoheleth*, it is not limited to *Targum Qoheleth*. The phrase occurs in *Targum 2 Chronicles* 25:19 and *Pseudo-Jonathan* Numbers 15:32 as well. *Targum 2 Chronicles* 25:19 uses the phrase in the second person as Joash sends word to Amaziah regarding a previous message. This use is not inner deliberation, but implies something that someone else said "in his heart," or "to himself." The מימר in *Targum 2 Chronicles* 25:19 was not a word directly spoken to Joash, but rather, something that Joash had heard regarding Amaziah's deliberations. Even so, the phrase again fails to describe God's agency.

In *Pseudo-Jonathan* Numbers 15:32, מימר is used similarly to indicate the inner intent of a man who planned to pluck wood on a Sabbath. The Targum expands the Hebrew by including the man's deliberation about plucking wood on a Sabbath, and uses this construction (אמר במימריה) to suggest internal deliberation. Since this targumic use of מימר fails to highlight God's agent or manifestation, *Targum Qoheleth* 6:3 does not help one find Christ in this use of מימר.

Targum Isaiah 40:10:
Reward for Those Who Do His "Word"

Isaiah 40:10	Behold, the Lord comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.
MT Isaiah 40:10	הנה אדני יהוה בחזק יבוא וזרעו משלה לו הנה שכרו אתו ופעלתו לפניו
Targum Isaiah 40:10	Behold the Lord God is revealed with strength, and the strength of his mighty arm rules before him. Behold the

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[70]Peter S. Knobel, *The Targum of Qohelet*, The Aramaic Bible 15 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 21n3. See also, Sigmund Maybaum, *Die Anthropomorphien und Anthropopathien bei Onkelos und den Spätern Targumim mit besonderer Berücksichtingung der Ausdrücke Memra, J^ekara und Schechintha* (Breslau, Germany: Schletter'sche Buchhandlung, 1870), 44.

reward of the doers of his *word* is with him because all his deeds are revealed before him.

Targum Isaiah 40:10   הא יוי אלהים בתקוף מתגלי ותקוף דרע גבורתיה שלטא קדמוהי הא אגר עבדי מימריה עמיה דכל עובדיהון גלן קדמוהי

Isaiah 40:1–11 describes the glorious appearance of the Lord, but the reference to *Memra* does not suggest manifestation. Isaiah 40:10 says the Lord comes in might and the fruit of his victory is before him, namely reward and recompense.[71] The reward that God brings is literally "wages" in both the Hebrew and Aramaic (אגר/שכר).[72] God's reward is with "the doers of his word" (עבדי מימריה).[73]

Several reasons exist why *Memra* in *Targum Isaiah* 40:10 does not refer to Jesus in the Old Testament. First, the context of *Targum Isaiah* 40:10 involves those who obey God's commands and are worthy to receive the reward that comes when God is revealed. The verb עבד typically implies action in Aramaic, and in this verse, the action is performed by the receivers of God's reward, not by God himself.[74] Therefore, מימריה represents the body of commands that those who receive the reward have done (עבד).[75] Second, the use of מימריה in *Targum Isaiah* 40:10 is similar to the use of מימר in *Neofiti* Exodus 34:27 in which the "words" are the statutes and commands of the covenant law. Third, the use of מימר in this targumic interpretation fails to indicate agency or

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[71]J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 20 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1999), 277.

[72]For שכר, see BDB, 968, and for אגר, see Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim,* 14. The LXX translates שכר as μισθός. Compare these terms to Rom 4:4–5, where Paul compares the "wages" (μισθός) of the one who "works" (ἐργαζομένῳ) to the faith of the one who believes in God's agent (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 15:6; *Tg. Neof.* Exod 14:31).

[73]This phrase occurs again in *Tg. Isa* 62:11 in almost identical fashion.

[74]Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim*, 1034–35.

[75]The participle of עבד likely implies a characteristic (occupation) of those who will receive God's reward (Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §16a). In this sense, those who receive God's reward consistently live according to his commands. The annexation עבדי מימריה explains human action specifically as action "according to" God's word/command (ibid., §12e).

manifestation of God. Certainly, God reveals himself in *Targum Isaiah* 40:10, but he is not revealed "in/by his *Memra*" as in other passages (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 2:25; *Tg. 1 Sam* 3:21). Therefore, the use of מימר in *Targum Isaiah* 40:10 fails to provide a reference to Jesus in the Old Testament.

Memra occurs in some passages where the Hebrew implies a body of commands or inner deliberation of a human. In addition, *Memra* occurs as a reference to the word of a human being or a spoken word. These occurrences clearly do not refer to Jesus, nor do they help one find Christ in the Old Testament.

Conclusion

The Targums use *Memra* in various contexts to explain the meaning of the Hebrew original. Where the *Memra* functions similarly to Jesus, one can possibly find a reference to Christ in the Old Testament. Some occurrences of *Memra* clearly point to the offices or roles of Jesus in the New Testament. Where *Memra* functions as God's agent or manifestation and performs similar functions directly connected to Jesus' offices or roles, these passages certainly point to Christ in the Old Testament. While some occurrences of *Memra* directly connect to the New Testament presentation of Jesus' offices and roles, other passages are more indirect and *probably* refer to Jesus. Where the *Memra* functions as an agent or manifestation and an indirect, conceptual connection to Jesus exists, these occurrences *probably* can help one find Christ in the Old Testament. While many occurrences of *Memra* fall into these two categories, some occurrences of *Memra* do not point to Christ in the Old Testament because מימר may also represent a "decree" or "command," a body of laws, or a euphemism for inner deliberation. These occurrences of *Memra* do not help one find Christ in the Old Testament. The examples in this chapter are by no means exhaustive, but represent a sampling of the targumic uses of *Memra*. By using similar exegetical methods as the apostles, one can find Christ in the Old Testament through the Aramaic *Memra*.

CHAPTER 4

FINDING CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
THROUGH THE ARAMAIC
SHEKINAH AND *YEQARA*

Like *Memra*, the terms *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* seem to have Christological

implications based on their use in the Targums as God's divine manifestation. The

Shekinah represents God's manifest presence, sometimes taking on similar agent-roles as

the *Memra* (e.g., *Tg. Onq.* Exod 33:16; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 13:21). The *Yeqara* represents

God's "weighty" radiance as in the burning bush (e.g., *Tg. Neof.* Exod 3:1, 6; cf. 2 Cor

4:4, 6) or the pillar of cloud and fire (e.g., *Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 9:20–22; cf. 1 Cor 10:1–9).

Since both of these targumic terms refer to an aspect of God's manifestation, they will be

considered together in this chapter. In fact, the two terms often occur in tandem,

especially in *Neofiti*.[1] The Apostle John highlighted the close relationship between the

Shekinah and *Yeqara* when he taught that Jesus "tabernacled (ἐσκήνωσεν) among us, and

we have beheld his glory" (John 1:14, τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ).[2] Because *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*

represent God's manifestation, and because the New Testament authors identified Jesus

as God's final manifestation, nearly all of the occurrences of *Shekinah* may point to

Christ, and most of the occurrences of *Yeqara* may point to Christ.

As the manifestation of God, *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* may refer to God's

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[1]In general, *Tg. Onq.* prefers to use "*Yeqara*" in the same passages that *Tg. Neof.* uses "*Yeqara*
of the *Shekinah*." *Tg. Ps.-J.* seems to go back and forth between these terms without a clear reason. In
parallel passages, *Tg. Ps.-J.* sometimes follows *Tg. Onq.*, but sometimes mirrors *Tg. Neof.* Even with this
variation in use, the meaning of the terms remains nearly identical.

[2]In chap. 2 it was argued that John used targumic terminology in John 1:14 to teach that Jesus
was the premier manifestation of the Father. Indeed, Jesus fully displayed the presence of God (Col 1:15)
and the glory of God (Heb 1:3).

manifestation or to God's manifestation with agency.[3] Chapter 3 argued that *Memra*

mainly represented God's manifestation in action, fulfilling an office or role similar to

Jesus. Alternatively, *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* most often represent God's manifestation, but

may or may not indicate action/agency.[4] Since the New Testament authors speak of

Jesus as the manifestation of God, the targumic passages that teach of the manifestation

of the Father through the *Shekinah* or *Yeqara* may refer to Christ. Furthermore, the

Shekinah and *Yeqara* sometimes fulfill offices or roles similar to the *Memra* and Jesus.

Therefore, the targumic passages where *Shekinah* or *Yeqara* imply God's manifestation

with agency may also refer to Jesus.

As God's manifestation, *Shekinah* nearly always refers to Christ, and *Yeqara*

mostly refers to Christ. Therefore, *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* will be delineated into

categories of manifestation and manifestation with agency. The New Testament also

seems to point toward this structure for *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*. The New Testament

describes Jesus as God's final manifestation. Jesus is the "tabernacle" presence of God

(John 1:14) and the "image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). He is the radiant glory of

the Father (Heb 1:2), and in his face, the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father

shines (John 1:14; cf. 2 Cor 4:4, 6). Indeed, Jesus is the manifestation of the glory of the

Father similar to God's presence passing in front of Moses (cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 33:23–24;

34:5–9).[5] Therefore, the first category of passages to be considered are those in which

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[3]For this discussion, a "manifestation" is a manifestation of God's presence without the implication of action or performance. For instance, God's presence in the temple or in the land of Israel would be considered simply, a manifestation. Alternatively, God's "manifestation with agency" refers to the *Shekinah* or *Yeqara* fulfilling the role of a personal agent similar to the *Memra* or Jesus.

[4]The *Shekinah* or *Yeqara* are often used to translate God's presence in the promised land or tabernacle. For good overviews of *Shekinah*, see Chan Yew Ming, "The Shekinah: An Introduction to the Jewish Understanding of the Presence of God," *TTJ* 17 (2009): 1–19; Leonard Kravitz, "Shekinah as God's Spirit and Presence," *Living Pulpit* 5, no. 1 (1996): 22–23. For rabbinic references to the *Shekinah*, see *Abot R. Nat.* 38; *b. Sotah* 13a; *b. Meg.* 29a; *b. Šabb.* 22b; *b. Ber.* 7a.

[5]*Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 33:23 states that the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* will pass over before Moses as the *Memra* protects him in the cleft of the rock. However, God tells Moses that he will not be able to see

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the *Shekinah* or *Yeqara* function as a manifestation of God and refer to Christ.

In addition to displaying God's manifestation, *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* fulfill agent-roles that the New Testament authors apply to Jesus.[6] The *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* saves/redeems (*Tg. Neof.* Deut 23:15), fights (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 20:4), and distributes the Holy Spirit (*Tg. Neof.* Num 11:25), doing the Father's work in the world. Similarly, Jesus does the works that his Father sent him to do (John 5:36; 14:10–11). Jesus is Israel's Savior and redeemer (Luke 2:11; John 4:42), and he is the manifestation of God who will send the Helper (John 15:26). Therefore, the New Testament connects Jesus to the active manifestation of God, and the Targums assign similar functions and roles to the *Shekinah* or *Yeqara*. Targumic passages in which *Shekinah* or *Yeqara* present God's manifestation *and* fulfill a role or function similar to Jesus will be considered in the category entitled, "Occurrences of *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* Referring to God's Manifestation with Agency."

While nearly all of the occurrences of *Shekinah* refer to Christ, and many occurrences of *Yeqara* refer to Christ, some occurrences of *Yeqara* fail to help one find Christ in the Old Testament.[7] Some occurrences of *Yeqara* appear as a literal translation of the Hebrew כבוד. In order to provide a balanced understanding of these targumic terms, the final category in this chapter presents a few occurrences of *Yeqara* as a literal

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the face of the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah*. After the incarnation, the veil has been lifted (2 Cor 3:13–16), and mankind may gaze upon the glory of God in the face of Christ.

[6]Like *Memra*, when the *Shekinah* or *Yeqara* fulfill agent-roles similar to Jesus, they often mirror the offices of Christ (Prophet, Priest, and King) as well.

