Yesterday I posted the first in what will be a series of reflections on the earliest Christian Christologies (understandings of Christ), and in this post I would like to provide some necessary background information that will allow that post to make even better sense.

In that post I began to outline what I take to be the earliest Christology of all. Jesus and his followers, I maintained, saw him(self) as a man and nothing more than a man (who was a great teacher, a prophet, and the future messiah of the coming kingdom – but human through and through, nothing else). But once these followers came to believe that he had been raised from the dead, they altered their view to begin to think that God had exalted him to heaven and made him his specially anointed one, his Son, who would indeed be the future messiah and who would bring in that Kingdom himself when he returned from heaven as the Son of Man.

And so, why do I think that this Christological view – that God made Jesus his Son at the resurrection, the one who reigns *now* (and so is already the “ruler” or the “anointed one” or the “messiah,”), and so is the lord of the kingdom (the LORD) already? It’s a complicated story.

A bit of personal background. I took my first PhD seminar at Princeton Theological Seminar before I was a PhD student. I was in the senior year of my Masters of Divinity program, and I knew that I wanted the next year to get into the PhD program. That year one of the great professors of NT at Princeton, Paul Meyer, was offering a PhD seminar (for PhD students only), called “Creeds and Hymns in the NT.” I had taken a crazy-hard six-week crash-course German the summer before at Princeton University, and so I could already read scholarship in German (where most NT scholarship had been and was being done at the time). And so I asked Prof. Meyer if he would make an exception to his rule not to allow MDiv students into his graduate seminars, and I somehow convinced him. So now I was in with the big boys. (And yes, they were all boys.)

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Exaltation Christology in an Early Creed
The Earliest Christology