

## The Odes of Solomon: Commentary and Analysis

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Last modified: July 20, 2018

*Note for readers:* This document contains the texts of the Odes themselves, along with my notes, as I explore the Odes for historical, literary, liturgical, and theological insights.

Major Themes:

- First person Messianic Odes: 8, 9?, 10, 15, 17, 22, 28?, 31, 33, 35?, 36, 42
- Incarnation of Jesus: 19

From: <http://www.abcog.org/odes.htm>

The "Odes of Solomon" is the earliest known Christian book of hymns, psalms or odes. It probably dates from before 100 A.D. It has been reconstructed from manuscripts in the British Museum, John Rylands Library and Biblioth que Bodmer. It contained 42 Odes. Two examples are given here from the excellent translation by John Charlesworth. The authors were probably Jewish-Christians and the originals were in Aramaic. This collection is called "The Odes of Solomon" because that is the name used in references to it in other ancient writings. but there is no immediate connection to the ancient King of Israel, Solomon. The Odes were probably chanted a capella, i.e., without instrumental accompaniment.

James H. Charlesworth writes (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, v. 6, p. 114):

The date of the *Odes* has caused considerable interest. H. J. Drijvers contends that they are as late as the 3d century. L. Abramowski places them in the latter half of the 2d century. B. McNeil argued that they are contemporaneous with *4 Ezra*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, Polycarp, and Valentinus (ca. 100 C.E.). Most scholars date them sometime around the middle of the 2d century, but if they are heavily influenced by Jewish apocalyptic thought and especially the ideas in the Dead Sea Scrolls, a date long after 100 is unlikely. H. Chadwick, Emerton, Charlesworth, and many other scholars, are convinced that they must not be labeled "gnostic," and therefore should not be dated to the late 2d or 3d century.

Charlesworth comments on the attestation to the Odes of Solomon (op. cit., v. 6, p. 114):

The 11th ode was found among the Bodmer Papyri in a 3d-century Gk manuscript (no. 11). Five were translated into Coptic in the 4th century and used to illustrate the *Pistis Sophia* (*Odes Sol.* 1, 5, 6, 22, and 25). Also in the 4th century Ode 19 was quoted by Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* 4.12.3). In the 10th century a scribe copied the *Odes* in Syriac, but only *Odes Sol.* 17:7-42:20 are preserved (British Museum ms. Add. 14538). In the 15th century another scribe copied them into Syriac, but again the beginning is lost (John Rylands Library Cod. Syr. 9 contains only *Odes Sol.* 3.1b-42:20).

There is controversy over whether the Odes of Solomon were a Jewish or a Christian composition.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE ODES OF SOLOMON AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE JOHANNINE TRADITION AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS**

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The Odes of Solomon consist of 42 psalms. They are believed to have originated in either Antioch or Edessa and were originally written in Syriac. All scholars believe the Odes to be Christian; for example Charlesworth believes them to be the "earliest Christian hymn- book." (Charlesworth, *The Odes of Solomon*, p. vii).

Parallels with Johannine Theology:

The two most convincing parallels are their references to the "Word" and "Living Water". Third, the salvation as knowing and loving God. Fourth, 'knowing God' without developing that knowledge ethically. Fifth, they seem to emphasise the docetic nature of the redeemer rather than his humanity. Sixth, the saving significance of the incarnation. Seventh, they both share some notion of the Paraclete.

Where do the dissimilarities arise between the Odes and John ?

They seem to differ in terms of their theology.

Possible parallels between the Odes of Solomon and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Dead Sea Scrolls antedate both John and the Odes and therefore it is possible that they are related.

What is the relationship between the Odes and John's dualism ? They both seem to inherit a modified cosmic dualism of two worlds.

The Odes, more than likely came from the same community as John but were influenced more by the Essenes than John was. It has also been suggested by a number of scholars that the Odist was a converted Essene. If this is true it would explain the bias of the Odes towards the Qumran Scrolls.

Bibliography

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**The Odes of Solomon**  
**Translation by James Charlesworth**

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**Ode 1**

- <sup>1</sup> The Lord is on my head like a crown,  
    And I shall never be without Him.
- <sup>2</sup> Plaited for me is the crown of truth,  
    And it caused Your branches to blossom in me.
- <sup>3</sup> For it is not like a parched crown that blossoms not;
- <sup>4</sup> For You live upon my head,  
    And have blossomed upon me.
- <sup>5</sup> Your fruits are full and complete;  
    They are full of Your salvation....

**Ode 2**

[Has not yet been found.]

**Ode 3**

- <sup>1</sup> ... I am putting on the love of the Lord.
- <sup>2</sup> And His members are with Him,  
And I am dependent on them;  
    And He loves me.
- <sup>3</sup> For I should not have known how to love the Lord, if He had not continuously loved me.
- <sup>4</sup> Who is able to distinguish love, except him who is loved?
- <sup>5</sup> I love the Beloved and I myself love Him,  
    And where His rest is, there also am I.
- <sup>6</sup> And I shall be no stranger,  
    Because there is no jealousy with the Lord Most High and Merciful.
- <sup>7</sup> I have been united to Him,  
    Because the lover has found the Beloved,  
Because I love Him that is the Son,  
    I shall become a son.
- <sup>8</sup> Indeed he who is joined to Him who is immortal, truly shall be immortal.
- <sup>9</sup> And he who delights in the Life will become living.
- <sup>10</sup> This is the Spirit of the Lord, which is not false,  
    Which teaches the sons of men to know His ways.
- <sup>11</sup> Be wise and understanding and awakened. Hallelujah.

**Ode 4**

- <sup>1</sup> No man can pervert Your holy place, O my God;  
    Nor can he change it, and put it in another place.
- <sup>2</sup> Because he has no power over it;  
    For Your sanctuary You designed before You made special places.

- <sup>3</sup> The ancient one shall not be perverted by those which are inferior to it.  
You have given Your heart, O Lord, to Your believers.
- <sup>4</sup> Never will You be idle,  
Nor will You be without fruits;
- <sup>5</sup> For one hour of Your faith is more excellent than all days and years.  
<sup>5</sup> For who shall put on Your grace and be rejected?
- <sup>6</sup> Because Your seal is known;  
And Your creatures are known to it.
- <sup>7</sup> And Your hosts possess it,  
And the elect archangels are clothed with it.
- <sup>8</sup> You have given to us Your fellowship,  
Not that You were in need of us, but that we are always in need of You.
- <sup>9</sup> Shower upon us Your gentle rain,  
And open Your bountiful springs which abundantly supply us with milk and honey.
- <sup>10</sup> For there is no regret with You;  
That You should regret anything which You have promised;
- <sup>11</sup> Since the result was manifest to You.  
<sup>12</sup> For that which You gave, You gave freely,  
So that no longer will You draw back and take them again.
- <sup>13</sup> For all was manifest to You as God,  
And was set in order from the beginning before You.
- <sup>14</sup> And You, O Lord, have made all. Hallelujah.

*Comments:* Ode 4 seems to address God (v.1) and then the Lord Jesus (v.3), which is important in exploring how the earliest Christians regarded the relationship between Jesus and God. Verse 3 is remarkable in that it addresses 'O Lord,' and says, 'You have given Your heart... to Your believers.'

### **Ode 5**

- <sup>1</sup> I praise You, O Lord,  
Because I love You.
- <sup>2</sup> O Most High, forsake me not,  
For You are my hope.
- <sup>3</sup> Freely did I receive Your grace,  
May I live by it.
- <sup>4</sup> My persecutors will come  
But let them not see me.
- <sup>5</sup> Let a cloud of darkness fall upon their eyes;  
And let an air of thick darkness obscure them.
- <sup>6</sup> And let them have no light to see,  
So that they cannot seize me.
- <sup>7</sup> Let their designs become hardened,  
So that whatever they have conspired shall return upon their own heads.
- <sup>8</sup> For they have devised a plan,  
But it was not for them.
- <sup>9</sup> They prepared themselves maliciously,  
But they were found to be impotent.
- <sup>10</sup> Indeed my confidence is upon the Lord,  
And I will not fear.
- <sup>11</sup> And because the Lord is my salvation,  
I will not fear.
- <sup>12</sup> And He is as a woven crown upon my head,  
And I shall not be shaken.

- <sup>13</sup> Even if everything should be shaken,  
I shall stand firm.  
<sup>14</sup> And though all things visible should perish,  
I shall not die;  
<sup>15</sup> Because the Lord is with me,  
And I with Him. Hallelujah.