[7]*Yeqara* occurs almost 600 times in the various Targums. Of these occurrences, 260 of them do not refer to Jesus because they literally translate כבוד or other Hebrew words meaning "dignity," "precious," "expensive," or "honor" (see Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005], 593). Often, the translation of כבוד with יקר refers to the "glory" of a kingdom (e.g., *Tg. Isa* 35:2; 38:12) or the "glory" of an object like garments (e.g., *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 3:21; *Tg. Ezek* 23:26). יקר is also used in *Tg. Neof.* Exod 34:29–30 to refer to the "glory" of the face of Moses as he descended from his meeting with the Lord. These references do not refer to a manifestation of God, and therefore, do not help one find Christ in the Old Testament.

translation of כבוד that do not refer to Jesus.[8]

Occurrences of *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* as a Manifestation of God

Shekinah and *Yeqara* often represent the manifestation of God's presence. In some cases, these terms display God's manifestation without the notion of action or agency. These occurrences of *Shekinah* or *Yeqara* typically fail to exhibit divine agency, and yet they refer to Jesus because they function as the manifestation of the Father. *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* exhibit the manifestation of the divine character and presence just as Jesus displayed the fullness of God as the God-Man. The examples in this section show how *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* function as a simple manifestation of God and also point to Jesus as the quintessential manifestation of the Father.

Targum Psalms 36:10[9]: Manifestation as Light

Psalm 36:9	For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.
MT Psalm 36:10	כי עמך מקור חיים באורך נראה אור
Targum Psalms 36:10	For with you are streams of living water; in the splendor of your *Yeqara* we will see light.
Targum Psalms 36:10	ארום עמך טיפי מיין חיין בזיו יקרך נחמי נהורא

The context of Psalm 36:7–9 [MT and Tg. 36:8–10] highlights God's goodness to his people and the blessings that come in the shadow of his presence.[9] One of those blessings is that God's people see the light of the glory of God and gain eternal life in his presence. *Targum Psalms* 36:10 interprets the "fountain of life" in the Hebrew as God

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[8]Even literal translations of כבוד may refer to Christ if the display of God's glory is a display of his glory that has a clear connection to Jesus' appearance (e.g., *Tg. Neof.* Exod 40:34; *Tg. Isa* 40:5). The examples that fit into this chapter's final category clearly do not refer to a manifestation of God's glory.

[9]*Tg. Ps* 36:8 interprets the "shadow of his wings" as "the shadow of your *Shekinah*."

providing "streams of living water." In addition, *Targum Psalms* 36:10 explains "in your light do we see light" as seeing the light of "the splendor of your *Yeqara*."[10] As such, the Targum presents the *Yeqara* in a context in which God's *Shekinah* (*Tg. Ps* 36:8) provides comfort and blessings to his people, and in God's presence the light of the *Yeqara* shines leading to streams of living water.

The New Testament authors, indeed Jesus himself, used similar language to teach about God's presence with his people. John says that Jesus was the "true light" who was coming into the world (John 1:9). After introducing the *Memra's* role in creation (John 1:1–3), John highlights Jesus' role as the *Yeqara*. He says, "In him was life (cf. *Tg. Ps* 36:10a) and the life was the light of men" (cf. *Tg. Ps* 36:10b).[11] Jesus is the light that "shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (cf. Ps 80:3, 7, 19; Isa 9:2). Jesus is the Light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5), and will be the light source in the new creation (Rev 21:23). Indeed, the same one in whom God's people see the light of the glory of God (cf. 2 Cor 4:4, 6; Heb 1:3) is the one who provides streams of living water just as *Targum Psalms* 36:10 explains.

When Jesus conversed with the woman at the well, he referred to living water similarly to *Targum Psalms* 36:10. Jesus told her that if she knew who was talking to her, she would have asked him for a drink and he would give her "living water" (John

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[10]The grammar of בזיו קרדי seems to point to a personal manifestation. One meaning of the genitive is the ל preposition indicating possession (Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax: A Traditional Semitic Approach* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, forthcoming], §12e). In this particular construction, the genitive is properly annexed with the meaning of the ל preposition, identifying the owner of the "splendor." As such, the two similar nouns become one unit of meaning with יקרך making the whole package definite. Therefore, the splendor belongs to something or *someone*. This construction differs from the same genitive in *Tg. Onq.* Exod 34:35, in which the construct package זיו יקרא carries one meaning, but is annexed to and governs דאפי משה with the Aramaic pronoun די. In *Tg. Onq.* Exod 34:35, the two independent construct phrases form a composite construct package that indicates the "splendor of the glory" belongs to "the face of Moses." Alternatively, *Tg. Ps* 36:10 suggests that the "splendor" belongs to the *Yeqara*, a personal manifestation.

[11]John's combination of the ideas of life and light in his prologue parallels the similar ideas in *Tg. Ps* 36:10.

4:10). Furthermore, Jesus told the woman that the water he provides would become a "spring of water (πηγὴ ὕδατος) welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14).[12] As the *Yeqara* of the Lord, Jesus distributes living water in John 7:38. Jesus, the manifestation of God, who shines the radiant glory of the Father, is the one who distributes streams of living water, which are the "fountain of life" to all who believe. Indeed, the streams of living water found in the presence of the *Yeqara* are similar to Jesus' teaching to the woman at the well.

Targum Onqelos Exodus 20:21[24]:
Manifestation Requires Worship

Exodus 20:24[13]	An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you.
MT Exodus 20:24	מזבח אדמה תעשה לי וזבחת עליו את עלתיך ואת שלמיך את צאנך ואת בקרך בכל המקום אשר אזכיר את שמי אבוא אליך וברכתיך
Onqelos Exodus 20:21	You shall make an altar of earth before me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your holy sacrifices from your flocks and from your bulls. In every place where I cause my *Shekinah* to dwell, I will send my blessing to you, and I will bless you.
Onqelos Exodus 20:21	מדבח אדמתא תעביד קדמי ותהי דבח עלוהי ית עלותך וית נכסת קודשך מן ענך ומן תורך בכל אתר דאשרי שכינתי לתמן אשלח ברכתי לך ואברכינך

In Exodus 20, God delivered the Ten Commandments to Israel (Exod 20:1–17) and demonstrated his presence with his people by speaking with them (Exod 20:22).

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[12]The LXX uses πηγή to translate "fountain" in Ps 36:10.

[13]*Tg. Onq.* has a different versification than MT and the other Targums leading to the discrepancy between which verse is being discussed. The content of the verses is the same.

Instead of making images of silver and gold, Israel is to worship the true God alone (Exod 20:23–24). In every place the Lord causes his name to be remembered, Israel is to build an altar of worship. *Onqelos* explains that the place where God will make his name be remembered is the place where he causes his *Shekinah* to dwell.[14] Whereas the tabernacle is likely in view as the place where God will make his *Shekinah* dwell, God has not yet established the "building" where worship will take place. Instead, he suggests that wherever his presence is manifest, worship will happen. As such, the manifestation of God requires and elicits worship just as Jesus' presence elicited worship.

In the New Testament, Jesus is the premier manifestation of God who requires the worship of humanity. The magi sought Jesus in order to worship him (Matt 2:2), and brought him gifts as an expression of that worship (Matt 2:11). After exercising his dominion over the storm, the men in the boat worshiped Jesus (Matt 14:33). On several occasions, people knelt before Jesus when asking for help, a sign of adoration and respect (Matt 9:18; 20:20; Luke 5:8). Jesus taught that those who do not honor the Son do not honor the Father (John 5:23) suggesting that the inverse is also true. Those who *do* honor the Son honor the Father since the Son is the manifest presence of the Father. After Jesus healed the blind man, he believed and worshiped (John 9:38). One day, every knee will bow to Jesus (Phil 2:10–11), and the author of Hebrews says that even the heavenly hosts should worship Jesus (Heb 1:6). According to the New Testament, Jesus is the one, in

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[14]Bernard Grossfeld points to Rabbi Halafta of Kefar Hananiah and his exposition of this verse in *m. Abot.* 3:6 (Bernard Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Exodus: Translates, with Apparatus and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 7 [Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988], 58n17). The Mishnah reads, "When ten sit and study Torah, the Divine Presence rests among them . . . . How do I know this is true even of one person?—because it says, 'in every place where I cause my name to be mentioned I will come to you and bless you' (Exod 20:24)." The Mekhilta links this revelation of God specifically to the temple and Grossfeld subsequently connects this passage to Deut 12:5, which is addressed below. Although God's presence is with individuals, the Mishnah interprets Exod 20:24 to say that where several are gathered at the place where God's name dwells, his presence is there with them also. In Matt 18:20, Jesus speaks of himself similarly to how Judaism speaks of the *Shekinah*. He says, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." Using similar language as Judaism, Jesus points out that he is the *Shekinah* of God who manifests God's presence with his people.

whom the Name of God resides (Phil 2:9; Heb 1:4), and his manifestation of the Father elicits worship.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
Deuteronomy 12:5:
Manifestation in the Promised Land

Deuteronomy 12:5	But you shall seek the place that the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. And you shall go there.
MT Deuteronomy 12:5	כי אם אל המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם מכל שבטיכם לשום את שמו שם לשכנו תדרשו ובאת שמה
Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 12:5	But you shall seek the land where the *Memra* of the Lord your God has chosen, among all your tribes, to cause his *Shekinah* to dwell, and there as a house for his *Shekinah* you shall go.
Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 12:5	אלהין לארעא דיתרעי מימרא דייי אלקכון מן כל שיבטיכון לאשרהא שכינתיה תמן לבית שכינתיה תתבעון ותיתון תמן

Deuteronomy 12 elaborates on the idea of the place where God will make his name to dwell and links it to the place where his habitation will be. God told Israel to go to the place he would put his name, which was also the place of his habitation. *Pseudo-Jonathan* simplifies the Hebrew. The Targum explains that the place of God's name and his habitation were the dwelling of God's *Shekinah*.[15] As Israel's history unfolds, God chooses to make his presence dwell among his people in the promised land.[16] God

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[15]*Tg. Ps.-J.* also explains that the "place" (המקום) where God will choose to make his name dwell is "the land" (ארעא). Ernest G. Clarke explains that ארעא in *Tg. Ps.-J.* may be a scribal mistake since אתר occurs in vv. 11 and 14 (Ernest G. Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Deuteronomy: Translated, with Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 5B [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998], 38n6). However, the targumist also may have been explaining that the location of the temple (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 12:10) was in the land.

[16]Related to the idea of God's presence in the land is that the removal of the *Shekinah* is often a consequence of disobedience in the Targums (*Tg. Neof.* Exod 33:5; *Tg. Isa* 1:5; 57:17; *Tg. Jer* 33:5; *Tg. Mic* 3:4). Although the New Testament fails to threaten to remove the presence of God in Christ from believers, Jesus will deny those who disobediently deny him before men (Matt 10:33). Those who reject

specifically chooses to make his dwelling in the temple, and the Targum points the reader to this reality.[17]

The New Testament teaches that the presence of God is with his people at all times through Christ. Jesus promised to never leave his people implying his eternal presence even in his physical absence (Heb 13:5; Matt 28:20). Paul taught that the hope of Christian's future glory was that Christ was alive in them even in the present (Col 1:27). As mentioned in chapter 2, these targumic terms relate to Jesus' identification as the "image of God." If one understands this title as Jesus being the quintessential human being, Jesus was also the temple of the presence of God through the Holy Spirit (cf. Isa 61:1–2; Luke 4:18–19; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; Eph 2:21). As the God-Man, Jesus was the "place" of the manifest presence of God similarly to the temple that housed the *Shekinah.* Just as God chose to make his *Shekinah* dwell among his people in the promised land, so also, he chose to exhibit the manifestation of his presence in Christ throughout the church.

Targum Neofiti Exodus 40:34:
Manifestation in the Tabernacle

Exodus 40:34	Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.
MT Exodus 40:34	ויכס הענן את אהל מועד וכבוד יהוה מלא את המשכן
Neofiti Exodus 40:34	Then the cloud covered the tent of assembly, and the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* of the Lord filled the tabernacle.
Neofiti Exodus 40:34	וכסי עננא ית משכן זימנא ואיקר שכינתה דייי מלת ית

the presence of God in Christ will be cast out from the presence of God eternally (Matt 25:41). In this sense, the *Shekinah* will be removed from them as an act of judgment similarly to how the *Shekinah* was removed from Israel as an act of judgment.

[17]Clarke notes that בית ('site') is a reference to the temple (Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Deuteronomy*, 38n8). Cf. *Sifre Devarim* 116.

