

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	vii
Abbreviations .....	xiii
1. Introduction .....	1
1.1. Initial Analysis of 2 Corinthians 12:1–10 .....	3
1.2. History of Interpretation .....	9
1.2.1 Interpretation before 1942 .....	9
1.2.2 The Post-1942 Consensus .....	11
1.2.3 New History of Religion Approaches .....	13
1.2.4 Rhetorical Approaches .....	20
1.3. Why this Project? .....	23
1.3.1 The Difficulties of Betz's Proposal .....	23
1.3.2 Käsemann's Proposal and its Implications .....	26
1.3.3 Moving Beyond Tabor's Thesis .....	28
1.4. The Problems of "Religious Experience" .....	31
1.5. Methodology .....	36
2. Ascent to Heaven in the Greco-Roman World .....	39
2.1. Greek <i>Iatromentes</i> .....	41
2.2. Ascent as Metaphor for Philosophical Enlightenment ...	47
2.2.1. Parmenides' Proem .....	47
2.2.2. Plato's <i>Phaedrus</i> .....	50
2.2.3. Conclusions .....	53
2.3. Heavenly Ascent as Philosophical Myth .....	54
2.3.1. Plato's Myth of Er .....	54
2.3.2. Cicero's Dream of Scipio .....	56
2.3.3. Plutarch's Philosophical Myths .....	59
2.3.3.1. <i>The Face on the Moon</i> .....	59
2.3.3.2. <i>On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance</i> .....	59
2.3.3.3. <i>On the Sign of Socrates</i> .....	60
2.3.4. Corpus Hermeticum: <i>Poimandres</i> .....	64
2.3.5. Lucian's <i>Icaromenippus</i> .....	67
2.3.6. Conclusions .....	69

2.4.	Heavenly Ascent as Religious Practice .....	70
2.4.1.	Early Rituals of Descent .....	70
2.4.2.	Apuleius and the Mysteries of Isis .....	71
2.4.3.	The Mysteries of Mithras .....	77
2.4.4.	<i>The Mithras Liturgy</i> .....	81
2.4.5.	Nag Hammadi 6.6: <i>Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth</i> .....	85
2.4.6.	Conclusions .....	88
2.5.	Ascent as Political Propaganda: Roman Apotheosis Traditions .....	89
2.6.	Conclusions .....	89
3.	Ascent to Heaven in Ancient Judaism and Christianity .....	95
3.1.	Old Testament Theophanies .....	98
3.1.1.	Moses .....	98
3.1.2.	First Kings 22:19–22 .....	99
3.1.3.	Isaiah 6:1–13 .....	100
3.1.4.	Ezekiel 1:1–3:15 .....	101
3.1.5.	Daniel 7–12 .....	103
3.1.6.	Summary .....	104
3.2.	Moses Traditions .....	105
3.2.1.	<i>The Exagoge</i> of Ezekiel the Tragedian .....	105
3.2.2.	Philo’s Moses .....	107
3.3.	Ascents of Other Old Testament Figures .....	108
3.3.1.	<i>First Enoch</i> 1–36: <i>The Book of Watchers</i> .....	108
3.3.2.	<i>Testament of Levi</i> .....	114
3.3.3.	<i>First Enoch</i> 37–71: <i>Parables</i> .....	118
3.3.4.	<i>Second Enoch</i> .....	120
3.3.5.	<i>Third Baruch</i> .....	126
3.3.6.	<i>Apocalypse of Abraham</i> .....	127
3.3.7.	<i>Apocalypse of Zephaniah</i> .....	131
3.3.8.	<i>Apocalypse of Sedrach</i> .....	132
3.3.9.	<i>Testament of Abraham</i> .....	134
3.3.10.	<i>Ascension of Isaiah</i> .....	134
3.3.11.	Conclusions .....	137
3.4.	Heavenly Ascent as Religious Practice .....	139
3.4.1.	A Fragment from Qumran .....	139
3.4.2.	<i>Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice</i> .....	141
3.4.3.	Philo .....	144
3.4.4.	The Revelation of John of Patmos .....	147
3.4.5.	Conclusions .....	151
3.5.	Rabbinic Traditions and the Hekhalot Literature .....	152