### Ode 6

- <sup>1</sup> As the wind glides through the harp  
And the strings speak,  
<sup>2</sup> So the Spirit of the Lord speaks through my members,  
And I speak through His love.  
<sup>3</sup> For He destroys whatever is alien,  
And everything is of the Lord.  
<sup>4</sup> For thus it was from the beginning,  
And will be until the end.  
<sup>5</sup> So that nothing shall be contrary,  
And nothing shall rise up against Him.  
<sup>6</sup> The Lord has multiplied his knowledge,  
And He was zealous that those things should be known  
Which through His grace have been given to us.  
<sup>7</sup> And His praise He gave us on account of His name,  
Our spirits praise His Holy Spirit.  
<sup>8</sup> For there went forth a stream,  
And it became a river great and broad;  
Indeed it carried away everything,  
And it shattered and brought it to the Temple.  
<sup>9</sup> And the barriers which were built by men were not able to restrain it,  
Nor even the arts of them who habitually restrain water.  
<sup>10</sup> For it spread over the surface of all the earth,  
And it filled everything.  
<sup>11</sup> Then all the thirsty upon the earth drank,  
And thirst was relieved and quenched;  
<sup>12</sup> For from the Most High the drink was given.  
<sup>13</sup> Blessed, therefore, are the ministers of that drink,  
Who have been entrusted with His water.  
<sup>14</sup> They have refreshed the parched lips,  
And have aroused the paralyzed will.  
<sup>15</sup> Even living persons who were about to expire,  
They have held back from death.  
<sup>16</sup> And limbs which have collapsed,  
They have restored and set up.  
<sup>17</sup> They gave strength for their coming,  
And light for their eyes.  
<sup>18</sup> Because everyone recognized them as the Lord's,  
And lived by the living water of eternity. Hallelujah.

### Ode 7

<sup>1</sup> As is the course of anger over wickedness,  
So is the course of joy over the Beloved;  
And brings in of its fruits unhindered.

<sup>2</sup> My joy is the Lord  
And my course is towards Him,  
This path of mine is beautiful.

<sup>3</sup> For there is a Helper for me, the Lord.  
He has generously shown Himself to me in His simplicity,  
Because His kindness has diminished His dreadfulness.

<sup>4</sup> He became like me, that I might receive Him.  
In form He was considered like me, that I might put Him on.

<sup>5</sup> And I trembled not when I saw Him,  
Because He was gracious to me.

<sup>6</sup> Like my nature He became, that I might understand Him.  
And like my form, that I might not turn away from Him.

<sup>7</sup> The Father of knowledge is the Word of knowledge.  
<sup>8</sup> He who created wisdom is wiser than His works.

<sup>9</sup> And He who created me when yet I was not  
Knew what I would do when I came into being.

<sup>10</sup> On account of this He was gracious to me in His abundant grace,  
And allowed me to ask from Him and to benefit from His sacrifice.

<sup>11</sup> For He it is who is incorrupt,  
The perfection of the worlds and their Father.

<sup>12</sup> He has allowed Him to appear to them that are His own;  
In order that they may recognize Him that made them,  
And not suppose that they came of themselves.

<sup>13</sup> For towards knowledge He has set His way,  
He has widened it and lengthened it and brought it to complete perfection.

<sup>14</sup> And has set over it the traces of His light,  
And it proceeded from the beginning until the end.

<sup>15</sup> For by Him He was served,  
And He was pleased by the Son.

<sup>16</sup> And because of his salvation He will possess everything.  
And the Most High will be known by His holy ones:

<sup>17</sup> To announce to those who have songs of the coming of the Lord,  
That they may go forth to meet Him  
And may sing to Him,  
With joy and with the harp of many tones.

<sup>18</sup> The Seers shall go before Him,  
And they shall be seen before Him.

<sup>19</sup> And they shall praise the Lord in His love,  
Because He is near and does see.

<sup>20</sup> And hatred shall be removed from the earth,  
And with jealousy it shall be drowned.

<sup>21</sup> For ignorance was destroyed upon it,  
Because the knowledge of the Lord arrived upon it.

<sup>22</sup> Let the singers sing the grace of the Lord Most High,  
And let them bring their songs.

<sup>23</sup> And let their heart be like the day,  
And their gentle voices like the majestic beauty of the Lord.

<sup>24</sup> And let there not be anyone who breathes that is without knowledge or voice.  
<sup>25</sup> For He gave a mouth to His creation:  
To open the voice of the mouth towards Him,  
And to praise Him.

<sup>26</sup> Confess His power  
And declare His grace. Hallelujah.

Ode 7 begins by praising the Incarnate one, Jesus:

- <sup>4</sup> He became like me, that I might receive Him.  
In form He was considered like me, that I might put Him on.  
<sup>5</sup> And I trembled not when I saw Him,  
Because He was gracious to me.  
<sup>6</sup> Like my nature He became, that I might understand Him.  
And like my form, that I might not turn away from Him.

Strikingly, then the Odist utters a poetic statement making an identity statement between ‘the Father’ and ‘the Word.’ This identity is not merely ‘functional’ with reference to Jesus acting on the Father’s behalf while on earth. There is an identity of ‘knowledge.’ Knowledge is a running theme for a substantial part of Ode 7, in v.7 – 13. The *knowledge* that both the Father and the Word have relate to creating the figure of wisdom (v.8), probably in the sense of Proverbs 8 which unites God’s wisdom in creation with God’s wisdom in giving commands befitting humanity in His creation. The Father/Word is then ambiguously praised as a singular person ‘He’ throughout verses 8 – 14. The Father/Word *knew* the Odist’s life before he was born (v.9b). ‘He’ was gracious and allowed the Odist to ask from Him and benefit from Him (v.10). For ‘He’ disclosed ‘Him’ to appear to His own, presumably speaking of the Father and Jesus’ incarnation (v.12). Jesus set His way towards true ‘knowledge’ (v.13) for the sake of others, that we might see ‘the traces of His light’ (v.14) on the path. The Father was served and pleased by the Son (v.15). For the Son brought about ‘salvation’ so that the ‘Most High will be known by His holy ones’ (v.16).

- <sup>7</sup> The Father of knowledge is the Word of knowledge.  
<sup>8</sup> He who created wisdom is wiser than His works.  
<sup>9</sup> And He who created me when yet I was not  
Knew what I would do when I came into being.  
<sup>10</sup> On account of this He was gracious to me in His abundant grace,  
And allowed me to ask from Him and to benefit from His sacrifice.  
<sup>11</sup> For He it is who is incorrupt,  
The perfection of the worlds and their Father.  
<sup>12</sup> He has allowed Him to appear to them that are His own;  
In order that they may recognize Him that made them,  
And not suppose that they came of themselves.  
<sup>13</sup> For towards knowledge He has set His way,  
He has widened it and lengthened it and brought it to complete perfection.  
<sup>14</sup> And has set over it the traces of His light,  
And it proceeded from the beginning until the end.  
<sup>15</sup> For by Him He was served,  
And He was pleased by the Son.  
<sup>16</sup> And because of his salvation He will possess everything.  
And the Most High will be known by His holy ones:

The Odist happily jumbles together Father and Word/Son. He refers to them sometimes distinctly and sometimes by one pronoun, ‘He.’ The Odist is very comfortable speaking of both the Father and the Word/Son this way. The identity in knowledge between the Father and the Word/Son is highly significant. This Ode testifies to a belief in the pre-incarnate, divine Word/Son. It therefore testifies to an early Trinitarian identification of the Word/Son with the Father.

## Ode 8

- <sup>1</sup> Open, open your hearts to the exultation of the Lord,  
And let your love abound from the heart to the lips.  
<sup>2</sup> In order to bring forth fruits to the Lord, a holy life;

And to talk with watchfulness in His light.  
<sup>3</sup> Rise up and stand erect,  
     You who sometimes were brought low.  
<sup>4</sup> You who were in silence, speak,  
     For your mouth has been opened.  
<sup>5</sup> You who were despised, from henceforth be lifted up,  
     For your Righteousness has been lifted up;  
<sup>6</sup> For the right hand of the Lord is with you,  
     And He will be your Helper.  
<sup>7</sup> And peace was prepared for you,  
     Before what may be your war.  
<sup>8</sup> Hear the word of truth,  
     And receive the knowledge of the Most High.  
<sup>9</sup> Your flesh may not understand that which I am about to say to you;  
     Nor your garment that which I am about to show you.  
<sup>10</sup> Keep my mystery, you who are kept by it;  
     Keep my faith, you who are kept by it.  
<sup>11</sup> And understand my knowledge, you who know me in truth;  
     Love me with affection, you who love;  
<sup>12</sup> For I turn not my face from my own,  
     Because I know them.  
<sup>13</sup> And before they had existed, I recognized them;  
     And imprinted a seal on their faces.  
<sup>14</sup> I fashioned their members, and my own breasts I prepared for them,  
     That they might drink my holy milk and live by it.<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>15</sup> I am pleased by them,  
     And am not ashamed by them.  
<sup>16</sup> For my workmanship are they,  
     And the strength of my thoughts.  
<sup>17</sup> Therefore who can stand against my work?  
     Or who is not subject to them?  
<sup>18</sup> I willed and fashioned mind and heart, and they are my own.  
     And upon my right hand I have set my elect ones.  
<sup>19</sup> And my righteousness goes before them,  
     And they shall not be deprived of my name; for it is with them.  
<sup>20</sup> Pray and increase,  
     And abide in the love of the Lord;  
<sup>21</sup> And you who were loved in the Beloved,  
     And you who are kept in Him who lives,  
     And you who are saved in Him who was saved.  
<sup>22</sup> And you shall be found incorrupt in all ages,  
     On account of the name of your Father. Hallelujah.