After the tabernacle was built and dedicated, God manifested his glory in a cloud surrounding the tent of meeting. *Neofiti* interprets the יהוה כבוד as the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* of the Lord. Sometimes, the Targums will interpret words based on multiple meaning or common consonants, but in *Neofiti* Exodus 40:34, the Targum leaves משכנה for the "tabernacle."[18] Although the use of איקר could be a literal translation of כבוד, the combination of איקר with *Shekinah* suggests more than visible radiance.[19] Instead, *Neofiti* highlights God's simple manifestation in the tabernacle, a manifestation that was also common later in the temple (*Tg. 1 Kgs* 8:12–13, 27). Indeed, God's manifest presence existed in the tabernacle and the temple.

Just as the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* displayed God's presence in the tabernacle and temple, Jesus also displayed God's manifestation *as* the temple. After driving out the moneychangers in the temple, Jesus told the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up again" (John 2:19). John clarifies that Jesus was talking about his own body rather than the temple building (John 2:21). Paul failed to use the terminology of the temple, but said that all of the fullness of deity dwelled in Christ making him the dwelling place of the presence of God (Col 2:9). As such, the full manifestation of God dwelled in Christ, who was the temple.[20] *Neofiti* Exodus 40:34 is an example of the

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[18]See Martin McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible: A Light on the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 105. If the Targum had translated Exod 40:34 using the common consonants, one would expect *Yeqara* to be a literal translation of כבוד and *Shekinah* would take the place of המשכן. Using this technique, the Targum would teach that the glory of God is seen in the *Shekinah*. However, the Targum leaves the reference to the tabernacle (המשכן) *and* includes a reference to *Shekinah*. As such, the Targum emphasizes the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* dwelling in the tabernacle.

[19]*Tg. Neof.* Exod 40:38 says that the cloud of the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* would lead in the tabernacle by day and fire by night throughout their wilderness journeys. Comparing this idea to *Tg. Neof.* Exod 13:21, the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* takes on a similar role to the *Memra*, God's agent to lead Israel in the wilderness.

[20]G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2004), 365–93. In his *A New Testament*

manifestation of God in a designated building. Jesus taught that something better than the temple had come (Matt 12:5), and indeed Jesus fulfilled God's manifestation in the temple. The Son, who displays the glory of God, "tabernacled" among men (John 1:14).

Targum Neofiti Deuteronomy 6:15–16: Israel Grumbled Against God's Manifestation

Deuteronomy 6:15–16	For the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth. You shall not put the Lord to the test, as you tested him at Massah.
MT Deuteronomy 6:15–16	כי אל קנא יהוה אלהיך בקרבך פן יחרה אף יהוה אלהיך בך והשמידך מעל פני האדמה לא תנסו את יהוה אלהיכם כאשר נסיתם במסה
Neofiti Deuteronomy 6:15–16	For your God is a jealous and avenging God, the *Yeqara* of whose *Shekinah* is among you, lest the anger of the Lord your God grow strong against you, and destroy you from off the face of the land. You shall not put to the test the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* of the Lord your God as you put to the test before him at Testing.
Neofiti Deuteronomy 6:15–16	ארום אלה קניי ופורען הוא אלהכון דאיקר שכינתיה ביניכון דלא יתקוף רוגזה דייי אלהך בך וישיצי יתכון מיעילוי אפי ארעא לא תנסון ית איקר שכינתה דייי אלהכון היך מה דניסיתון קדמוי בניסיונה

In Deuteronomy 6, Moses rehearsed many of the promises given to Abraham with intermingled warnings. As Israel prepared to enter the promised land, one of the warnings Moses offered was that Israel should not test God as they did at Massah (Deut

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Biblical Theology, Beale says, "Christ is the epitome of God's presence on earth as God incarnate, thus continuing the true form of the old temple, which actually was a foreshadowing of Christ's presence throughout the OT era" (idem, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011], 632).

6:15–16). The targumic tradition of Israel's grumbling in the wilderness suggests that Israel grumbled against God's manifest presence, the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah*, who was "among [them]."[21]

Neofiti Deuteronomy 6:15–16 teaches that God is an avenging God and, therefore, Israel should not test the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* as they did as Massah. The Targums consistently apply this idea. *Onqelos* Exodus 17:7 says that Moses called the name of the place "Testing" and "Quarreling" because they tested God by asking if the *Shekinah* was among them. Israel quarreled against the *Shekinah* by asking if God's manifest presence was with them. Likewise, *Pseudo-Jonathan* Numbers 21:7 teaches that God delivered serpents to plague Israel because they grumbled against the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah*, and *Onqelos* Numbers 11:20 says that Israel grumbled against the *Memra*, whose *Shekinah* was among them.[22] In Deuteronomy 6:15–16, Moses recalled these instances in Israel's history and warned Israel not to rebel against God as they had before. According to *Neofiti*, the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* functions as God's manifestation against whom Israel grumbled in the wilderness.

Paul recalled these passages when he taught the Corinthians to flee from idolatry in 1 Corinthians 10:1–14. The testing Moses warned against in Deuteronomy 6:15–16 was turning to worthless idolatry by not obeying God's commandments (cf. Deut 6:17–19). To make his point, Paul referred to the same wilderness episodes as

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[21]The Mishnah (*m. Abot* 5:4) mentions ten trials with which Israel tested the Lord. These trials are listed in full in *Sifre Devarim* 1:1 and in *b. Arak.* 15a. The majority of the trials listed in the Talmud and *Sifre* refer to Israel grumbling against or testing God's agent(s) in the Targums.

[22]Num 11:20 is another example of Israel grumbling in the wilderness, and therefore refers to Jesus similarly to *Tg. Neof.* Deut 6:15–16 (cf. 1 Cor 10:9). However, *Tg. Onq.* Num 11:20 differs by presenting the *Shekinah* as the manifestation of the *Memra*. *Tg. Onq.* Num 11:20 explains Israel rejecting the Lord as Israel "loathed the *Memra* of the Lord." In addition, *Tg. Onq.* Num 11:20 includes that the *Memra's Shekinah* dwelled in Israel whereas the Hebrew says that the Lord dwelled among them. Therefore, the use of *Shekinah* in *Tg. Onq.* Num 11:20 portrays the manifestation of God in the *Memra*, a character who displays the divine presence as well. Other passages that equate the *Memra* with the *Shekinah* include *Tg. Neof.* Lev 16:2; *Tg. Neof.* Num 14:14; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 16:13; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 10:36; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 31:8.

Moses. In the exodus journey, God protected Israel with a pillar of cloud (1 Cor 10:1; cf.

Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 13:21) rescuing them through the sea, and yet Israel failed to trust the

Lord, becoming fearful (Exod 13:10–12). In the wilderness, Israel ate the food provided

by God (Exod 16:15) and drank from the Rock whom Paul labeled explicitly as Christ (1

Cor 10:3; cf. Exod 17:6; *Tg. Onq.* Exod 17:7).[23] In all their journeys, God provided

everything Israel needed. As Paul continued, he indicated that God was not pleased with

Israel's idolatry (1 Cor 10:7). Even though Israel had the blessings of God's presence

and provision, God's people still practiced idolatry. Paul taught that Israel put *Christ* to

the test (1 Cor 10:9), whereas the Targums indicate that Israel tested the *Yeqara* of the

Shekinah (*Tg. Neof.* Deut 6:16).[24] According to Paul, these things happened in Israel's

history so that the Corinthian church would not fall into the same trap of idolatry, a

figurative grumbling against God's manifestation in Christ (1 Cor 10:14).

In the wilderness, Israel grumbled against God's manifestation, the *Yeqara* of

the *Shekinah*. Moses warned Israel not to put God's manifest agent to the test as they

prepared to enter the promised land, and Paul extended these ideas in the New Testament

to warn against idolatry. Just as Israel grumbled against God's manifestation in the

wilderness, so also the church was prone to test Jesus, being tempted to worship idols

rather than a faithful God who provides a way of escape (1 Cor 10:13).

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[23]For discussions on the "spiritual" Rock Paul refers to, see E. Earle Ellis, "A Note on First Corinthians 10:4," *JBL* 76, no. 1 (1957): 53–65; and Nathaniel Helfgot, "'And Moses Struck the Rock': Numbers 20 and the Leadership of Moses," *Traditions* 27, no. 3 (1993): 51–58.

[24]Bruce Metzger and the committee of the *Textual Commentary on the New Testament* place a {B} rating for "Christ" in 1 Cor 10:9 (Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the New Testament*, 2nd ed. [New York: United Bible Societies, 1971], 494). Metzger's comments affirm that "Christ" probably parallels Paul's use of "Christ" in 1 Cor 10:4, but the early church found difficulty explaining how Israel could have tested Christ, and so later manuscripts insert "Lord." Even so, "Christ" is the favored reading (as the more difficult one).

Targum Zechariah 2:14–15:
Manifestation as Eternal Presence

Zechariah 2:14–15 [2:10–11]	Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord. And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.
MT Zechariah 2:14–15	רני ושמחי בת ציון כי הנני בא ושכנתי בתוכך נאם יהוה ונלוו גוים רבים אל יהוה ביום ההוא והיו לי לעם ושכנתי בתוכך וידעת כי יהוה צבאות שלחני אליך
Targum Zechariah 2:14–15	Rejoice and be glad, O congregation of Zion, for behold I am revealing myself and I will cause my *Shekinah* to dwell in your midst—the Lord has spoken. And many nations shall be added to the people of the Lord at that time, and they shall become a people before me, and I shall make my *Shekinah* dwell in your midst. Then you shall know that the Lord of hosts sent me to prophesy to you.
Targum Zechariah 2:14–15	בועי וחדא כנשתא דציון ארי הא אנא מתגלי ואשרי שכינתי בגויך אמר יוי ויתוספון עממין סגיאין על עמיה דיוי בעדנא ההוא ויהון קדמי לעם ואשרי שכינתי בגויך ותידעון ארי יוי צבאות שלחני לאתנבאה ליך

Zechariah prophesies of the future day when God will dwell with his people in Zechariah 2:14–15. *Targum Zechariah* 2:14–15 explains God's self-revelation as causing his *Shekinah* to dwell in the midst of his people.[25] Zechariah likely refers to a future day when God will once again cause his presence to dwell with Israel.[26] When

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[25]God's revelation of himself is expressed in the Targum as an *ithpeel* participle (מתגלי) suggesting a work that God does to make himself known. See Alger F. Johns, *A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1972), 44–45; William B. Stevenson, *Grammar of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999), §16. Instead of being revealed, God will reveal himself, and this revelation will be the *Shekinah* according to the Targum.

[26]For the eschatological outlook of Zech 2:14–15, see Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 25B (Garden City,

God causes his *Shekinah* to dwell with Israel, "nations will join themselves to the Lord, and shall be [his] people" (Zech 2:11). God's manifest presence will return to his people at a time when the nations are primed to enter God's kingdom.

Although the New Testament authors do not draw a direct connection to Zechariah 2:14–15, they appear to connect the *idea* of Zechariah's prophecy to the appearance of Jesus as God's manifestation to welcome the nations.[27] Simeon knew that Jesus was God's presence representing a light for the Gentiles/nations (Luke 2:32; cf. Isa 42:6). After the incarnation, the nations were central to the New Testament message. Jesus commissioned his disciples to take the message of salvation to all nations (Matt 28:19), and Paul taught that God's grace was given to bring the obedience of faith to all nations (Rom 1:5; 16:26). Paul was commissioned to take the gospel to the Gentiles, including all nations in God's purposes for his final revelation through Christ (Gal 3:8). In the book of Revelation, the elders around the throne praise God that the Lamb will bring people into the kingdom from every nation (Rev 5:9; 7:9). In the Song of the Lamb (Rev 15:3–4), all nations will come and worship the Lamb, who is God's final manifestation (Rev 15:4). Finally, in the heavenly Jerusalem, the nations will walk by the light of the glory of the Lamb, and there will be no need for the temple (Rev 21:24). Indeed, the nations will be gathered into God's eternal presence through Christ (Rev 21:26).

Zechariah prophesied that God would bring in the nations when God once again manifested his presence in the world. Jesus clearly manifested God's presence (Heb 1:3), and in God's redemptive plan, all nations will be represented in the heavenly

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NY: Doubleday, 1987), 168–69.

[27]See Thomas Edward McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 1064, for how the promise of God's manifest presence in Zech 2:14 points to Christ's *spiritual* presence in the church.

kingdom, when the Lamb will be God's eternal presence with his people.[28]

Targum Neofiti Genesis 17:22:
Manifestation as God's Messenger

Genesis 17:22	When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.
MT Genesis 17:22	ויכל לדבר אתו ויעל אלהים מעל אברהם
Neofiti Genesis 17:22	Then he finished speaking with him, and the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* of the Lord was taken up from Abraham.

