

A BRIEF RESPONSE TO

‘THE CHRISTOLOGY OF TITUS 2:13 AND 1 TIM. 2:5’

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We can be grateful to Dr Edwards for reminding us of part of the Old Testament background of the ransom logion and for highlighting the similarity of Mark 10:45, 1 Timothy 2:6, Titus 2:14, and Barnabas 14:6.

In its essence, Dr Edwards’ view seems to be that the similarities between 1 Timothy 2:1-7 and Titus 2:11-14 are so great that it is unlikely that their Christologies should not also be identical. Then, since θεός and Χριστός Ἰησοῦς are clearly distinguished in 1 Timothy 2:5, they should also be distinguished in Titus 2:13. So the common translation that ascribes the title ‘our great God and Saviour’ to Jesus Christ ‘is not valid’.

That there are certain similarities between 1 Timothy 2:1-7 and Titus 2:11-14 is incontestable (although it is perhaps the universal ‘scope’ of salvation rather than its universal ‘extension’), but when we compare the two verses in question, a principal difference between them becomes apparent, namely that 1 Timothy 2:5 is concerned with the oneness of the Godhead (εἷς... θεός) and the oneness of the mediator (εἷς... μεσίτης) along with the humanity (ἄνθρωπος) of that one mediator, emphases that are lacking in Titus 2:13, which could be affirming the complementary truth of Christ’s deity (hardly ‘a fundamentally different Christology’) as well as his glorious appearing as the ‘blessed hope’ of Christians.

From notes seven and seventeen it appears that Edwards wishes to translate Titus 2:13, ‘the appearance of the glory of our great God and saviour, Jesus Christ’, taking Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as being in apposition to τῆς δόξης. This has a *prima facie* attractiveness, since (1) it preserves intact the stereotyped θεός καὶ σωτήρ formula that was common in First Century religious terminology and always denoted one deity, not two; and (2) it identifies ‘our great God and Saviour’ as

the Father, reflecting the usage of the Pastorals (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; Tit. 1:3; 2:10; 3:4). Against this must be set three difficulties. (1) While nouns in exegetical apposition need not be juxtaposed (see Col. 2:2), ἥτις ἐστὶν might have removed the ambiguity that arises, *ex hypothesi*, from the two substantival genitives that occur between δόξης and Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Aware of this problem, Edwards suggests (n. 7) that Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is in apposition to the whole phrase ‘the-glory-of-our-great-God-and-Saviour’, a usage that would be difficult to justify. (2) Since the relative clause that follows Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (viz. ‘who gave himself for us’) defines the work of Jesus Christ as Saviour, it seems unnatural to dissociate σωτήρ from Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. (3) The title σωτήρ is elsewhere applied to Jesus in the Pastorals (2 Tim. 1:10; Tit. 1:4; 3:6), but nowhere in the New Testament is the title δόξα θεοῦ explicitly applied to Jesus.

Also, it is not a little surprising to be told that the common translation that applies the title ‘our great God and Saviour’ to Jesus Christ, ‘is not valid’, when almost all grammarians and lexicographers, and many commentators on Titus (from Ellicott through to Marshall, Mounce and Collins), support this translation, not to mention the majority of modern English versions (RV, TCNT, RSV, NRSV, NEB, REB, NASB^{1,2}, JB, NJB, GNB, NIV, TNIV, HCSB, Weymouth, Goodspeed, Barclay). See further my *Jesus as God. The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992; repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008): 173-85.