### Ode 9

<sup>1</sup> Open your ears, and I shall speak to you.  
<sup>2</sup> Give me yourself, so that I may also give you myself.  
<sup>3</sup> The word of the Lord and His desires,  
     The holy thought which He has thought concerning His Messiah.  
<sup>4</sup> For in the will of the Lord is your life,

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah also attributed 'breasts' to men as a figure of speech: 'You will also suck the milk of nations and suck the breast of kings' (Isa.60:16).



And His purpose is eternal life,  
And your perfection is incorruptible.  
<sup>5</sup> Be enriched in God the Father;  
And receive the purpose of the Most High.  
Be strong and redeemed by His grace.  
<sup>6</sup> For I announce peace to you, His holy ones,  
So that none of those who hear shall fall in the war.  
<sup>7</sup> And also that those who have known Him may not perish,  
And so that those who received Him may not be ashamed.  
<sup>8</sup> An everlasting crown is Truth;  
Blessed are they who set it on their head.  
<sup>9</sup> It is a precious stone,  
For the wars were on account of the crown.  
<sup>10</sup> But Righteousness has taken it,  
And has given it to you.  
<sup>11</sup> Put on the crown in the true covenant of the Lord,  
And all those who have conquered will be inscribed in His book.  
<sup>12</sup> For their book is the reward of victory which is for you,  
And she sees you before her and wills that you shall be saved.  
Hallelujah.

#### **Ode 10**

<sup>1</sup> The Lord has directed my mouth by His Word,  
And has opened my heart by His Light.  
<sup>2</sup> And He has caused to dwell in me His immortal life,  
And permitted me to proclaim the fruit of His peace.  
<sup>3</sup> To convert the lives of those who desire to come to Him,  
And to lead those who are captive into freedom.  
<sup>4</sup> I took courage and became strong and captured the world,  
And the captivity became mine for the glory of the Most High, and of God my Father.  
<sup>5</sup> And the Gentiles who had been dispersed were gathered together,  
But I was not defiled by my love for them,  
Because they had praised me in high places.  
<sup>6</sup> And the traces of light were set upon their heart,  
And they walked according to my life and were saved,  
And they became my people for ever and ever.  
Hallelujah.

#### **Ode 11**

<sup>1</sup> My heart was pruned and its flower appeared, then grace sprang up in it,  
And my heart produced fruits for the Lord.  
<sup>2</sup> For the Most High circumcised me by His Holy Spirit,  
Then He uncovered my inward being towards Him,  
And filled me with His love.  
<sup>3</sup> And His circumcising became my salvation,  
And I ran in the Way, in His peace, in the way of truth.  
<sup>4</sup> From the beginning until the end I received His knowledge.  
<sup>5</sup> And I was established upon the rock of truth, where He had set me.

<sup>6</sup> And speaking waters touched my lips from the fountain of the Lord generously.  
<sup>7</sup> And so I drank and became intoxicated, from the living water that does not die.  
<sup>8</sup> And my intoxication did not cause ignorance,  
 But I abandoned vanity,  
<sup>9</sup> And turned toward the Most High, my God,  
 And was enriched by His favors.  
<sup>10</sup> And I rejected the folly cast upon the earth,  
 And stripped it off and cast it from me.  
<sup>11</sup> And the Lord renewed me with His garment,  
 And possessed me by His light.  
<sup>12</sup> And from above He gave me immortal rest,  
 And I became like the land that blossoms and rejoices in its fruits.  
<sup>13</sup> And the Lord is like the sun upon the face of the land.  
<sup>14</sup> My eyes were enlightened,  
 And my face received the dew;  
<sup>15</sup> And my breath was refreshed by the pleasant fragrance of the Lord.  
<sup>16</sup> And He took me to His Paradise,  
 Wherein is the wealth of the Lord's pleasure.  
 I beheld blooming and fruit-bearing trees,  
 And self-grown was their crown.  
 Their branches were sprouting and their fruits were shining.  
 From an immortal land were their roots.  
 And a river of gladness was irrigating them,  
 And round about them in the land of eternal life.  
<sup>17</sup> Then I worshipped the Lord because of His magnificence.  
<sup>18</sup> And I said, Blessed, O Lord, are they who are planted in Your land,  
 And who have a place in Your Paradise;  
<sup>19</sup> And who grow in the growth of Your trees,  
 And have passed from darkness into light.  
<sup>20</sup> Behold, all Your laborers are fair, they who work good works,  
 And turn from wickedness to your pleasantness.  
<sup>21</sup> For the pungent odor of the trees is changed in Your land,  
<sup>22</sup> And everything becomes a remnant of Yourself.  
 Blessed are the workers of Your waters,  
 And eternal memorials of Your faithful servants.  
<sup>23</sup> Indeed, there is much room in Your Paradise.  
 And there is nothing in it which is barren,  
 But everything is filled with fruit.  
<sup>24</sup> Glory be to You, O God,  
 The delight of Paradise for ever. Hallelujah.

*Comments:* Ode 11 begins with the odist celebrating God having caused a fundamental heart transformation within. The speaker uses the metaphors of pruning (v.1) and circumcising (v.2). A plant being pruned means that something new can emerge. In this case, 'my heart was pruned...and my heart produced fruits for the Lord.' Also, the language of circumcision of the heart is applied to this heart transformation. This circumcision of the heart uncovers 'my inward being' so that new life can emerge. This language follows the way Moses and Jeremiah used that language; God would circumcise hearts when he renewed His covenant with Israel following exile (Moses commands this in Dt.10:16 but points to the new covenant post-exile in Dt.30:6, Jeremiah commands this in Jer.4:4 but points to the new covenant heart renewal of Jer.31:31 – 34). Then Paul in Rom.2:28 – 29 says that circumcision of the heart is ultimately what constitutes the true Israel of God. Hence this Ode is firmly anchored in Jewish language of Israel's renewal in light of Christ. Christ accomplishes the heart transformation that signifies the dawning of the new covenant.

The odist gives sustained attention to garden language. This is also Hebraic creation language.

### **Ode 12**

- <sup>1</sup> He has filled me with words of truth,  
That I may proclaim Him.
- <sup>2</sup> And like the flowing of waters,  
Truth flows from my mouth,  
And my lips declare His fruits.
- <sup>3</sup> And He has caused His knowledge to abound in me,  
Because the mouth of the Lord is the true Word,  
And the entrance of His light.
- <sup>4</sup> And the Most High has given Him to His generations,  
Which are the interpreters of His beauty,  
And the narrators of His glory,  
And the confessors of His purpose,  
And the preachers of His mind,  
And the teachers of His works.
- <sup>5</sup> For the subtlety of the Word is inexpressible,  
And like His utterance so also is His swiftness  
And His acuteness, for limitless is His progression.
- <sup>6</sup> He never falls but remains standing,  
And one cannot comprehend His descent or His way.
- <sup>7</sup> For as His work is, so is His expectation,  
For He is the light and dawning of thought.
- <sup>8</sup> And by Him the generations spoke to one another,  
And those that were silent acquired speech.
- <sup>9</sup> And from Him came love and equality,  
And they spoke one to another that which was theirs.
- <sup>10</sup> And they were stimulated by the Word,  
And knew Him who made them,  
Because they were in harmony.
- <sup>11</sup> For the mouth of the Most High spoke to them,  
And His exposition prospered through Him.
- <sup>12</sup> For the dwelling place of the Word is man,  
And His truth is love.
- <sup>13</sup> Blessed are they who by means of Him have perceived everything,  
And have known the Lord in His truth.
- Hallelujah.

### **Ode 13**

- <sup>1</sup> Behold, the Lord is our mirror.  
Open your eyes and see them in Him.
- <sup>2</sup> And learn the manner of your face,  
Then declare praises to His Spirit.
- <sup>3</sup> And wipe the paint from your face,  
And love His holiness and put it on.
- <sup>4</sup> Then you will be unblemished at all times with Him.
- Hallelujah.

#### **Ode 14**

- <sup>1</sup> As the eyes of a son upon his father,  
    So are my eyes, O Lord, at all times towards You.
- <sup>2</sup> Because my breasts  
    And my pleasure are with You.
- <sup>3</sup> Turn not aside Your mercies from me, O Lord;  
    And take not Your kindness from me.
- <sup>4</sup> Stretch out to me, my Lord, at all times, Your right hand,  
    And be to me a guide till the end according to Your will.
- <sup>5</sup> Let me be pleasing before You, because of Your glory,  
    And because of Your name let me be saved from the Evil One.
- <sup>6</sup> And let Your gentleness, O Lord, abide with me,  
    And the fruits of Your love.
- <sup>7</sup> Teach me the odes of Your truth,  
    That I may produce fruits in You.
- <sup>8</sup> And open to me the harp of Your Holy Spirit,  
    So that with every note I may praise You, O Lord.
- <sup>9</sup> And according to the multitude of Your mercies, so grant unto me,  
    And hasten to grant our petitions.
- <sup>10</sup> For You are sufficient for all our needs.  
    Hallelujah.