Neofiti Genesis 17:22   ואשלם מן למללה עמה ואסתלק איקר שכינתיה דייי מעלוי
אברהם

Neofiti Genesis 17:22 is an example of God's manifestation to Abram. In verse 22, the Lord has finished speaking with Abram, and his presence is taken up from him (cf. Gen 35:13; *Tg. Neof.* Gen 35:13). The Targum interprets God's presence that had been speaking with Abram as the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah*. God manifested himself to Abram to deliver a message through his agent. In addition, *Neofiti* Genesis 17:1 teaches that the *Memra* of the Lord was revealed to Abram (ואתגלי ממריה דייי על אברם). The Targum introduces God's agent as the *Memra* (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 17:1), but when God's agent departs, he is the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah*. Both of these targumic concepts suggest that God manifested his divine presence before Abram.[29]

Just as the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* represents God's manifest agent, so also Jesus is God's manifest agent. Jesus spoke only the words that his Father gave him in order to accurately represent the Father to the world (John 14:10). Jesus is the exact

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[28]For his discussion on how Zech 2:14–15 points to Christ even without the targumic tradition, see Richard D. Phillips, *Zechariah*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007), 56–58.

[29]In addition to God manifesting himself as the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* to Abram, Ronning demonstrates that the *Memra* was, in fact, the "God of Abraham" from *Tg. Neof.* Exodus and John 8:58. See Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*, 209–11.

imprint of the Father's nature (Col 1:19; Heb 1:3), so he is able to accurately express the Father's heart regarding the promises of the Abrahamic covenant.[30] As God's manifest agent, he appeared so that the promises spoken to Abram would be fulfilled in God's agent (Rom 15:8; Gal 3:16–22).

Indeed, Jesus was God's final and premier manifestation just as the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* was God's manifestation to Abram. Jesus was not just any manifestation, but he was the manifestation of God who would bring about the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises. Indeed, he was the one in whom Abraham believed (*Tg. Onq.* Gen 15:6; cf. Rom 4:3; Gal 3:22).[31] As God's manifestation, Jesus was closely related to the Abrahamic covenant; indeed he fulfilled its promises (2 Cor 1:20).

Targum Isaiah 40:5:
Manifestation of God's Presence

Isaiah 40:5	And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.
MT Isaiah 40:5	ונגלה כבוד יהוה וראו כל בשר יחדו כי פי יהוה דבר
Targum Isaiah 40:5	And the *Yeqara* of the Lord shall be revealed, and all mankind will together see for by the *Memra* of the Lord it has been decreed.
Targum Isaiah 40:5	ויתגלי יקרא דיוי ויחזון כל בני בסרא כחדא ארי במימרא דיוי גזיר כין

According to *Targum Isaiah* 40:5, the *Yeqara* of the Lord will be revealed after the voice of the one crying out in the wilderness (cf. Isa 40:3). The *Yeqara* represents

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[30]One could perhaps argue that Jesus was involved in the Abrahamic covenant based on the appearance of God's agent in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 17:22. Jesus says that before Abraham existed, he existed (John 8:58). In John 8:56, Jesus says that Abraham saw Jesus' day and rejoiced in it. Although Jesus' saying could be metaphorical, it could also be literal if the *Memra* and *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* are understood as God's agent(s) of manifestation.

[31]Related to *Memra*, *Tg. Neof.* Gen 15:6 says that Abram "believed in the name of the *Memra* of the Lord" pointing to those who believed in the name of the one that John calls the "Word" in John 1:12.

God's manifestation in *Targum Isaiah* 40:5 since he will be revealed (יתגלי) and all flesh will see him (ויחזון).[32] Grammatically, יקרא דיוי mirrors מימרא דייי, in which the construct package uses די as a proper annexation giving the package one unit of meaning.[33] This construction allows *Targum Isaiah* to maintain the definite governing noun, which seems to suggest an independent agent or manifestation of the Lord. Even though *Targum Isaiah* 40:5 translates כבוד literally, the Targum uses a term that suggests the manifestation of God to all mankind.

The arrival of the *Yeqara* mirrors Jesus' arrival following John the Baptist's announcement (e.g., Luke 3:4). In addition, the manifestation of the *Yeqara* may point to Christ since it is closely related to the decree of the *Memra* in *Targum Isaiah* 40:5. The surety that the *Yeqara* will be revealed is that God's agent has decreed it. Just as Jesus taught that he fulfilled Isaiah 61:1–2 (cf. Luke 4:18–19), perhaps he would also decree his arrival as the fulfillment of God's manifestation in the world. Finally, the radiant glory of God is particularly seen in the face of Christ (2 Cor 4:4, 6). Indeed, John taught that the Word became flesh, and by doing so, "we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father" (John 1:14). Jesus uniquely displays the radiant glory of the Father as God's manifestation. Therefore, *Targum Isaiah* 40:5 helps one find Christ in the Old Testament since the *Yeqara* of the Lord will be revealed and seen just as Jesus was (cf. 1 John 1:1) following the decree of the voice crying in the wilderness.

Targum Isaiah 12:6:
Manifestation of the Holy One of God

Isaiah 12:6	Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

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[32]*Tg. Isa* interprets the prophetic perfects of the Hebrew (ראו נגלה) as imperfects (יתכלי, יחזון), indicating a future reality. See Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, NAC 15B (Nashville: B&H, 2009), 97, no. 44.

[33]Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 12e.

MT Isaiah 12:6   צהלי ורני יושבת ציון כי גדול בקרבך קדוש ישראל

Targum Isaiah 12:6   Rejoice loudly and praise, O congregation of Zion, for the Great One has commanded to make his *Shekinah* to dwell in your midst, the Holy One of Israel.

Targum Isaiah 12:6   בועי ושבחי כנשתא דציון ארי רבא אמר לאשראה שכינתיה בגויך קדישא דישראל

Isaiah 12 portrays the joy and thanksgiving that comes when God turns away from his anger and becomes Israel's salvation (Isa 12:1–2).[34] In Isaiah 12:6, the prophet commands Israel to sing for joy because the presence of the Holy One is great. *Targum Isaiah* 12:6 interprets the presence of the Holy One as "the Great One" (רבא), who commands to make his *Shekinah* dwell in Israel's midst. In addition, the Targum identifies the *Shekinah* as the Holy One of Israel since "the Great One" (רבא) is a substantive rather than a predicate adjective as in the MT (cf. גדול).[35] In other words, the *Shekinah* represents the manifest presence of "the Great One," and *is* the Holy One of Israel according to *Targum Isaiah* 12:6.

Similarly to the *Shekinah*, Jesus is also called the Holy One. When Jesus encountered demons, they knew of his status as "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34).[36] Simon Peter confessed that Jesus was the Holy One of God (John 6:69), and realized there was no one else in whom he could believe for eternal life (cf. John 3:16; *Tg. Onq.* Exod 14:31; *Tg. Jonah* 3:5). The book of Revelation describes Jesus as the Holy One in the letter to the church at Philadelphia (Rev 3:7), and in the third bowl of

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[34]Larry Taylor, "The Holy One of Israel is Savior: Theological Themes in Isaiah," *SwJT* 34 (1991): 13–19.

[35]In the Hebrew, קדוש ישראל is a construct package functioning as the nominative of the phrase כי גדול בקרבך קדוש ישראל. In the Targum, קדישא דישראל is determined, sharing the same gender, number, and state as רבא. These terms, therefore, are in apposition. The רבא, whose *Shekinah* dwells in Israel's midst *is* the קדישא דישראל. Therefore, one can also conclude that the *Shekinah*, which is a manifestation of the רבא is also the קדישא דישראל.

[36]W. R. Domeris, "The Holy One of God as a Title for Jesus," *Neot* 19 (1985): 9–17.

wrath, the angel declares that Jesus, as the Holy One, has authority to bring about these judgments (Rev 16:5).[37] Indeed, just as the *Shekinah* simultaneously manifests "the Great One" and *is* the Holy One of God, so also Jesus carries the title "Holy One of God" and manifests the presence of God.

Targum Onqelos Deuteronomy 3:24:
Divine Presence in Heaven

Deuteronomy 3:24	O Lord God, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such mighty acts as yours?
MT Deuteronomy 3:24	אדני יהוה אתה החלות להראות את עבדך את גדלך ואת ידך החזקה אשר מי אל בשמים ובארץ אשר יעשה כמעשיך וכגבורתך
Onqelos Deuteronomy 3:24	O Lord God, you have begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand, that you are God, whose *Shekinah* is in heaven above, and the ruler on the earth. There is none who can do according to your deeds and your mighty acts.
Onqelos Deuteronomy 3:24	יוי אלהים את שריתא לאחזאה ית עבדך ית רבותך וית ידך תקיפתא דאת הוא אלהא דשכינתך בשמיא מלעילא ושליט בארעא לית דיעביד כעובדך וכגברותך

In Deuteronomy 3:24, Moses extols the Lord God as the only one in heaven or on earth who displays his mighty acts in the created order so clearly. *Onqelos* interprets God's presence in heaven as his "*Shekinah* in the heavens above" and his earthly presence as his rulership (שליט בארעא).[38] Even though the Targum seems to distinguish

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[37]For the Holy One as a reference to Jesus here, see Rev 5:7; 6:1, where the Lamb takes the scroll of God's judgments and opens them, unfolding the coming judgment.

[38]Cf. *Tg. 1 Kgs* 8:23, where a similar idea is expressed for God's presence in the heavenly realm versus his rulership on earth.

between God's manifest presence in heaven and his active rulership on earth, these two

ideas are complementary. *Onqelos* interprets God's implied presence on earth from the

Hebrew specifically as God's rulership on earth, deriving from his authority as the divine

presence in heaven.[39] Because God's *Shekinah* is in the heavens above, he has the

authority to rule on earth. No god compares to the divine authority of Yahweh, and the

Targum explains the answer to the Hebrew question.

In 1 Timothy 6:13–16, Paul highlights some of the same ideas as *Onqelos*

Just as the *Shekinah* exists in heaven yet exercises rule on earth, so also Jesus

was the heavenly presence sent from God to establish his rule. Regarding Jesus'

heavenly existence, John taught that the one who came from heaven had authority over

all (John 3:31). Jesus taught Nicodemus, "no one has ascended into heaven except the

one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man" (John 3:13).[40] Nathanael drew a link

between Jesus' heavenly dwelling and his earthly rule when he called Jesus the Son of

God and King of Israel (John 1:49). As the Son who came from God (1 John 4:9), Jesus

is also the King of Israel. Paul taught that after Jesus' resurrection God raised Jesus to

the heavens to exercise his authority from the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 1:20–

22). Finally, in the eschatological revelation of Christ from heaven, every knee will bow

recognizing his royal authority (Phil 2:9–11).

In 1 Timothy 6:13–16, Paul highlights some of the same ideas as *Onqelos*

Deuteronomy 3:24. He charges Timothy "in the presence of God . . . and of Christ Jesus"

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[39]The Targum explains the question, "what god is there?" as a reference to Yahweh and therefore ascribes to him the proper authority and rulership. According to the Targum, God's authority on earth is a result of his manifest presence in heaven. Likewise, Jesus existed with the Father before the creation of the world (i.e., heavenly presence, John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5), and exercises royal authority in the earthly realm (i.e., earthly King, John 1:49; 3:31).

[40]Ronning argues that John's language about Jesus descending from heaven is similar to how the Old Testament speaks of God intervening in human affairs to judge, redeem, and dwell among his people (Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*, 115). According to Ronning, John has adapted targumic language to describe Jesus as the one who is both the God of the Old Testament *and* descended as the one who "fulfills various OT divine roles (warrior, bridegroom, lawgiver)." See ibid., 84–115.

showing the link between the presence of God and Jesus' manifestation of God. In verse

14, Paul mentions "the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ," a reference to the second

manifestation of God in Christ in the last days. In most Greek texts of verses 15–16, the

description of God in Christ is set apart as an ancient hymn, probably on the nature of

God the Father that Paul applies to Jesus as well. These two verses describe the Father

and the Son. Paul describes God in Christ as "the only Sovereign, the King of kings and

Lord of lords." Then, in verse 16, Paul continues the hymn, but refers to the one who

"dwells in unapproachable light" (cf. Job 37:23) and "whom no one has ever seen or can

see." These descriptors hint at the dynamic in the Godhead that the Father, who dwells in

heaven alone, exercises his authority on earth through Christ. In other words, Paul

affirms the reality of God's "hidden" presence in heaven, but suggests that in Christ, the

heavenly presence of God is manifest through Jesus' earthly rule. Paul knew that "No

one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side," and yet "he [Jesus] has

made him known" (John 1:18).