3.5.1.	Mishnah <i>Hagiga</i> .....	152
3.5.2.	The Four who Entered Paradise .....	154
3.5.3.	<i>Hekhalot Rabbati</i> .....	156
3.5.4.	<i>Hekhalot Zutarti</i> .....	160
3.5.5.	Conclusions .....	163
3.6.	Conclusions .....	164
4.	Religious Experience in Paul's Letters .....	169
4.1.	Visions and Revelations .....	170
4.1.1.	Visions and Revelations of the Lord .....	171
4.1.1.1.	First Corinthians 9:1 .....	171
4.1.1.2.	First Corinthians 15:8–11 .....	173
4.1.1.3.	Galatians 1:11–17 .....	176
4.1.1.4.	Second Corinthians 4:5–12 .....	178
4.1.1.5.	The Community's Vision of the Lord: 2 Corinthians 3:16–18 .....	184
4.1.2.	Other Experiences of Revelation .....	188
4.1.2.1.	The Galatians' Reception of the Gospel: Galatians 3:1–5 .....	188
4.1.2.2.	First Corinthians 14:26–33 .....	192
4.1.2.3.	First Corinthians 2:6–16 .....	192
4.1.3.	Conclusions .....	198
4.2.	Experiences of Divine Speech .....	201
4.2.1.	Galatians 4:6 .....	201
4.2.2.	Romans 8:9–27 .....	202
4.2.3.	First Corinthians 14 .....	207
4.2.4.	Second Corinthians 13:2–5 .....	212
4.2.5.	Conclusions .....	214
4.3.	Suffering and Power .....	215
4.3.1.	Galatians 2:19–20 .....	215
4.3.2.	Galatians 6:17 .....	218
4.3.3.	Philippians 3:4b–21 .....	219
4.3.4.	Philippians 1:20–21 .....	225
4.3.5.	Conclusions .....	226
4.4.	Conclusions .....	228
5.	Second Corinthians 12:1–10 in its Context .....	231
5.1.	Rhetorical Situation .....	232
5.1.1.	Paul's Collection Efforts .....	232
5.1.2.	Suspicions about Paul .....	233
5.1.3.	Paul's Rivals .....	234

5.2.	The Immediate Literary Context of 2 Corinthians 12:1–10 in Chapters 10–13 .....	235
5.2.1.	Paul’s Gentleness and Paul’s Authority .....	235
5.2.2.	Paul’s Teaching and Refusal of Payment .....	242
5.2.3.	A Fool’s Boast .....	244
5.3.	Second Corinthians 12:1–10 .....	248
5.3.1.	Second Corinthians 12:1–4 .....	248
5.3.2.	Second Corinthians 12:5–7a .....	263
5.3.3.	Second Corinthians 12:7b–10 .....	268
5.4.	Conclusions .....	282
5.4.1.	Summary and Conclusions of Exegetical Work .....	282
5.4.2.	Conclusions in View of Chapters 2–4 .....	285
6.	Premodern Interpretation of 2 Corinthians 12:1–10 in the Eastern Church .....	289
6.1.	Origen .....	292
6.2.	Gregory of Nyssa .....	304
6.3.	Symeon the New Theologian .....	313
6.4.	Gregory Palamas .....	321
6.5.	Conclusions .....	328
	Epilogue .....	333
	Bibliography .....	339
1.	Primary Sources .....	339
2.	Reference Works .....	347
3.	Commentaries .....	348
4.	Other Secondary Sources .....	350
	Index of Ancient Texts .....	375
	Index of Modern Authors .....	387
	Index of Subjects .....	389