#### **Ode 15**

- <sup>1</sup> As the sun is the joy of them who seek its daybreak,  
    So is my joy the Lord;
- <sup>2</sup> Because He is my Sun, and His rays have lifted me up;  
    And His light has dismissed all darkness from my face.
- <sup>3</sup> Eyes I have obtained in Him,  
    And have seen His holy day.
- <sup>4</sup> Ears I have acquired,  
    And have heard His truth.
- <sup>5</sup> The thought of knowledge I have acquired,  
    And have enjoyed delight fully through Him.
- <sup>6</sup> I repudiated the way of error,  
    And went towards Him and received salvation from Him abundantly.
- <sup>7</sup> And according to His generosity He gave to me,  
    And according to His excellent beauty He made me.
- <sup>8</sup> I put on immortality through His name,  
    And took off corruption by His grace.
- <sup>9</sup> Death has been destroyed before my face,  
    And Sheol has been vanquished by my word.
- <sup>10</sup> And eternal life has arisen in the Lord's land,  
    And it has been declared to His faithful ones,  
    And has been given without limit to all that trust in Him. Hallelujah.

#### **Ode 16**

<sup>1</sup> As the occupation of the ploughman is the ploughshare,  
And the occupation of the helmsman is the steering of the ship,  
So also my occupation is the psalm of the Lord by His hymns.

<sup>2</sup> My art and my service are in His hymns,  
Because His love has nourished my heart,  
And His fruits He poured unto my lips.

<sup>3</sup> For my love is the Lord;  
Hence I will sing unto Him.

<sup>4</sup> For I am strengthened by His praises,  
And I have faith in Him.

<sup>5</sup> I will open my mouth,  
And His Spirit will speak through me  
The glory of the Lord and His beauty,

<sup>6</sup> The work of His hands,  
And the labor of His fingers;

<sup>7</sup> For the multitude of His mercies,  
And the strength of His Word.

<sup>8</sup> For the Word of the Lord investigates that which is invisible,  
And reveals His thought.

<sup>9</sup> For the eye sees His works,  
And the ear hears His thought.

<sup>10</sup> It is He who made the earth broad,  
And placed the waters in the sea.

<sup>11</sup> He expanded the heaven,  
And fixed the stars.

<sup>12</sup> And He fixed the creation and set it up,  
Then He rested from His works.

<sup>13</sup> And created things run according to their courses,  
And work their works,  
For they can never cease nor fail.

<sup>14</sup> And the hosts are subject to His Word.

<sup>15</sup> The reservoir of light is the sun,  
And the reservoir of darkness is the night.

<sup>16</sup> For He made the sun for the day so that it will be light;  
But night brings darkness over the face of the earth.

<sup>17</sup> And by their portion one from another  
They complete the beauty of God.

<sup>18</sup> And there is nothing outside of the Lord,  
Because He was before anything came to be.

<sup>19</sup> And the worlds are by His Word,  
And by the thought of His heart.

<sup>20</sup> Praise and honor to His name.  
Hallelujah.

### **Ode 17**

<sup>1</sup> Then I was crowned by my God,  
And my crown was living.

<sup>2</sup> And I was justified by my Lord,  
For my salvation is incorruptible.

<sup>3</sup> I have been freed from vanities,  
And am not condemned.

<sup>4</sup> My chains were cut off by His hands,

I received the face and likeness of a new person,  
And I walked in Him and was saved.  
5 And the thought of truth led me,  
And I went after it and wandered not.  
6 And all who saw me were amazed,  
And I seemed to them like a stranger.  
7 And He who knew and exalted me,  
Is the Most High in all His perfection.  
8 And He glorified me by His kindness,  
And raised my understanding to the height of truth.  
9 And from there He gave me the way of His steps,  
And I opened the doors which were closed.  
10 And I shattered the bars of iron,  
For my own shackles had grown hot and melted before me.  
11 And nothing appeared closed to me,  
Because I was the opening of everything.  
12 And I went towards all my bound ones in order to loose them;  
That I might not leave anyone bound or binding.  
13 And I gave my knowledge generously,  
And my resurrection through my love.  
14 And I sowed my fruits in hearts,  
And transformed them through myself.  
15 Then they received my blessing and lived,  
And they were gathered to me and were saved;  
16 Because they became my members,  
And I was their Head.  
17 Glory to You, our Head,  
O Lord Messiah. Hallelujah.

### **Ode 18**

1 My heart was lifted up and enriched in the love of the Most High,  
So that I might praise Him with my name.  
2 My members were strengthened,  
That they may not fall from His power.  
3 Infirmities fled from my body,  
And it stood firm for the Lord by His will;  
Because His kingdom is firm.  
4 O Lord, for the sake of those who are in need,  
Do not dismiss Your Word from me.  
5 Nor, for the sake of their works,  
Withhold Your perfection from me.  
6 Let not light be conquered by darkness,  
Nor let truth flee from falsehood.  
7 Let Your right hand set our salvation to victory,  
And let it receive from every region,  
And preserve it on the side of everyone who is besieged by misfortunes.  
8 You are my God,  
Falsehood and death are not in Your mouth;  
Only perfection is Your will.  
9 And vanity You know not,  
Because neither does it know You.  
10 And You know not error;

- Because neither does it know You.  
<sup>11</sup> And ignorance appeared like dust,  
And like the foam of the sea.  
<sup>12</sup> And vain people thought that it was great,  
And they became like its type and were impoverished.  
<sup>13</sup> But those who knew understood and contemplated,  
And were not polluted by their thoughts;  
<sup>14</sup> Because they were in the mind of the Most High,  
And mocked those who were walking in error.  
<sup>15</sup> Then they spoke the truth,  
From the breath which the Most High breathed into them.  
<sup>16</sup> Praise and great honor to His name.  
Hallelujah.

### Ode 19

- <sup>1</sup> A cup of milk was offered to me,  
and I drank it in the sweetness of the Lord's kindness.  
<sup>2</sup> The Son is the cup,  
and the Father is He who was milked;  
and the Holy Spirit is She who milked Him;  
<sup>3</sup> Because His breasts were full,  
and it was undesirable that His milk should be ineffectually released.  
<sup>4</sup> The Holy Spirit opened Her bosom,  
and mixed the milk of the two breasts of the Father.<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>5</sup> Then She gave the mixture to the generation without their knowing,  
and those who have received it are in the perfection of the right hand.  
<sup>6</sup> The womb of the Virgin took it,  
and she received conception and gave birth.  
<sup>7</sup> So the Virgin became a mother with great mercies.  
<sup>8</sup> And she labored and bore the Son but without pain,  
because it did not occur without purpose.  
<sup>9</sup> And she did not require a midwife,  
because He caused her to give life.  
<sup>10</sup> She brought forth like a strong man with desire,  
and she bore according to the manifestation,  
and she acquired according to the Great Power.  
<sup>11</sup> And she loved with redemption,  
and guarded with kindness,  
and declared with grandeur. Hallelujah.

*Comments:* Ode 19 is probably one of the most challenging of the Odes for me to read. My first reading of it provoked discomfort and disagreement. Yet it reflects sustained attention to the theme of the Trinity as well as the virgin birth of Christ. Though it is obviously not current, it nevertheless represents something that the early Christians sung and believed, so it is fascinating to read it in that light.

The first difficult aspect of the Ode is that the Father is portrayed as a nursing mother with breasts yielding milk. Isaiah also attributed 'breasts' to men as a figure of speech: 'You will also suck the milk of nations and suck the breast of kings' (Isa.60:16). Too, various studies point out how feminine or maternal functions are attributed to God

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<sup>2</sup> Isaiah also attributed 'breasts' to men as a figure of speech: 'You will also suck the milk of nations and suck the breast of kings' (Isa.60:16).

in Scripture. John even attributes birthing to God in Jn.1:13. However, this attribution of breasts to *the Father* is certainly a bit surprising.

I'll attempt an explanation by trying to understand what 'milk' represents. Paul and Hebrews (1 Cor.3:12; Heb.5:13) refer to 'milk' as the teaching that young believers need (as opposed to the 'solid food' of mature believers). However, Peter makes an unqualified positive metaphor between 'milk' and 'the word' in 1 Pet.2: 'the pure milk of the word.' Another unqualified positive reference to 'milk' occurs in Isa.55:1 as part of Isaiah's vision of covenant renewal based on the Isaianic Servant's sacrifice.