Occurrences of *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* Referring to God's Manifestation with Agency

In addition to the *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* functioning as God's manifestation,

these terms also portray God's manifestation with agency similarly to the *Memra*. In

fact, the Targums often equate the *Shekinah* and/or *Yeqara* with the *Memra*.[41] In *Neofiti*

Leviticus 16:2, the Lord told Moses, "my *Memra* will be revealed" over the mercy seat,

"in the clouds of the *Yeqara* of my *Shekinah*." The revelation of the *Memra* is the

manifestation of God by the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah*, equating all of these terms. In

Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis 16, Hagar conversed with the angel of the Lord (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen

16:7), and yet she claimed that the *Memra* of the Lord spoke with her when the *Yeqara* of

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[41]Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*, 50–62.

the *Shekinah* of the Lord was revealed to her (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 16:13). The *Memra*, whose

Yeqara of his *Shekinah* was revealed, conversed with Hagar. In *Pseudo-Jonathan*

Numbers 10:36, Moses recounted the occasions when the ark would rest during the

wilderness wanderings. At those times, he would pray, "Return now, O *Memra* of the

Lord, by your good mercy, and lead the people of Israel and cause the *Yeqara* of your

Shekinah to dwell among them." As the ark rested, Moses asked the *Memra* to cause the

Yeqara of his *Shekinah* to dwell in Israel. Finally, *Onqelos* Numbers 11:20 equates the

Shekinah with the *Memra* when Moses says that Israel "loathed the *Memra* of the Lord,

whose *Shekinah* dwells among you." Where the Hebrew says the Lord dwelled in Israel,

Onqelos says the *Memra's Shekinah* dwelled in Israel. These examples show how the

Targums equate the *Memra* with the *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*, and provide a reason why the

Shekinah and *Yeqara* sometimes represent an active manifestation of God.

Because Jesus was God's manifest agent in the world, passages in which

Shekinah or *Yeqara* functions as God's agent may refer to Jesus. The passages in this

section provide examples of how *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* function as God's agent(s)

fulfilling roles similar to those of the *Memra* and Jesus.

Targum Neofiti Deuteronomy 23:15:
Manifestation as Savior

Deuteronomy 23:15	Because the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, so that he may not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you.
MT Deuteronomy 23:15	כי יהוה אלהיך מתהלך בקרב מחנך להצילך ולתת איביך לפניך והיה מחניך קדוש ולא יראה בך ערות דבר ושב מאחריך
Neofiti Deuteronomy 23:15	For the Lord your God, because the *Yeqara* of his *Shekinah* leads in the midst of your camps to save you and to hand over your enemies before you, so

your camps shall be holy, and he shall not see in you nakedness of a matter so that the *Yeqara* of his *Shekinah* would not turn back from you.

Neofiti Deuteronomy 23:15

ארום ייי אלהכון דאיקר שכינתיה מדברה בגו
משירייתכון למשזבה יתכון ולמסור בעלי דבביכון
קדמיכון ויהוויין משירייתכון קדישין ולא יחמי בכון
עריה דמילה ולא יחזר איקר שכינתיה מן בתריכון

The context of Deuteronomy 23:15 would seem to have little direct, canonical connections with Jesus, and yet the Targum describes the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* as God's manifestation *to save* Israel. In *Neofiti* Deuteronomy 23:15, the Targum interprets God's presence in Israel's camp as the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* "leading" (מדברה איקר שכינתיה) in the camp. This language implies God's manifestation since it translates the Hebrew, "the Lord your God walking" (יהוה אלהיך מתהלך) in Israel's midst.[42] Furthermore, the Targum provides the reason why the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* reveals God. The *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* is present in the midst of the camp "to deliver" Israel (למשזבה).[43] Therefore, God's manifest presence through the *Yeqara* of his *Shekinah* is for the purpose of delivering Israel, a role similar to Jesus' manifestation of the Father.[44]

Similarly to how the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* manifests God's presence to

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[42]Nine other passages in *Tg. Neof.* have the same phrase (מדברה שכינתיה איקר) and suggest that the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* is a divine manifestation of God with his people (*Tg. Neof.* Exod 33:14; *Tg. Neof.* Deut 1:30; 1:42; 7:21; 9:3; 20:4; 31:3; 31:6; 31:8). While *Tg. Neof.* Deut 23:15 implies that the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* is God's warrior to save, *Tg. Neof.* Deut 1:30; 1:42; 7:21; 9:3; and 20:4 make that idea explicit. According to *Tg. Neof.*, the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* is God's manifest agent for warfare similarly to the *Memra*.

[43]Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim,* 1558–59. The idea of God "delivering" through an agent was common in the targumic tradition. See, for example, *Tg. Onq.* Jer 1:8; 1:19; 15:20, where the *Memra* is Israel's aid "to deliver." See especially *Tgs. Neof.* and *Ps.-J.* Exod 3:8, where God is revealed "by his *Memra*" to deliver Israel in the exodus. Likewise, see Kravitz, "Shekinah as God's Spirit and Presence," 23, where he says, ". . . for them [Christians], God is Creator as Father, Redeemer as Son and ongoing presence as Holy Spirit."

[44]For the ל + infinitive construct to express purpose, see Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax,* §53g, cf. §18e.

deliver, so also, Jesus is God's manifest agent in salvation/deliverance. The New

Testament teaches that Jesus is the "Savior of the world" (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14).[45] At

Jesus' birth, the angels announce that he is God's manifest agent to save (Luke 2:11; cf.

Isa 45:15; *Tg. Isa* 45:15).[46] As God's manifest agent, Jesus redeems those who believe in

him and offers forgiveness of sins, a picture of saving deliverance (Acts 5:31; Eph 1:7).

The LXX translates נצל in Deuteronomy 23:15 with ἐξαιρέω. In the New Testament,

Paul uses ἐξαιρέω to teach that Jesus gave himself in order "to deliver us from the present

evil age" (Gal 1:4). When Paul illustrates Christ's relationship to the church (Eph 5:22–

33), he says that Jesus is the "Savior" of the church (Eph 5:23).[47] Finally, Paul tells Titus

that the church waits for "the appearing of the *glory* of our great God and *Savior* Jesus

Christ (Titus 2:13).[48] Although Paul likely refers to the radiance of God's magnificence

in Christ, his language resembles *Neofiti* Deuteronomy 23:15 where the *Yeqara* of the

Shekinah is God's manifestation as a deliverer/savior.

In addition to the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* delivering Israel, *Neofiti*

Deuteronomy 23:15 suggests that if Israel's camps become unholy, the *Yeqara* of the

Shekinah would be taken up from Israel.[49] In the New Testament, Jesus presents God's

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[45]For the Greek σωτήρ as a title for Jesus, see George Foerher, "σωτήρ," in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 7:1003–24, esp. 1015–18.

[46]Isa 45:15 teaches that God "hides himself" but is Savior. *Tg. Isa* 45:15 explains God's hiddenness that he made his *Shekinah* to dwell on high rather than in visible form on earth. With the advent of the Messiah, Israel's "hidden" God, who saves, is now manifest as God in the flesh, Israel's "Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

[47]*Tg. Isa* 54:6 interprets God calling Israel as a wife who is distressed as the *Shekinah* meeting Israel like a wife. Indeed, Jesus is Israel's Savior and bridegroom just as the *Shekinah*.

[48]See George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 321–26, for a discussion of the various interpretations of the phrase "glory of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ." F. J. A. Hort argues that "glory" could refer to a title in Jas 2:1 (F. J. A. Hort, *The Epistle of St. James* [London: Macmillan, 1909], 47). Hort also argues for "glory" as a title in Titus 2:13 (ibid., 103). The Targums seem to support the use of "glory" as a title for God's manifest agent, the one in whose face the glory of the Father resides (cf. 2 Cor 4:4, 6).

[49]*Tg. Onq.* has that God's *Memra* would turn back from doing good to Israel if God's *Shekinah* finds unholiness in the camp. With this correlation, both the *Memra* and *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* function

people as holy by becoming a curse for them (Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:21). In this sense, God's manifest agent (Jesus) provides the holiness required by God's manifest presence (the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah*). Therefore, those who are in Christ continually have the presence of God's mediating agent *in them* (Col 1:27). Alternatively, failure to believe in Jesus results in "unholiness." However, instead of Jesus removing his presence like the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah*, he casts the unholy out of his presence (Matt 25:41; Luke 13:27). In both the New Testament and in the Targum, God's manifest presence will not stand unholiness.

As God's manifestation, the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* intends to deliver Israel from her enemies and sustain the holiness of God's people. Likewise, Jesus delivers his people from the enemy of unholiness and promises his eternal presence (Matt 28:20).

Targum 1 Kings 22:19:
Manifestation as King

1 Kings 22:19	And Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left."
MT 1 Kings 22:19	ויאמר לכן שמע דבר יהוה ראיתי את יהוה ישב על כסאו וכל צבא השמים עמד עליו מימינו ומשמאלו
Targum 1 Kings 22:19	Then he said, "Therefore receive the word of the Lord. I saw the *Yeqara* of the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the heavenly hosts were standing before him, from his right and from his left."
Targum 1 Kings 22:19	ואמר בכין קביל פתגמא דיוי חזיתי ית יקרא דיוי שרי על כרסהי וכל חילי שמיא קימין קדמוהי מימיניה ומסמליה

In 1 Kings 22, the prophet Micaiah delivered a message to Jehoshaphat that

as God's manifestation. See Bernard Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Deuteronomy: Translated with an Apparatus and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 9 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988), 69n10. For other references to the *Shekinah* leaving Israel for disobedience or unholiness, see *Tg. Isa* 57:7 and *Tg. Jer* 33:5.

Israel was like sheep scattered on a mountainside without a shepherd (1 Kings 22:17). As Micaiah elaborates on the vision, he says that he saw the Lord sitting on his throne with the hosts of heaven on either side of him (1 Kings 22:19). The Targum interprets this verse similarly to Isaiah 6:5–6 as Micaiah seeing the *Yeqara* of the Lord sitting on the throne. Like Isaiah 6:1 (cf. John 12:41), the *Yeqara* functions as a manifestation of God. Furthermore, the *Yeqara*, sitting on the throne, represents God's King who has the authority to speak messages such as the one Micaiah delivers.

Similarly, Jesus is God's manifest King surrounded by the heavenly hosts. The wise men sought Jesus, who was born "king of the Jews" (Matt 2:1; cf. Matt 27:11, 37). Jesus fulfilled Zechariah 9:9 as he rode into Jerusalem (Matt 21:5), "the city of the great King" (Matt 5:35). Revelation describes Jesus as the "ruler of kings on earth," making him the preeminent King (Rev 1:5). Likewise, he is the King of kings when he delivers the final blow to Satan and his followers (Rev 19:16). As the Lamb enters the throne room of heaven, the elders and those around the throne bow down in worship (Rev 5:8). In Hebrews 1, the author implies that the hosts of heaven are to worship the Son (Heb 1:6), who is the "radiance of God's glory" (Heb 1:3) and God's final prophet (Heb 1:2). According to the author of Hebrews, angels should worship the Son because he has "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," a reference to his kingship (Heb 1:3).

These images of the *Yeqara* and Jesus suggest that Jesus has always been the manifestation of God's glory. Isaiah saw the *Yeqara* and John said that Isaiah saw Jesus (John 12:41). Similarly, Micaiah saw the *Yeqara* of the Lord with the hosts of heaven surrounding him. Jesus, God's final manifestation of the divine glory, sits enthroned as King and demands the worship of the hosts of heaven.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
Deuteronomy 20:4:
Manifestation as Warrior and Redeemer

Deuteronomy 20:4   For the Lord your God is he who goes with you to fight for

you against your enemies, to give you the victory.

	MT Deuteronomy 20:4	כי יהוה אלהיכם ההלך עמכם להלחם לכם עם איביכם להושיע אתכם

Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 20:4 — For the Lord your God, his *Shekinah* is leading among you to wage war before you with your enemies, to deliver you.

Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 20:4 — ארום ייי אלקכון שכינתיה מידברא קדמיכון לאגחא מטולכון עם בעלי דבביכון למפרוק יתכון

In *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy 20:4, God's *Shekinah* will lead before Israel to fight the nations in the promised land. Moses encourages Israel not to fear the nations because God's *Shekinah* will go with them as they fight. However, the *Shekinah* represents more than just a general presence of God with his people. The *Shekinah* "leads before" (מידברא קדמיכון) Israel in order to "wage war" (לאגחא) against their enemies and thus redeem them.[50] *Pseudo-Jonathan* Deuteronomy 20:4 teaches that God's manifest presence functions as a warrior and redeemer, fighting Israel's battles as they enter the promised land.[51]

Just as God's manifest agent in the Targums fights Israel's battles and redeems them, so also Jesus wages war against his enemies to redeem his people. Again, Revelation 19:13 demonstrates that Jesus' status as the divine warrior is similar to the targumic interpretation of the *Shekinah*. Just as the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* arranged in battle array before the foreign nations (*Tg. Neof.* Deut 20:4), so also, Jesus will wage war

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[50]For purpose clauses, see Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax,* §53g.

[51]Other targumic passages teach that the *Shekinah* was a warrior for Israel. *Tg. Neof.* Exod 12:23 says that the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* would pass over to destroy the Egyptians so that Israel could leave redeemed. Likewise, *Tg. Hab* 3:8 interprets God's chariot of salvation as his *Shekinah* being strength and salvation (פרקן) for his people when he was revealed over the sea, a reference to the exodus. Both of these passages, like *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 20:4 label the *Shekinah* as Israel's warrior and redeemer. Ernest Clarke points to Alexander Sperber's text of *Tg. Onq.* Deut 20:4, which says that God's *Memra* leads before Israel in battle (Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Deuteronomy,* 55n7). The broader targumic tradition seems to ascribe to the *Memra*, the *Shekinah*, and the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* the same role as God's agent in warfare.

against Satan and his followers. When Jesus delivers the decisive blow to Satan, he will

usher in the redemption promised long ago to Abraham. Therefore, both the *Yeqara* of

the *Shekinah* and Jesus represent God's agent(s) to wage war and redeem.

Targum Neofiti Numbers 11:25:
Agent to Distribute the Holy Spirit

Numbers 11:25	Then the Lord came down in a cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders.
MT Numbers 11:25	וירד יהוה בענן וידבר אליו ויאצל מן הרוח אשר עליו ויתן על שבעים איש הזקנים ויהי כנוח עליהם הרוח ויתנבאו ולא יספו
Neofiti Numbers 11:25	Then the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* of the Lord was revealed in the cloud and spoke with him, and he increased some of the Holy Spirit that was upon him, and he put it upon the seventy wise men.
Neofiti Numbers 11:25	ואיתגליית איקר שכינתה דייי בעננא ומלל עמה ורבי מן רוח קודשה די עלוי ויהב על שבעתי גובריה חכימיה והוה כד שרת עליהון רוח קודשה והוון מתנבאין ולא פסקין

In Numbers 11:16–25, Moses chose seventy wise men to help bear the burden

of leading Israel. God promised to take some of the Spirit that was on Moses and put it

on the elders to empower their leadership just as he had with Moses. In *Neofiti* Numbers

11:25, the Targum explains God's distribution of the Spirit as the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah*

distributing the *Holy* Spirit upon the seventy elders.[52] Therefore, the *Yeqara* of the

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[52]*Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 11:17 says also that God will be revealed in the *Yeqara* of his *Shekinah* and increase the spirit of prophecy over Israel. Alternatively, *Tg. Neof.* Num 11:17 says that God will be revealed by his *Memra* to distribute the *Holy* Spirit on Israel. In both cases, *Memra* and *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* function as agents to distribute the Holy Spirit (cf. John 20:22). In an excursus on the ecstasy of prophecy in Israel, Jacob Milgrom points to 1 Cor 12:10, 28 and Acts 10:44–45 as passages that pull from Num 11:25 to support spirit-empowered gifts (Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, JPSTC [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 383). For the Holy Spirit in the Targums related to the New Testament, see Martin McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 167–76. For a discussion of "Holy Spirit" in the Targums with an attempt to date the Targums, see Pere Casanellas, "The Use of the Expressions 'Prophetic Spirit' and 'Holy

Shekinah was God's agent to distribute the Holy Spirit according to *Neofiti* Numbers 11:25.[53]

Similarly, Jesus is God's agent to distribute the Holy Spirit. Some versions of the Nicene Creed say, "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; *who proceeds from the Father and the Son . . . .*" Based on John 15:26, Jesus will send the Helper (ὁ παράκλητος), the Spirit who proceeds from the Father. Although the language of procession does not refer to Jesus in John 15:26, that he will send (πέμψω) the Helper suggests that he has the authority as God's agent to distribute the Holy Spirit to God's people. Likewise, Paul teaches Titus that the Holy Spirit was poured out on Christians richly "through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5–6, διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν).[54] As such, Jesus is God's manifest agent through whom the Father distributes the Holy Spirit just as the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* distributed the Holy Spirit on the seventy elders in Israel.

Targum Isaiah 30:20: Manifestation as Teacher

Isaiah 30:20	And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher.
MT Isaiah 30:20	ונתן לכם אדני לחם צר ומים לחץ ולא יכנף עוד מוריך והיו

Spirit' in the Targum and the Dating of the Targums," *Aramaic Studies* 22, no. 2 (2013): 167–86.

[53]In *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Ludwig Blau says that in rabbinic literature, the "Holy Spirit" is equivalent to the "Spirit of the Lord" and that the *Shekinah* is often substituted in place of the Holy Spirit (Ludwig Blau, "The Holy Spirit," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Isidore Singer [New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1910], 6:446–50). Blau also says, "Although the Holy Spirit is often named instead of God (e.g., in *Sifre Deut* 31), yet it was conceived as being something distinct" (ibid., 6:448). According to *Tg. Neof.* Num 11:25, the *Shekinah*, who is God and distinct from God, distributes the Holy Spirit just as Jesus distributes the Spirit, who is God and yet is distinct from God.

[54]George Knight says, "διά with gen. is used to denote the personal agent through whom God has acted" (Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 345). See also the grammatical discussions of διά with the genitive to express agency in chap. 2.

Targum Isaiah 30:20	And the Lord will give you the possessions of the enemies and the plunder of the oppressor. And he will never again remove his *Shekinah* from the temple, but your eyes will see the *Shekinah* in the temple.

ויתן לכון יוי נכסי סנאה וביזת מעיקא ולא יסליק עוד שכינתיה מבית מקדשא ויהויין עינך חזין ית שכינתא בבית מקדשא	*Targum Isaiah* 30:20

Targum Isaiah 30:20 expresses God's promise to never remove his *Shekinah* presence from the temple. The Targums often interpret the *Shekinah* in relation to the temple (e.g., *Tg. 1 Kgs* 8:12–13; *Tg. 2 Kgs* 13:23), suggesting that God's presence regularly resided in the "house of holiness" (בית מקדשא). In *Targum Isaiah* 30:20, God promises that he will not remove his *Shekinah* from the temple, and that Israel's eyes will see the *Shekinah*. In addition, *Targum Isaiah* 30:20 translates the *Shekinah* based on the Hebrew, "your Teacher (מוריך) will not hide himself anymore." According to the Targum, the *Shekinah*, who will continually dwell with God's people, is also their Teacher.

Just as the Targum teaches that the *Shekinah* will be God's eternal presence, so also the New Testament teaches that Jesus is God's eternal manifestation. Once God's final manifestation arrived in the world, he promised that his presence would always be with his people (Matt 18:20; 28:20; Col 1:27; Heb 13:5). Likewise, Jesus is the final revelation of God who will represent the glory of God throughout eternity (Rev 21:3; 22–27; 22:4–5). Just as Jesus represented God's visible presence on earth, he will also represent God's visible presence in eternity. Indeed, Jesus is the final and eternal manifestation of the Father.

In addition, the Targums use *Shekinah* to translate the Hebrew "Teacher." Just as the Targums interpret the "Teacher" as the *Shekinah*, so also Jesus is also called "Teacher" in the New Testament. The religious leaders and disciples often call Jesus

"teacher" (e.g., Matt 9:11;12:28; 22:33; Mark 9:38; 12:19; Luke 7:40; John 3:2). Even

Jesus refers to himself as "the Teacher" (ὁ διδάσκαλος) when he sends the disciples to

prepare for the Passover (Matt 26:18; Mark 14:14). Likewise, the citizens of Judea

recognized Jesus as "teacher" (Mark 4:38; 5:35; 9:17). Combining the targumic

interpretation with the New Testament, the final revelation of God in Christ *is* the

"Teacher" not hiding himself anymore.

Examples of *Yeqara* as a Literal Translation That Do Not Refer to Jesus

Shekinah most often refers to God's manifest presence, but *Yeqara* may be a

literal translation of the Hebrew כבוד. Some occurrences of *Yeqara* as a literal

translation may refer to Christ as seen earlier in *Targum Ezekiel* 3:12 and *Targum Isaiah*

40:5. However, יקר has a range of meaning that goes beyond God's manifest radiance or

active agent. Therefore, the passages in this section will demonstrate uses of *Yeqara* as a

literal translation of כבוד that do not refer to Jesus.

Targum Onqelos Exodus 34:35: The "Glory" of Moses' Face

Exodus 34:35	The children of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining . . .
MT Exodus 34:35	וראו בני ישראל את פני משה כי קרן עור פני משה
Onqelos Exodus 34:35	And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the splendor of the *glory* of the face of Moses had increased.
Onqelos Exodus 34:35	וחזן בני ישראל ית אפי משה ארי סגי זיו יקרא דאפי משה

In Exodus 34:29–35, Moses returns from speaking with God face to face, and

his visible appearance changed noticeably. The Hebrew Bible says that Moses' face was

shining (קרן) and *Onqelos* interprets that the "splendor of the *glory* of the face of Moses

had increased." *Onqelos* explains that Moses' face shone with great radiance, and so the

term יקרא was appropriate. Even so, the radiance in *Onqelos* Exodus 34:35 refers to Moses' face rather than a manifestation of God, and therefore this passage does not refer to Jesus in the Old Testament.

In addition to the context, the grammar points to a use of יקרא that does not refer to Jesus. The Aramaic pronoun די connects "the splendor of the glory" to "the face of Moses."[55] According to Stevenson, ד before a genitive noun is equivalent to a possessive, in which the genitive noun "belongs to" the governing noun.[56] In *Onqelos* Exodus 34:35, the governing noun package (דאפי משה) "owns" the genitive noun package (זיו יקרא). Therefore, "glory" in *Onqelos* Exodus 34:35 is that which belongs to Moses' face, not to a manifestation of God.[57]

Targum Isaiah 11:10:
The "Glory" of the Messianic Dwelling Place

Isaiah 11:10	In that day, the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.
MT Isaiah 11:10	והיה ביום ההוא שרש ישי אשר עמד לנס עמים אליו גוים ידרשו והיתה מנחתו כבוד
Targum Isaiah 11:10	And it will come about in that time that the son of the son of Jesse who will stand as a sign to the nations, kingdoms will

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[55]Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim*, 275.

[56]Stevenson, *Grammar of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic*, §7n3.

[57]Grossfeld points to *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 34:35, which interprets the Hebrew as "the radiance of his facial features shone brightly from the radiance of the Glory of the Lord's Presence" (Grossfeld, *Targum Onqelos to Exodus*, 99n20). *Tg. Ps-J.* seems to point more directly to a use of יקרא that refers to Christ since it only speaks of the "radiance" of Moses' face, but relegates the "glory" to the Lord. This tradition was common in rabbinic literature, that the shining of Moses' face was a derived radiance from the glory of God's presence (see the *Midrash Tanhuma*; *Exod. Rab.* 47:6; *Deut. Rab.* 3:12). The story of the transfiguration (Matt 17:1–8) does not indicate that Moses and Elijah's faces shone like Jesus, but perhaps the idea is similar. The glorified humans, Moses and Elijah, display their heavenly glory derivative of the glory of God's manifest presence in Christ (cf. Isa 60:1; Matt 13:43; Rev 21:23). Even though *Tg. Ps.-J.* presents a more likely use of *Yeqara* as a reference to Jesus, *Tg. Onq.* does not readily point that direction in either context or grammar.

obey him and the place of his dwelling will be *glorious*.