The metaphor of 'milk' for 'the word' (whether for new or all believers) is an apt one because (1) milk must be internalized for nourishment, just as the word must be internalized for nourishment, (2) milk is an absolute necessity for survival, just as the word is an absolute necessity for survival, and (3) drinking mother's milk is an act of intimacy with and trust of the mother, just as receiving the Father's word is an act of intimacy with and trust of God. Furthermore, (4) the uncertain reference in v.5, 'Then She gave the mixture to the generation without their knowing, and those who have received it are in the perfection of the right hand,' should probably be interpreted as Jesus preaching the word, creating a division in Israel between those who accepted his word and those who did not, and the spiritual consequences that followed. Viewed in this light, attributing breasts and milk to the Father is, while a bit bold, not terribly unorthodox.

In fact, could this be an early baptismal hymn? The explicit and dense mention of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is unusual even in the Odes (only Ode 23:22 comes remotely close), but the baptismal Triune name of God given by Jesus would suffice as an explanation for why it is invoked here (Mt.28:18 – 20). Milk naturally makes one think of infants; a newly baptized believer would be considered a spiritual infant. It could be that the recent Christian convert emerged from the waters of baptism and was given a cup of milk ('A cup of milk was offered to me,' v.1) to represent their new birth. Given the obvious dependence of the *Odes of Solomon* on the Gospel of John (or at least its oral precursor), this ode might be a drawn out reflection on John 1:13 itself, where God births the new believer as a child of God.

The second difficult aspect of the Ode is that the Spirit is referred to as a 'She.' Ode 36:1 also does this, interestingly enough from the first person perspective of Jesus himself. While perhaps not carrying the same theological weight and significance as changing the name of the Father to 'Mother,' calling the Holy Spirit by the feminine pronoun is certainly different from anything found in Scripture. Jesus referred to the Spirit in a gender neutral sense (Jn.14:17 – 18; 15:26) and with a male pronoun (16:7) in the midst of gender neutral pronouns ('that one' occurs repeatedly in 16:7 – 15). The *Odes* themselves also refer to the Spirit using a male pronoun (Ode 6:2). So this reflects a certain theological creativity on the part of *The Odes* and the community (or communities) that employed them. Perhaps it is the baptismal context and its parallels to birth that provoked the preponderance of maternal language. I think it more faithful to Scripture to refer to the Spirit without pronouns, or with the designator 'that one,' or by occasionally using the male pronouns while preserving the maternal function attributed to the Spirit.

The third difficult aspect of the Ode is the functions attributed to each person of the Trinity. If I am correct in saying that milk represents 'the word,' then the Son, as 'the cup,' holds the word. The Father, being the one 'milked,' is the source of the word. And the Holy Spirit, who 'milked' the Father and deposited the word in the Son, transmits the word. This type of language is novel and I can find no precedent for it in Scripture. Nevertheless, there are positives to it. Jesus did see himself as (at least) a prophet with the Father's word 'in himself.' He clearly wanted others to internalize (drink) his word and said so many times. Jesus said the inverse to the Pharisees, 'There is no place in you for my word' (Jn.8:37). Moreover, Jesus said that the Father is the source of the words that he speaks: 'I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me' (Jn.8:28). This is another way of saying that the Father is the source of the word Jesus spoke, as Ode 19 says. And the Spirit searches the very depths of God, which led Paul to speak *words* from God (1 Cor.2:10 – 13, cf. Jn.6:63 where Jesus calls his words 'spirit and life'). Could this maternal metaphor simply be a compact way of saying all this? I believe so. While I would not want this to be the only material taught about the Trinity, nevertheless its main image seems to correspond with Jesus' own teaching.

Finally, it is fascinating to think of why the virgin Mary is also discussed in Ode 19. The attempt is made here to see Jesus' birth as exempting Mary from the curse of pain in childbirth. Theologically, this can go either way. On the one hand, it makes some sense, as Jesus can be understood as being one without sin and therefore his



relationship to the curses of Genesis 3 might be unique. On the other hand, Jesus participated in the groaning of the creation, and I do not believe Mary was so exempt from all that. My judgment is that this should not be repeated because it suggests that Mary herself was sinless and free from the curse.

What does faithfully reproduce Scripture is the fact that God's word came to Mary, who then said, 'Be it done to me according to Thy word' (Lk.1:38). Of those who 'received it' [the word] (v.5), Mary was truly the first, as Zecharias' assent was ambiguous. It is somewhat natural then, in the story of the gospel, to say that the Spirit's declaration of the word took root first in Mary, thus explaining the link between the many in v.5 ('those who have received it') and the particular individual, Mary, in v.6 ('the womb of the Virgin took it') of Ode 19. The word of God that caused the birth of divine life (Jesus) from a womb of water (Mary's) provides a physical reference point for Christian baptism, where God's word again brings forth the birth of divine life (a person joined to Jesus by his Spirit) from a womb of water (baptism). Perhaps it was a connection produced by the early Christians reflecting on Jesus' own mention of baptism as new spiritual birth in John 3.

### Ode 20

- <sup>1</sup> I am a priest of the Lord,  
    And Him I serve as a priest;
- <sup>2</sup> And to Him I offer  
    The offering of His thought.
- <sup>3</sup> For His thought is not like the world,  
    Nor like the flesh,  
    Nor like them who worship according to the flesh.
- <sup>4</sup> The offering of the Lord is righteousness,  
    And purity of heart and lips.
- <sup>5</sup> Offer your inward being faultlessly;  
    And let not your compassion oppress compassion;  
    And let not yourself oppress a self.
- <sup>6</sup> You should not purchase a stranger because he is like yourself,  
    Nor seek to deceive your neighbor,  
    Nor deprive him of the covering for his nakedness.
- <sup>7</sup> But put on the grace of the Lord generously,  
    And come to His Paradise,  
    And make for yourself a garland from His tree.
- <sup>8</sup> Then put it on your head and be joyful,  
    And recline upon His rest.
- <sup>9</sup> For His glory will go before you;  
    And you shall receive of His kindness and of His grace;  
    And you shall be anointed in truth with the praise of His holiness.
- <sup>10</sup> Praise and honor to His name.  
    Hallelujah.

### Ode 21

- <sup>1</sup> I lifted up my arms on high  
    On account of the compassion of the Lord.
- <sup>2</sup> Because He cast off my bonds from me,  
    And my Helper lifted me up  
    According to His compassion and His salvation.
- <sup>3</sup> And I put off darkness,

And put on light.  
4 And even I myself acquired members.  
In them there was no sickness or affliction or suffering.  
5 And abundantly helpful to me  
Was the thought of the Lord,  
And His everlasting fellowship.  
6 And I was lifted up in the light,  
And I passed before Him.  
7 And I was constantly near Him,  
While praising and confessing Him.  
8 He caused my heart to overflow,  
And it was found in my mouth;  
And it sprang forth unto my lips.  
9 Then upon my face increased the exultation of the Lord  
And His praise.  
Hallelujah.

## Ode 22

1 He who caused me to descend from on high,  
And to ascend from the regions below;  
2 And He who gathers what is in the Middle,  
And throws them to me;  
3 He who scattered my enemies,  
And my adversaries;  
4 He who gave me authority over bonds,  
So that I might unbind them;  
5 He who overthrew by my hands  
The dragon with seven heads,  
And set me at his roots that I might destroy his seed;  
6 You were there and helped me,  
And in every place Your name surrounded me.  
7 Your right hand destroyed his evil venom,  
And Your hand leveled the Way  
For those who believe in You.  
8 And It chose them from the graves,  
And separated them from the dead ones.  
9 It took dead bones  
And covered them with flesh.  
10 But they were motionless,  
So It gave them energy for life.  
11 Incorruptible was Your way and Your face;  
You have brought Your world to corruption,  
That everything might be resolved and renewed.  
12 And the foundation of everything is Your rock.  
And upon it You have built Your kingdom,  
And it became the dwelling-place of the holy ones.  
Hallelujah.

*Comments:* Ode 22 appears to portray a pre-incarnate, divine Son of God who descended from on high (v.1). He also ascended from the regions below (v.2), presumably referring to the dead (1 Pet.3:18 – 20; 4:6; Eph.4:11). The reference to gathering what is in the middle is probably living disciples (v.3). References to other Old and New Testament passages are packed densely into the Ode: scattering enemies and adversaries is language from the

Psalms; the seven headed dragon is an image from Daniel and Revelation; the reference to the 'seed' of the enemy from John 8:44; resurrecting people from graves comes from Ezekiel 37 and Jesus' quotation of that material in John 5; the foundation of Jesus' kingdom being 'Your rock' might refer to the confession of Simon Peter in Matthew 16 and parallels (Mk.8; Lk.9) although it also seems jumbled together with temple-and-foundation-stone language from Psalm 118, Isaiah 8 and 28, 1 Peter 2, and Ephesians 2:11 – 22.

The Odist portrays God acting both through and on behalf of Jesus. He acts through Jesus: 'He gave me authority over bonds... He who overthrew by my hands...' At the same time, He acts on behalf of Jesus: 'He who scattered my enemies... Your right hand destroyed his evil venom...' The dual activity is intriguing. The Odist does not appear to be terribly concerned to delineate who did what, exactly. This is what we would expect in a blossoming Trinitarian awareness of God's activity.

The focal point of the atonement is ontological and relational. God is 'incorruptible.' However, He 'brought [His] world to corruption.' This comparison and contrast is vital. Presumably, the Odist shares the view that God was protecting humanity from eating from the tree of life in a corrupted state, and thereby making sinfulness immortal. In this sense, it is appropriate to think of God bringing His world to corruption. God did not make a prelapsarian hidden decree to orchestrate the fall and then impose it onto Adam and Eve.

Nevertheless, God needed to resolve the ontological and relational alienation that had set in. Human beings corrupted themselves. There is no mention of God satisfying His retributive justice. Rather, God needed to exert His love to undo the corruption, 'that everything might be resolved and renewed.' The Odist has framed the meaning of this 'resolution and renewal' in terms of the material that has already been provided. God needed to reassert His relational category of pure 'ownership' (v.2), which is contrasted with the influence exerted by 'the dragon with seven heads' (v.5). There is an relational category of 'authority' as well, expressed in terms of 'bonds' from which 'I might unbind them' (v.4).

The authority and bonds of the dragon, moreover, is expressed with the language of 'evil venom.' That is, sin is understood as an intrusion into our very human nature. It affects our ontology, that is, our very being. Sin is a disorder and disease, from which we have been sickened and weakened. It caused 'death' on various levels (v.8 – 10).

The achievement of the Son in his incarnation into human nature, as Jesus of Nazareth, must therefore understood as ontological and medical. Jesus 'resolved and renewed' all things (v.11). He healed the fundamental poisoning of human beings by undoing the dragon's venom. By doing this, he freed humanity from its bonds, and from the authority of the enemy.

Ode 22 provides evidence that medical substitutionary atonement is the foundation for the Christus Victor kaleidoscopic understanding of Jesus' achievement and our salvation.

### **Ode 23**

<sup>1</sup> Joy is for the holy ones.

And who shall put it on but they alone?

<sup>2</sup> Grace is for the elect ones.

And who shall receive it

But they who trusted in it from the beginning?

<sup>3</sup> Love is for the elect ones.

And who shall put it on

But they who possessed it from the beginning?

<sup>4</sup> Walk in the knowledge of the Lord,

And you will know the grace of the Lord generously;

Both for His exultation

And for the perfection of His knowledge.

<sup>5</sup> And His thought was like a letter,

And His will descended from on high.  
<sup>6</sup> And it was sent like an arrow  
 Which from a bow has been forcibly shot.  
<sup>7</sup> And many hands rushed to the letter,  
 In order to catch it,  
 Then take and read it.  
<sup>8</sup> But it escaped from their fingers;  
 And they were afraid of it  
 And of the seal which was upon it.  
<sup>9</sup> Because they were not allowed to loosen its seal;  
 For the power which was over the seal was greater than they.  
<sup>10</sup> But those who saw the letter went after it;  
 That they might learn where it would land,  
 And who should read it,  
 And who should hear it.  
<sup>11</sup> But a wheel received it,  
 And it came over it.  
<sup>12</sup> And a sign was with it,  
 Of the kingdom and of providence.  
<sup>13</sup> And everything which was disturbing the wheel,  
 It mowed and cut down.  
<sup>14</sup> And it restrained a multitude of adversaries;  
 And bridged rivers.  
<sup>15</sup> And it crossed over and uprooted many forests,  
 And made an open way.  
<sup>16</sup> The head went down to the feet,  
 Because unto the feet ran the wheel,  
 And whatever had come upon it.  
<sup>17</sup> The letter was one of command,  
 And hence all regions were gathered together.  
<sup>18</sup> And there was seen at its head,  
 The head which was revealed,  
 Even the Son of Truth  
 From the Most High Father.  
<sup>19</sup> And He inherited and possessed everything,  
 And then the scheming of the many ceased.  
<sup>20</sup> Then all the seducers became headstrong and fled,  
 And the persecutors became extinct  
 And were blotted out.  
<sup>21</sup> And the letter became a large volume,  
 Which was entirely written by the finger of God.  
<sup>22</sup> And the name of the Father was upon it;  
 And of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
 To rule for ever and ever.  
 Hallelujah.

*Comments:* Ode 23 is striking for its image of the thought of the Lord, or the knowledge of the Lord in some sense, being sent down 'from on high' (v.5). No one is able to actually receive it and understanding it. Many desire to read it, however. Interestingly, 'a wheel received it' (v.11), which might refer to a chariot, as in the image of God's throne in Ezekiel 1 and 10. The rider (?) of the wheel/chariot appears with head and feet (v.16). This person is revealed as 'the Son of Truth from the Most High Father' (v.18). The meaning of this lyrical development is unclear. The Son becomes the inheritor and possessor, displacing his enemies (v.19 – 20). And finally the letter becomes a large book, written by the finger of God. Significantly, the name of the Father was upon it, to which the Odist quickly adds the 'of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, to rule forever and ever' (v.22). Already Ode 23 testifies to a Trinitarian vision of messianic rule. If this is the 'one name' of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit given by Jesus for the purpose of baptizing people (Mt.28:18 – 20), then this would explain why the Odist is aware of this 'name.'

## Ode 24

- <sup>1</sup> The dove fluttered over the head of our Lord Messiah,  
Because He was her head.
- <sup>2</sup> And she sang over Him,  
And her voice was heard.
- <sup>3</sup> Then the inhabitants were afraid,  
And the foreigners were disturbed.
- <sup>4</sup> The bird began to fly,  
And every creeping thing died in its hole.
- <sup>5</sup> And the chasms were opened and closed;  
And they were seeking the Lord as those who are about to give birth.
- <sup>6</sup> But He was not given to them for nourishment,  
Because He did not belong to them.
- <sup>7</sup> But the chasms were submerged in the seal of the Lord,  
And they perished in the thought with which they had remained from the beginning.
- <sup>8</sup> For they were in labor from the beginning,  
And the end of their travail was life.
- <sup>9</sup> And all of them who were lacking perished,  
Because they were not able to express the word so that they might remain.
- <sup>10</sup> And the Lord destroyed the devices,  
Of all those who had not the truth with them.
- <sup>11</sup> For they were lacking in wisdom,  
They who exalted themselves in their mind.
- <sup>12</sup> So they were rejected,  
Because the truth was not with them.
- <sup>13</sup> For the Lord revealed His way,  
And spread widely His grace.
- <sup>14</sup> And those who understood it knew His holiness.  
Hallelujah.

## Ode 25

- <sup>1</sup> I was rescued from my chains,  
And I fled unto You, O my God.
- <sup>2</sup> Because You are the right hand of salvation,  
And my Helper.
- <sup>3</sup> You have restrained those who rise up against me,  
And no more were they seen.
- <sup>4</sup> Because Your face was with me,  
Which saved me by Your grace.
- <sup>5</sup> But I was despised and rejected in the eyes of many,  
And I was in their eyes like lead.
- <sup>6</sup> And I acquired strength from You,  
And help.
- <sup>7</sup> A lamp You set for me both on my right and on my left,  
So that there might not be in me anything that is not light.
- <sup>8</sup> And I was covered with the covering of Your Spirit,  
And I removed from me my garments of skin.

<sup>9</sup> Because Your right hand exalted me,  
    And caused sickness to pass from me.  
<sup>10</sup> And I became mighty in Your truth,  
    And holy in Your righteousness.  
<sup>11</sup> And all my adversaries were afraid of me,  
    And I became the Lord's by the name of the Lord.  
<sup>12</sup> And I was justified by His kindness,  
    And His rest is for ever and ever.  
Hallelujah.

### **Ode 26**

<sup>1</sup> I poured out praise to the Lord,  
    Because I am His own.  
<sup>2</sup> And I will recite His holy ode,  
    Because my heart is with Him.  
<sup>3</sup> For His harp is in my hand,  
    And the odes of His rest shall not be silent.  
<sup>4</sup> I will call unto Him with all my heart,  
    I will praise and exalt Him with all my members.  
<sup>5</sup> For from the East  
    And unto the West is His praise;  
<sup>6</sup> Also from the South  
    And unto the North is His thanksgiving.  
<sup>7</sup> Even from the crest of the summits  
    And unto their extremity is His perfection.  
<sup>8</sup> Who can write the odes of the Lord,  
    Or who can read them?  
<sup>9</sup> Or who can train himself for life,  
    So that he himself may be saved?  
<sup>10</sup> Or who can press upon the Most High,  
    So that He would recite from His mouth?  
<sup>11</sup> Who can interpret the wonders of the Lord?  
    Though he who interprets will be destroyed,  
    Yet that which was interpreted will remain.  
<sup>12</sup> For it suffices to perceive and be satisfied,  
    For the odists stand in serenity;  
<sup>13</sup> Like a river which has an increasingly gushing spring,  
    And flows to the relief of them that seek it.  
Hallelujah.