Targum Isaiah 11:10 ויהי בעידנא ההוא בר בריה דישי דעתיד דיקום את לעממיא
ליה מלכון ישתמעון ויהי אתר בית משרוהי ביקר

Isaiah 11 is a passage that scholars use to point to Jesus in the Old Testament. John Oswalt says that the truth expressed in Isaiah 11:10 "is underlined when we look at the full revelation of the Messiah in Jesus Christ."[58] *Targum Isaiah* 11:10 also supports a reference to Jesus, but not because of the term *Yeqara*.

Targum Isaiah 11:10 provides a messianic reference in the phrase "the son of the son of Jesse." This son of Jesse will be the king who stands as a signal to the people that God's kingdom has come (cf. *Tg. Isa* 11:1). However, יקר occurs in the Targum as an adjective to describe the dwelling place of this son of Jesse rather than as an independent display of the glory of God. According to the Hebrew and the Targum, the dwelling place of this son of Jesse will be glorious (ויהי אתר בית משרוהי ביקר). The Targum translates the Hebrew literally, and therefore, the use of יקר in *Targum Isaiah* 11:10 does not refer to Jesus. Even in a passage full of messianic references, יקר does not refer to Jesus. The dwelling place of God's Messiah will indeed be glorious, but יקר fails to indicate divine manifestation or agency in *Targum Isaiah* 11:10.

Conclusion

Like *Memra*, *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* occur in the Targums with a variety of nuances. Whereas *Memra* functions primarily as God's agent, *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* function primarily as God's manifestation. At times, the *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* exhibit God's manifestation, in which God's divine presence is seen or experienced. These occurrences refer to Jesus since he is the final manifestation of the fullness of God's character (Heb 1:3). At other times, *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* refer to God's manifestation

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[58]John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1–39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 287.

with agency, and the *Shekinah* or *Yeqara* fulfill offices and roles similar to Jesus, carrying out the work of the Father. These passages also point to Christ since Jesus is God's agent to carry out the work of the Father. While nearly all of the occurrences of *Shekinah* refer to Jesus, some occurrences of *Yeqara* represent a literal translation of the Hebrew and do not help one find Christ in the Old Testament.

Shekinah* and *Yeqara* represent God's manifestation, and the New Testament similarly teaches that Jesus is God's ultimate manifestation. When *Shekinah* or *Yeqara* represent God's manifestation or manifestation with agency, these terms, like *Memra*, may help one find Christ in the Old Testament.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The endeavor to find Christ in the Old Testament has existed since the early church. Even Jesus pointed the disciples to his presence in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:27, 44). While the New Testament authors were human authors, the Spirit of God led them along in their interpretive methods (2 Pet 1:21). The Holy Spirit used their context and surroundings to bring to mind explanations and descriptions of Jesus that would fit the culture of the first century. The Holy Spirit, through the apostles, provided interpretive methods for finding Christ in the Old Testament. By following apostolic interpretive methods, one may confidently find Christ in the Old Testament.

One of the interpretive methods used by the apostles was to employ targumic terms and concepts in the New Testament. The Targums provide the names of the Egyptian sorcerers (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 7:11; 2 Tim 3:8–9), and they may provide insight into titles like "Zechariah, son of Barachiah" (Matt 23:35; *Tg. Lam* 2:20). These general references to the Targums suggest that the New Testament authors were familiar with these traditions.

In addition to these general references from the Targums, the New Testament authors appear to have used targumic terms and concepts to teach about Jesus. The *Memra* was God's manifest agent whereas the *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* represented God's manifestation in the Targums. While many claim that the *Memra* functions as an anti-anthropomorphic translational device, the Targums do not alleviate all anthropomorphism with substitute terms. Indeed, the *Memra* explains anthropomorphism rather than avoiding it. *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* sometimes translate the Hebrew literally, but in many

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cases these terms refer to the manifestation of God and portray similar offices and roles as Jesus. All of these terms have Christological implications based on how the New Testament authors use similar terminology and theological concepts to refer to Jesus.

In chapter 1, the historical overview of these terms demonstrated that nearly all scholarship understands these terms to represent divine agency and God's manifestation. The *Memra* is God's manifest agent, used in the Targums to interpret God's actions in the created order. Since God is transcendently other, he acts in the world through his agent. Even so, the *Memra* is the Lord. He is both God and distinct from God. Likewise, scholarship agrees that the *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* represent God's manifestation. The *Shekinah* is God's presence among his people while the *Yeqara* is God's "weighty" radiance displayed in Israel. While most scholarship agrees on the meaning and use of these terms, a distinction exists between those scholars who see Christological implications in these terms and those who do not. Indeed, some scholars who deny Christological implications in these targumic terms admit that the apostles understood the terms with Christological implications. These scholars want to study the Targums on their own terms without any connection to the New Testament. However, some admit that the New Testament authors may have appropriated these terms to speak of Jesus, but they simply believe the apostles were wrong. Even so, nearly all scholarship sees agency and manifestation in these terms even if they deny the Christological implications presented in the New Testament.

Chapter 2 showed that the apostles used terms and concepts similar to the targumic *Memra*, *Shekinah,* and *Yeqara* when referring to Christ. The Christological implications that some scholars timidly admit became apparent. The Apostle John readily called Jesus the *Memra* (*Logos*), and taught that God's presence in Christ "tabernacled" (*Shekinah*) among men, allowing them to see the radiant glory (*Yeqara*) of the Father. Indeed, in Christ, the fullness of deity dwells bodily. As such, Jesus is God's

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agent who redeems, wages war, judges, and displays the character of God in physical form. Jesus is God's agent *and* manifestation similarly to how the *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* represent God's agent(s) and manifestation in the world. Using these targumic terms, the New Testament speaks of Jesus as the "Word" (John 1:1, 14; Rev 19:13), the "glory" (John 12:41; 2 Cor 4:4, 6; Heb 1:3), and the manifest presence of God (Col 1:27).

The New Testament also extends similar concepts behind these targumic terms to speak of Jesus' offices and roles. As God's agent, Jesus redeems similarly to the *Memra*. Like the *Shekinah*, Jesus presents the fullness of the glory of God in his person. In the same way that the *Yeqara* will be revealed in the age to come (*Tg. Isa* 40:5), so also Jesus will be the shining radiance of God in the heavenly kingdom (Rev 21:22–23). The *Memra* and the *Yeqara* of the *Shekinah* fought for Israel as they entered the promised land, and Jesus will fight for the church in the final eschatological battle. Throughout the New Testament, the authors use similar terms and concepts to speak of Jesus' role as God's agent and manifestation.

As God's agent and manifestation, chapter 3 focused on examples of the *Memra* that refer to Christ, may refer to Christ, and do not refer to Christ. In an attempt to find Christ in the Old Testament, some passages certainly referred to Jesus based on how the apostles used *Memra* terminology and concepts. Jesus was God's agent to redeem, as well as the one in whom men must believe. Jesus was God's agent who accepts worship, and he was presented as the one who will wage war against Satan and his cohort. When the Father works in the created order, he works through his Son.

Whereas many of the occurrences of *Memra* refer to Jesus, some become difficult to discern. Sometimes, the Targums use *Memra* as a mere substitute for the divine name, and one may find it difficult to relate the usage directly to a role or function of Jesus. In addition, some references to *Memra* translate Hebrew passages in which no indication of God's agency exists. For instance, מימר sometimes translates passages

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implying the "word" of God's law, or the "word" of another human. These references do not refer to Christ, and the New Testament authors do not attempt to make them refer to Jesus. Therefore, a complete study of *Memra* must take into account that not all occurrences of *Memra* refer to Jesus.

In chapter 4, *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* were presented as God's manifestation. Sometimes, the *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* refer to God's manifestation, while at other times these terms refer to God's manifestation with agency. As God's manifestation, these terms represent God's presence with his people or in the tabernacle. These terms also represent God's manifestation as the visible light of God's glory or his heavenly presence. As God's manifestation with agency, *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* mirror the roles and functions of the *Memra*. Sometimes *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* function as God's agent(s) to actively carry out the work of the Father. In these cases, these two terms represent God's active presence to redeem, wage war, teach, and distribute the Holy Spirit. Even though nearly all occurrences of *Shekinah*, and most occurrences of *Yeqara* refer to Jesus, *Yeqara* may be used to translate the Hebrew literally and does not help one find Christ in the Old Testament.

Just as the *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* represent God's manifestation, Jesus also represents God's manifestation as the divine agent. Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God and in him all the fullness of deity was pleased to dwell. Jesus is God's manifest King and God's glory shines brightest in the face of Christ. As God's manifestation agent, Jesus also redeems, wages war, and is Israel's Teacher just as the *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*. Therefore, as God's manifestation, the New Testament portrays Jesus with terms and concepts similar to the targumic *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*.

While the New Testament authors used a variety of interpretive methods to teach about Jesus, they always sought to show how Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures (e.g., Acts 3:22; 1 Cor 15:4). Since the targumic traditions were part of the synagogue liturgy,

the apostles may have been familiar with these official interpretations of the Hebrew Bible. Although not all of the occurrences of *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* refer to Jesus, the New Testament authors spiritually discerned the ways in which the Targums may point to Christ as God's agent and manifestation. Using targumic terms and concepts, the apostles taught that Jesus was God's agent and manifestation similar to the *Memra, Shekinah*, and *Yeqara*. This exegetical strategy was one way the apostles sought to explain Jesus' person and work in all of Scripture. They highlighted similarities between the Targums and the New Testament, specifically the terms and concepts used to speak of Jesus. Therefore, the New Testament authors provided an exegetical method by which Christ may be found in the Old Testament through the Aramaic *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and *Yeqara* of the Targums.

APPENDIX

CATEGORIZATION OF *MEMRA* AS JESUS,
NOT JESUS, AND PROBABLY JESUS

Because *Memra* functions as God's agent to carry out his work in the world, the term may often point to Christ in the Old Testament. The intention of this appendix is to list the occurrences of *Memra* in the targumic traditions in categories indicating whether they refer to Jesus, do not refer to Jesus, or probably refer to Jesus. A similar structure was used in chapter 3, but this appendix provides an exhaustive list of the occurrences of *Memra* in targumic tradition.

For the occurrences of *Memra* that certainly refer to Jesus, *Memra* must be an agent or manifestation of God *and* have a direct connection to a New Testament office or role of Christ. For example, the *Memra* is Israel's Savior (e.g., *Tg. Isa* 63:8) just as Jesus saves those who believe in him. Likewise, *Memra* fights for Israel (*Tg. Josh* 10:14) just as Jesus will wage war against Satan and his cohort in the final battle (Rev 19:13). The *Memra* creates (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 1:3) just as Jesus is the author of creation (John 1:3, 10). In these examples, the *Memra* functions as God's agent *and* the New Testament authors appear to directly apply similar terms and concepts to teach about Jesus' offices and roles.

For the occurrences of *Memra* that do not refer to Jesus, מימר may be understood as a "word" or "command." Sometimes it is the word of a human, but at other times, the term indicates a body of commands that should be obeyed. Likewise, מימר may be used as part of a euphemism for inner deliberation. These instances of מימר do not refer to Jesus because the term fails to function as an agent or manifestation of God.

Finally, the occurrences of *Memra* that probably refer to Jesus indicate that *Memra* functions as God's agent or manifestation, and yet a connection to Jesus in the New Testament is less clear. Perhaps an indirect, conceptual connection to Jesus' offices and roles exists, but the New Testament use of similar language may be debatable. These occurrences of *Memra* are strong enough that they *probably* refer to Jesus. However, because the connection to the New Testament is less clear, these references *probably* refer to Jesus.

Occurrences of *Memra* That Refer to Jesus

Tg. Onqelos Genesis	*Tg. Onqelos* Numbers	*Tg. 2 Samuel*		
3:8	11:20	22:3	45:22–25	31:9
3:10	11:23	22:30–31	48:15–16	31:28
9:15–17	14:11	23:1	54:9	32:40–41
9:12–13	17:19	24:14	57:13	39:18
15:6	20:12		59:17	42:11
17:2	22:20	*Tg. 1 Kings*	61:10	46:28
17:7		18:24	62:2	49:11
17:10–11	*Tg. Onqelos* Deuteronomy	18:37	63:1	50:40
	1:30		63:8	
Tg. Onqelos Exodus	3:22	*Tg. 2 Kings*	63:10	*Tg. Ezekiel*
14:31	4:37	17:14	63:14	16:8
19:17	9:3	18:5	66:6	20:5–6
25:22	20:4	19:31		20:12
29:42–43	31:6		*Tg. Jeremiah*	20:20
30:6	33:27	*Tg. Isaiah*	1:9	34:30
30:36		6:8	2:2	37:14
31:13	*Tg. Joshua*	8:5	3:23	43:8
31:17	10:14	8:14	7:23	
33:22	10:42	9:6	11:4	*Tg. Hosea*
	13:6	10:17	11:7	1:7
Tg. Onqelos Leviticus	23:3	11:4	14:22	11:8–11
26:9	23:10	12:2	15:20	13:7–9
26:46	23:13	42:1	17:7	
		43:2	20:11	*Tg. Joel*
	Tg. Judges	44:24	24:6	2:11
	6:12	45:2	27:5	2:17
		45:12	30:11	
		45:17	31:2	*Tg. Jonah*
				3:5

33:9
33:12
33:19
33:22
34:5

Tg. Ps.-J.
Leviticus
26:11

26:46

Tg. Ps.-J.
Numbers
17:19
20:12
20:24
21:5–6
21:8–9

27:14

Tg. Ps.-J.
Deuteronomy
1:30
1:32
3:22
4:3
4:7

4:20
4:33
4:36
5:5
5:24–25
6:21
9:3
11:23
24:18

28:9
29:1
31:8
32:39
32:43
33:29
34:10

Occurrences of *Memra* That Are Not Jesus

Tg. Onqelos
Genesis
3:17
4:23
9:6
16:2
22:18
26:35
31:24
39:22
41:40
41:44
43:7
45:21

Tg. Onqelos
Exodus
5:2
15:8
18:24
21:22
34:27
38:21

Tg. Onqelos
Numbers
3:16
3:39
3:51
4:27
4:37
4:41

4:45
4:49
9:8
13:3
14:41
22:9
22:18
23:18
24:4
24:13
24:16
27:14
27:21
33:2
33:38
36:5

Tg. Onqelos
Deuteronomy
8:3
17:10–11
19:15
21:5
21:20
32:1
34:5

Tg. Joshua
7:12
15:13
17:4

19:50
21:3
22:9

Tg. Judges
11:10

Tg. 1 Samuel
2:25
2:35
4:8
8:7
8:9
8:19
8:22
12:1
15:1
19:6
28:23

Tg. 2 Samuel
7:21
22:14
22:16
22:25–26

Tg. 1 Kings
8:15
8:24
9:7
20:25

Tg. 2 Kings
23:35

Tg. Isaiah
4:4
11:15
21:17
22:25
25:8
26:19
28:6
28:21
28:23
30:1
32:9
36:10
36:15
37:29
40:10
40:13
48:1
52:6
57:6
59:13
59:16
60:9
62:11
63:5
63:10–11

Tg. Jeremiah
35:8
51:5

Tg. Ezekiel
3:17
17:22

Tg. Hosea
3:2

Tg. Amos
1:2

Tg. Micah
2:7
7:10

Tg. Habakkuk
3:9
3:13

Tg. Psalms
5:1
17:4
18:9
18:26
19:4
19:15
44:6
54:4
55:2

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4:27	14:41	24:4	36:5	21:8
4:37	15:32	24:13		28:15
4:41	15:34	24:16	*Tg. Ps.-J.* Deuteronomy	32:9
4:45	16:26	27:21	1:26	33:9
4:49	20:21	31:8	17:6	34:5–6
9:23	21:35	33:2	17:10–11	
10:13	22:18	33:38	19:15	
13:3	23:19	35:30		

Occurrences of *Memra* That Are Probably Jesus

Tg. Onqelos Genesis
6:6–7
8:21
15:1
20:3
21:20
21:22–23
22:16
24:3
26:3
26:5
26:24
26:28
28:15
28:20*
31:3
31:49–50
35:3
39:2–3
39:21
39:23
48:21
49:24–25

Tg. Onqelos Exodus
2:25
3:12
4:12
4:15
6:8

10:10
15:2
15:10
15:26
16:8
17:1
18:19
19:5
23:21–22
32:13

Tg. Onqelos Leviticus
8:35
18:30
20:23
22:9
24:12
26:11
26:14
26:18
26:21
26:23
26:27
26:30

Tg. Onqelos Numbers
9:18–20
9:23
10:13
14:9

14:22
14:30
14:35
14:43
20:24
23:3
23:16
23:19
23:21
36:2

Tg. Onqelos Deuteronomy
1:26
1:32
1:43
2:7
4:24
4:30
4:33
4:36
5:5
5:24–25
8:20
9:23
11:1
13:5
13:19
15:5
18:16
20:1
23:15

26:14
26:17
27:10
28:1–2
28:15
28:45
28:62
30:2
30:8
30:10
30:20
31:8
31:23
32:51
33:3

Tg. Joshua
1:5
1:9
1:17
2:12
3:7
5:6
6:27
9:18
14:12
22:2–3
22:16
22:18
22:27
22:29
22:31

24:24

Tg. Judges
1:1
1:19
1:22
2:2
2:18
2:20
6:10
6:16
18:5
20:18
20:23
20:27
21:7

Tg. 1 Samuel
3:19
10:7
10:22
12:5
12:14–15
13:3
14:26–27
15:11
15:19
15:22
15:24
15:35
16:18
17:37

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18:12
18:14
18:28
20:13
20:23
20:42
22:10
22:13
22:15
23:2
23:4
23:16
24:22
26:20
28:6
28:10
28:15–16
28:18
30:6
30:8
30:15

Tg. 2 Samuel
2:1
5:10
5:19
5:23
6:7
7:3
7:9
14:17
19:8
22:9
22:13
22:19
22:28
22:36

Tg. 1 Kings
1:17
1:30
1:37
2:3

2:8
2:23
2:42
8:50
8:57
11:38
12:24
13:21
13:26
14:11
20:36

Tg. 2 Kings
13:23
18:7
18:12
18:22
18:25
18:30
19:28
19:34
20:6

Tg. Isaiah
1:2
1:14
1:16
1:19–20
5:24
10:20
17:7
17:10
26:3
26:13
27:3
29:19
30:27
30:30–33
31:9
32:5
33:2
34:16–17
36:7

37:32
37:35
40:5
40:24
41:1
41:10
41:13–14
41:16
43:5
43:27
46:3–4
46:12
48:11–13
49:1
49:5
49:15
50:11
51:1
51:4–5
51:7
55:2–3
59:19
63:17
65:1
65:3
66:13
66:24

Tg. Jeremiah
2:5
2:8
2:20
2:29
2:31
3:13
3:20
3:25
4:12
4:17
4:28
5:11–12
5:22
6:8

7:26
7:28–29
9:12
12:15
13:15
14:19
15:15–19
16:12
16:17
17:5
17:13
17:16–17
17:24
17:27
18:10
22:5
22:21
22:24
23:16
23:18
23:39
25:7
25:30
26:4
26:13
27:18
29:14
29:23
31:37
32:23
32:31
33:8
34:14
34:17
35:14–16
38:20
40:3
42:5–6
42:13
42:21
43:4
43:7

44:23
49:13
49:16
51:14

Tg. Ezekiel
1:8
2:3
3:7
5:11
5:13
5:15
5:17
6:10
7:9
8:18
9:10
13:22
14:3–4
14:7
17:21
17:24
20:3
20:8
20:15
20:17
20:23
20:25
20:27–28
20:31
20:38–39
20:42
21:22
21:37
22:14
23:18
23:34
24:14
26:5
26:14
30:12
33:7
34:24

22:16
22:18
28:8
28:10
28:20
29:23

Tg. 2 Chronicles
1:1
6:10
6:15
7:15
12:2
13:9–11
13:15
13:18
14:10
15:2
15:6
15:9
16:7–8
17:3
18:31
19:6
19:11
20:7
20:17
20:20
20:22
20:27
20:37
21:14
21:16
21:18
22:7
24:16
25:7
26:7
26:16
26:20
28:19
28:22
29:19

29:25
30:7
31:10
32:1
32:8
32:21
32:24
32:31
33:17–18
34:27
36:23

Tg. Neofiti
Genesis
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13:14
14:19
14:22
15:1
18:1
18:17
18:19
20:3
20:6
20:13
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35:1
46:4
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Tg. Neofiti
Exodus
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4:15

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10:10
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15:8
15:26
17:1
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17:15
18:4
19:5
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25:22
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Tg. Neofiti
Leviticus
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19:2
20:23
26:9
26:23

Tg. Neofiti
Numbers
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18:9
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32:15

Tg. Neofiti
Deuteronomy
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1:26–27
1:36
1:43
2:1
3:21
6:2
7:4
8:10
8:18
8:20
9:4
9:7
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34:9–10

Tg. Ps.-J.
Genesis
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11:8
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Tg. Ps.-J.
Exodus
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16:3
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Tg. Ps.-J.
Leviticus
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Tg. Ps.-J.
Numbers
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Tg. Ps.-J.
Deuteronomy
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ABSTRACT

FINDING CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THROUGH
THE ARAMAIC *MEMRA*, *SHEKINAH*, AND *YEQARA*
OF THE TARGUMS

Adam Joseph Howell, Ph.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015
Chair: Dr. Russell T. Fuller

This dissertation seeks to find Christ in the Old Testament by examining the

targumic passages in which *Memra, Shekinah*, or *Yeqara* occur as God's agent or

manifestation. Chapter 1 demonstrates that scholars view the *Memra*, *Shekinah*, and

Yeqara as agents for God or manifestations of God even though many scholars reject the

notion of Christological implications found in the New Testament appropriation of these

terms and concepts.

Chapter 2 discusses the close connection between the targumic *Memra*,

Shekinah, and *Yeqara* and the New Testament by citing clear instances where the New

Testament authors appropriated targumic terms and concepts to speak of Jesus. By using

targumic terms and concepts, the New Testament authors provided an exegetical method

for finding Christ in the Old Testament through Targum.

Chapter 3 examines the occurrences of *Memra*, presenting examples of

passages that certainly refer to Christ, do not refer to Christ, and probably refer to Christ.

In this chapter, the *Memra* refers to Christ or probably refers to Christ when the *Memra*

functions as God's agent, carrying out God's work in the world.

Chapter 4 investigates the occurrences of *Shekinah* and *Yeqara*, but under the

influence of the New Testament, nearly all of the occurrences of *Shekinah,* and most

occurrences of *Yeqara* refer to Jesus. *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* are delineated into categories of occurrences that refer to God's manifestation and God's manifestation with agency. Even though most occurrences of *Shekinah* and *Yeqara* refer to Christ, some occurrences of *Yeqara* are a literal translation of the Hebrew and do not refer to Jesus.

Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation by tying several themes together to show the consistency and validity of finding Christ in the Old Testament through Aramaic terms and concepts.

This dissertation argues that when the *Memra, Shekinah*, or *Yeqara* appear as God's agent(s) or as manifestations of God, one may find Christ in those Old Testament passages. One may find Christ in these passages because the New Testament authors present Jesus as the premier agent and manifestation of God using targumic terms and concepts.

VITA

Adam Joseph Howell

EDUCATIONAL
 Diploma, Elizabethton High School, Elizabethton, Tennessee
 B.S., East Tennessee State University, 2002
 M.Div., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007

MINISTERIAL
 Discipleship Coordinator, The Well Ministry, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2004-
  2005
 Minister of Education, Boone Trail Baptist Church, Johnson City, Tennessee
  2004-2005

ACADEMIC
 Garrett Fellow, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006-
 Adjunct Instructor of Biblical Languages, Boyce College, Fall 2009
 Adjunct Online Instructor, Liberty University, 2012-
 Adjunct Instructor of Biblical Studies, Boyce College, Spring 2013, Spring
  2014, Spring 2015
 Adjunct Instructor of Biblical Languages, The Southern Baptist Theological
  Seminary, Spring 2014
 Adjunct Online Instructor, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014-
  2015

ORGANIZATIONAL
 Evangelical Theological Society
 Society of Biblical Literature