### **Ode 27**

<sup>1</sup> I extended my hands  
    And hallowed my Lord,  
<sup>2</sup> For the expansion of my hands is His sign.  
    <sup>3</sup> And my extension is the upright cross.  
Hallelujah.

### Ode 28

<sup>1</sup> As the wings of doves over their nestlings,  
And the mouths of their nestlings towards their mouths,  
So also are the wings of the Spirit over my heart.

<sup>2</sup> My heart continually refreshes itself and leaps for joy,  
Like the babe who leaps for joy in his mother's womb.

<sup>3</sup> I trusted, consequently I was at rest;  
Because trustful is He in whom I trusted.

<sup>4</sup> He has greatly blessed me,  
And my head is with Him.

<sup>5</sup> And the dagger shall not divide me from Him,  
Nor the sword;

<sup>6</sup> Because I am ready before destruction comes,  
And have been set on His immortal side.

<sup>7</sup> And immortal life embraced me,  
And kissed me.

<sup>8</sup> And from that life is the Spirit which is within me.  
And it cannot die because it is life.

<sup>9</sup> Those who saw me were amazed,  
Because I was persecuted.

<sup>10</sup> And they thought that I had been swallowed up,  
Because I seemed to them as one of the lost.

<sup>11</sup> But my injustice became my salvation.  
<sup>12</sup> And I became their abomination,  
Because there was no jealousy in me.

<sup>13</sup> Because I continually did good to every man I was hated.

<sup>14</sup> And they surrounded me like mad dogs,  
Those who in stupidity attack their masters.

<sup>15</sup> Because their thought is depraved,  
And their mind is perverted.

<sup>16</sup> But I was carrying water in my right hand,  
And their bitterness I endured by my sweetness.

<sup>17</sup> And I did not perish, because I was not their brother,  
Nor was my birth like theirs.

<sup>18</sup> And they sought my death but did not find it possible,  
Because I was older than their memory;  
And in vain did they cast lots against me.

<sup>19</sup> And those who were after me  
Sought in vain to destroy the memorial of Him who was before them.

<sup>20</sup> Because the thought of the Most High cannot be prepossessed;  
And His heart is superior to all wisdom.

Hallelujah.

### Ode 29

<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my hope,  
I shall not be ashamed of Him.

<sup>2</sup> For according to His praise He made me,  
And according to His grace even so He gave to me.

<sup>3</sup> And according to His mercies He exalted me,

And according to His great honor He lifted me up.  
4 And he caused me to ascend from the depths of Sheol,  
And from the mouth of death He drew me.  
5 And I humbled my enemies,  
And He justified me by His grace.  
6 For I believed in the Lord's Messiah,  
And considered that He is the Lord.  
7 And He revealed to me His sign,  
And He led me by His light.  
8 And He gave me the scepter of His power,  
That I might subdue the devices of the people,  
And humble the power of the mighty.  
9 To make war by His Word,  
And to take victory by His power.  
10 And the Lord overthrew my enemy by His Word,  
And he became like the dust which a breeze carries off.  
11 And I gave praise to the Most High,  
Because He has magnified His servant  
And the son of His maidservant.  
Hallelujah.

### **Ode 30**

1 Fill for yourselves water from the living fountain of the Lord,  
Because it has been opened for you.  
2 And come all you thirsty and take a drink,  
And rest beside the fountain of the Lord.  
3 Because it is pleasing and sparkling,  
And perpetually refreshes the self.  
4 For much sweeter is its water than honey,  
And the honeycomb of bees is not to be compared with it;  
5 Because it flowed from the lips of the Lord,  
And it named from the heart of the Lord.  
6 And it came boundless and invisible,  
And until it was set in the middle they knew it not.  
7 Blessed are they who have drunk from it,  
And have refreshed themselves by it.  
Hallelujah.

### **Ode 31**

1 Chasms vanished before the Lord,  
And darkness dissipated before His appearance.  
2 Error erred and perished on account of Him;  
And contempt received no path,  
For it was submerged by the truth of the Lord.  
3 He opened His mouth and spoke grace and joy;  
And recited a new chant to His name.  
4 Then He lifted his voice towards the Most High,



And offered to Him those that had become sons through Him.  
<sup>5</sup> And His face was justified,  
Because thus His Holy Father had given to Him.  
<sup>6</sup> Come forth, you who have been afflicted,  
And receive joy.  
<sup>7</sup> And possess yourselves through grace,  
And take unto you immortal life.  
<sup>8</sup> And they condemned me when I stood up,  
Me who had not been condemned.  
<sup>9</sup> Then they divided my spoil,  
Though nothing was owed them.  
<sup>10</sup> But I endured and held my peace and was silent,  
That I might not be disturbed by them.  
<sup>11</sup> But I stood undisturbed like a solid rock,  
Which is continuously pounded by columns of waves and endures.  
<sup>12</sup> And I bore their bitterness because of humility;  
That I might redeem my nation and instruct it.  
<sup>13</sup> And that I might not nullify the promises to the patriarchs,  
To whom I was promised for the salvation of their offspring.  
Hallelujah.

### Ode 32

<sup>1</sup> To the blessed ones the joy is from their heart,  
And light from Him who dwells in them;  
<sup>2</sup> And the Word of truth who is self-originate,  
<sup>3</sup> Because He has been strengthened by the Holy Power of the Most High;  
And He is unshaken for ever and ever.  
Hallelujah.

### Ode 33

<sup>1</sup> But again Grace was swift and dismissed the Corruptor,  
And descended upon him to renounce him.  
<sup>2</sup> And he caused utter destruction before him,  
And corrupted all his work.  
<sup>3</sup> And he stood on the peak of a summit  
And cried aloud from one end of the earth to the other.  
<sup>4</sup> Then he drew to him all those who obeyed him,  
For he did not appear as the Evil One.  
<sup>5</sup> However, the perfect Virgin stood,  
Who was preaching and summoning and saying:  
<sup>6</sup> O you sons of men, return,  
And you their daughters, come.  
<sup>7</sup> And leave the ways of that Corruptor,  
And approach me.  
<sup>8</sup> And I will enter into you,  
And bring you forth from destruction,  
And make you wise in the ways of truth.  
<sup>9</sup> Be not corrupted nor perish.

<sup>10</sup> Obey me and be saved,  
For I am proclaiming unto you the grace of God.  
<sup>11</sup> And through me you will be saved and become blessed.  
I am your judge;  
<sup>12</sup> And they who have put me on shall not be falsely accused,  
But they shall possess incorruption in the new world.  
<sup>13</sup> My elect ones have walked with me,  
And my ways I will make known to them who seek me;  
And I will promise them my name.  
Hallelujah.

### Ode 34

<sup>1</sup> There is no hard way where there is a simple heart,  
Nor barrier for upright thoughts,  
<sup>2</sup> Nor whirlwind in the depth of the enlightened thought.  
<sup>3</sup> Where one is surrounded on every side by pleasing country,  
There is nothing divided in him.  
<sup>4</sup> The likeness of that which is below  
Is that which is above.  
<sup>5</sup> For everything is from above,  
And from below there is nothing,  
But it is believed to be by those  
In whom there is no understanding.  
<sup>6</sup> Grace has been revealed for your salvation.  
Believe and live and be saved.  
Hallelujah.

### Ode 35

<sup>1</sup> The gentle showers of the Lord overshadowed me with serenity,  
And they caused a cloud of peace to rise over my head;  
<sup>2</sup> That it might guard me at all times.  
And it became salvation to me.  
<sup>3</sup> Everyone was disturbed and afraid,  
And there came from them smoke and judgment.  
<sup>4</sup> But I was tranquil in the Lord's legion;  
More than shade was He to me,  
And more than foundation.  
<sup>5</sup> And I was carried like a child by its mother;  
And He gave me milk, the dew of the Lord.  
<sup>6</sup> And I was enriched by His favor,  
And rested in His perfection.  
<sup>7</sup> And I spread out my hands in the ascent of myself,  
And I directed myself towards the Most High,  
And I was redeemed towards Him.  
Hallelujah.

### Ode 36

- <sup>1</sup> I rested on the Spirit of the Lord,  
And She lifted me up to heaven;
- <sup>2</sup> And caused me to stand on my feet in the Lord's high place,  
Before His perfection and His glory,  
Where I continued glorifying Him by the composition of His Odes.
- <sup>3</sup> The Spirit brought me forth before the Lord's face,  
And because I was the Son of Man,  
I was named the Light, the Son of God;
- <sup>4</sup> Because I was the most glorified among the glorious ones,  
And the greatest among the great ones.
- <sup>5</sup> For according to the greatness of the Most High, so She made me;  
And according to His newness He renewed me.
- <sup>6</sup> And He anointed me with His perfection;  
And I became one of those who are near Him.
- <sup>7</sup> And my mouth was opened like a cloud of dew,  
And my heart gushed forth like a gusher of righteousness.
- <sup>8</sup> And my approach was in peace,  
And I was established in the Spirit of Providence.
- Hallelujah.

### Ode 37

- <sup>1</sup> I stretched out my hands towards the Lord,  
And towards the Most High I raised my voice.
- <sup>2</sup> And I spoke with the lips of my heart,  
And He heard me when my voice reached Him.
- <sup>3</sup> His Word came towards me,  
In order to give me the fruits of my labors;
- <sup>4</sup> And gave me rest  
By the grace of the Lord.
- Hallelujah.

### Ode 38

- <sup>1</sup> I went up into the light of Truth as into a chariot,  
And the Truth led me and caused me to come.
- <sup>2</sup> And caused me to pass over chasms and gulfs,  
And saved me from cliffs and valleys.
- <sup>3</sup> And became for me a haven of salvation,  
And set me on the place of immortal life.
- <sup>4</sup> And He went with me and caused me to rest  
And did not allow me to err; because He was and is the Truth.
- <sup>5</sup> And there was no danger for me because I constantly walked with Him;  
And I did not err in anything because I obeyed Him.
- <sup>6</sup> For Error fled from Him,  
And never met Him.

<sup>7</sup> But Truth was proceeding on the upright way,  
And whatever I did not understand He exhibited to me:  
<sup>8</sup> All the poisons of error,  
And pains of death which are considered sweetness.  
<sup>9</sup> And the corrupting of the Corruptor,  
I saw when the bride who was corrupting was adorned,  
And the bridegroom who corrupts and is corrupted.  
<sup>10</sup> And I asked the Truth, Who are these?  
And He said to me: This is the Deceiver and the Error.  
<sup>11</sup> And they imitate the Beloved and His Bride,  
And they cause the world to err and corrupt it.  
<sup>12</sup> And they invite many to the wedding feast,  
And allow them to drink the wine of their intoxication;  
<sup>13</sup> So they cause them to vomit up their wisdom and their knowledge,  
And prepare for them mindlessness.  
<sup>14</sup> Then they abandon them;  
And so they stumble about like mad and corrupted men.  
<sup>15</sup> Since there is no understanding in them,  
Neither do they seek it.  
<sup>16</sup> But I have been made wise so as not to fall into the hands of the Deceivers,  
And I myself rejoiced because the Truth had gone with me.  
<sup>17</sup> For I was established and lived and was redeemed,  
And my foundations were laid on account of the Lord's hand; because He has planted me.  
<sup>18</sup> For He set the root, and watered it and endowed it and blessed it,  
And its fruits will be forever.  
<sup>19</sup> It penetrated deeply and sprang up and spread out,  
And it was full and was enlarged.  
<sup>20</sup> And the Lord alone was glorified,  
In His planting and in His cultivation;  
<sup>21</sup> In His care and in the blessing of His lips,  
In the beautiful planting of His right hand;  
<sup>22</sup> And in the attainment of His planting,  
And in the understanding of His mind.  
Hallelujah.

### Ode 39

<sup>1</sup> Raging rivers are the power of the Lord;  
They send headlong those who despise Him.  
<sup>2</sup> And entangle their paths,  
And destroy their crossings.  
<sup>3</sup> And snatch their bodies,  
And corrupt their natures.  
<sup>4</sup> For they are more swift than lightnings,  
Even more rapid.  
<sup>5</sup> But those who cross them in faith shall not be disturbed.  
<sup>6</sup> And those who walk on them faultlessly shall not be shaken.  
<sup>7</sup> Because the sign on them is the Lord,  
And the sign is the Way for those who cross in the name of the Lord.  
<sup>8</sup> Therefore, put on the name of the Most High and know Him,  
And you shall cross without danger; because rivers shall be obedient to you.  
<sup>9</sup> The Lord has bridged them by His Word,  
And He walked and crossed them on foot.

<sup>10</sup> And His footsteps stand firm upon the waters,  
And were not destroyed;  
But they are like a beam of wood that is constructed on truth.  
<sup>11</sup> On this side and on that the waves were lifted up,  
But the footsteps of our Lord Messiah stand firm.  
<sup>12</sup> And they are neither blotted out,  
Nor destroyed.  
<sup>13</sup> And the Way has been appointed for those who cross over after Him,  
And for those who adhere to the path of His faith; and who adore His name.  
Hallelujah.

*Comments:* Ode 39 uses an Exodus motif! Waters, passageway through it by faith. It seems to even reference Jesus walking on waters, and maybe Simon Peter walking on waters.

#### **Ode 40**

<sup>1</sup> As honey drips from the honeycomb of bees,  
And milk flows from the woman who loves her children,  
So also is my hope upon You, O my God.  
<sup>2</sup> As a fountain gushes forth its water,  
So my heart gushes forth the praise of the Lord,  
And my lips bring forth praise to Him.  
<sup>3</sup> And my tongue becomes sweet by His anthems,  
And my members are anointed by His odes.  
<sup>4</sup> My face rejoices in His exultation,  
And my spirit exults in His love, and my nature shines in Him.  
<sup>5</sup> And he who is afraid shall trust in Him,  
And redemption shall be assured in Him.  
<sup>6</sup> And His possessions are immortal life,  
And those who receive it are incorruptible.  
Hallelujah.

#### **Ode 41**

<sup>1</sup> Let all the Lord's babes praise Him,  
And let us receive the truth of His faith.  
<sup>2</sup> And His children shall be acknowledged by Him,  
Therefore let us sing by His love.  
<sup>3</sup> We live in the Lord by His grace,  
And life we receive by His Messiah.  
<sup>4</sup> For a great day has shined upon us,  
And wonderful is He who has given to us of His glory.  
<sup>5</sup> Let us, therefore, all of us agree in the name of the Lord,  
And let us honor Him in His goodness.  
<sup>6</sup> And let our faces shine in His light,  
And let our hearts meditate in His love, by night and by day.  
<sup>7</sup> Let us exult with the exultation of the Lord.  
<sup>8</sup> All those who see me will be amazed,  
Because I am from another race.  
<sup>9</sup> For the Father of Truth remembered me;

He who possessed me from the beginning.  
<sup>10</sup> For His riches begat me,  
And the thought of His heart.  
<sup>11</sup> And His Word is with us in all our way,  
The Savior who gives life and does not reject ourselves.  
<sup>12</sup> The Man who humbled Himself,  
But was exalted because of His own righteousness.  
<sup>13</sup> The Son of the Most High appeared  
In the perfection of His Father.  
<sup>14</sup> And light dawned from the Word  
That was before time in Him.  
<sup>15</sup> The Messiah in truth is one.  
And He was known before the foundations of the world,  
That He might give life to persons for ever  
By the truth of His name.  
<sup>16</sup> A new chant is for the Lord  
From them that love Him.  
Hallelujah.

#### **Ode 42**

<sup>1</sup> I extended my hands and approached my Lord,  
For the expansion of my hands is His sign.  
<sup>2</sup> And my extension is the upright cross,  
That was lifted up on the way of the Righteous One.  
<sup>3</sup> And I became useless to those who knew me not,  
Because I shall hide myself from those who possessed me not.  
<sup>4</sup> And I will be with those who love me.  
<sup>5</sup> All my persecutors have died,  
And they sought me,  
They who declared against me,  
Because I am living.  
<sup>6</sup> Then I arose and am with them,  
And will speak by their mouths.  
<sup>7</sup> For they have rejected those who persecute them;  
And I threw over them the yoke of my love.  
<sup>8</sup> Like the arm of the bridegroom over the bride,  
So is my yoke over those who know me.  
<sup>9</sup> And as the bridal chamber is spread out by the bridal pair's home,  
So is my love by those who believe in me.  
<sup>10</sup> I was not rejected  
Although I was considered to be so,  
And I did not perish  
Although they thought it of me.  
<sup>11</sup> Sheol saw me and was shattered,  
And Death ejected me and many with me.  
<sup>12</sup> I have been vinegar and bitterness to it,  
And I went down with it as far as its depth.  
<sup>13</sup> Then the feet and the head it released,  
Because it was not able to endure my face.  
<sup>14</sup> And I made a congregation of living among his dead;  
And I spoke with them by living lips;  
In order that my word may not be unprofitable.

<sup>15</sup> And those who had died ran towards me;  
    And they cried out and said, 'Son of God, have pity on us.  
<sup>16</sup> And deal with us according to Your kindness,  
    And bring us out from the bonds of darkness.  
<sup>17</sup> And open for us the door by which we may come out to You;  
    For we perceive that our death does not touch You.  
<sup>18</sup> May we also be saved with You,  
    Because You are our Savior.'  
<sup>19</sup> Then I heard their voice,  
    And placed their faith in my heart.  
<sup>20</sup> And I placed my name upon their head,  
    Because they are free and they are mine.  
Hallelujah.