

## Terms Indicating the Eucharistic Prayer in Irenaeus' Writings: "the Invocation of God" and "the Word of God"

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### I. Introduction

The aim of my study is to investigate the reality of the Eucharistic prayers in early Christianity from the writings of Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons in the second century.<sup>1)</sup> His principal work, *Against Heresies* (*Adversus haereses*; *AH*), was written in argument against Gnostic dualism that considering matter and flesh as radically evil, denied any union of the divine and the material.<sup>2)</sup> While Irenaeus indicates his understanding of the Eucharist in relation to themes such as the goodness of creation and the historicity of Christ's incarnation in that work,<sup>3)</sup> he does not provide any substantial description of the Eucharistic liturgy in his time, and explains nothing about the form and content of the Eucharistic prayer. It is also certain, however, that the Eucharistic references made in *AH* offer significant information more implicitly on the Eucharistic prayer familiar to him and on his understanding of it. In this study, I will specifically look at the terms used by Irenaeus that appear to indicate the Eucharistic prayer, namely, "the invocation of God" (ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ) and "the word of

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1) Regarding the life, the work, and the basic thoughts of Irenaeus, see R. M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (London and New York, 1997), 1-10; D. Minns, *Irenaeus* (London, 1994), 1-9; E. Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge, 2001), 1-24.

2) The Greek original of *Against Heresies* has been preserved only in fragmentary form. Most of these fragments are found in quotations by later writers, especially Hippolytus, Eusebius, Epiphanius, and John Damascene. There are also fragments of Syrian and Armenian versions. The work has come down completely only in a very literal Latin translation that dates back to the fourth century. The collection *Sources Chrétiennes* (SC), which I refer to here, has offered a reconstruction of the Greek text for the entire work, along with the Latin and a French translation.

3) Regarding the relation of Irenaeus' teachings on the Eucharist and to his theology as a whole, see M. A. Donovan, *One Right Reading?* (Collegeville, 1997), 109-111, 143; A. Hamman, 'Irenaeus of Lyons', in: W. Rordorf *et al.*, *The Eucharist of Early Christians* (New York, 1978), 86-98; Minns, *Irenaeus*, 114-16; Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 134; D. N. Power, *Irenaeus of Lyons on Baptism and Eucharist: Selected Texts with Introduction, Translation and Annotation*, Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 18 (Nottingham, 1991), 5-6, 26-28; Idem, *The Eucharistic Mystery* (Dublin, 1992), 109-10.

God” (ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ). Although a detailed reconstruction of the actual content of the Eucharistic prayer familiar to Irenaeus is impossible for lack of evidence,<sup>4)</sup> a close examination of these terms will provide an important key to understanding the essential character of that prayer.

## II. Key Texts

The terms in question for this study appear in *AH* IV.18.5 and V.2.3 as “the invocation of God” and “the word of God,” respectively. The theme and structure of Irenaeus’ argument about the Eucharist is very similar in these two passages. Against the Gnostic denial of the salvation of the flesh, Irenaeus asserts that through the nourishment of the Eucharist, believers’ bodies become incorruptible and capable of resurrection. Thus, Irenaeus emphasizes that, through the reality of the Eucharist, bread and flesh will assume an essential role in the entire economy of God’s salvation. It is vital to note that in the structure of such explanation in both texts, the terms, “the invocation of God” and “the word of God,” have exactly the same position. I quote the essential parts of the passages, italicizing the terms in question:

Then again, how can they say that the flesh goes to corruption and does not partake of life, when it is nourished by the Lord’s body and blood? (...) For we offer to God those things which belong to God, proclaiming fittingly the communion and unity of the flesh and the spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives *the invocation of God* is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, the earthly and the heavenly, so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, but have the hope of resurrection.<sup>5)</sup>

When, therefore, both the cup that has been mixed and the bread that has been made, receive *the word of God* and become the Eucharist of Christ’s body and blood, from which the substance of our flesh is increased and made consistent, how can they deny that flesh is capable of receiving the gift of God which is eternal life, [since] it is nourished by Christ’s body and blood and is his member? (...) Just as cutting of wood from the vine in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a grain of wheat falling into the earth and decomposing, rises with manifest

4) As generally agreed, there were most probably no fixed texts of the Eucharistic prayers in the early centuries, but they were said by the celebrant’s extemporization. It is also accepted, however, that those free prayers were said in a conventional framework, namely with a standard structure and theme. Bouley’s detailed study on this matter shows that it is true also in Irenaeus’ case. See A. Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula: The Evolution of the Eucharistic Prayer from Oral Improvisation to Written Texts* (Washington, D. C., 1981), 131-33.

5) *AH* IV. 18. 5 (SC 100, 610-13; the English translation is taken from: Power, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 21)

increase by the Spirit of God, ... and having received *the word of God* becomes the Eucharist, which is Christ's body and blood, so also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at the appointed time...<sup>6)</sup>

As is obvious, "the invocation of God" in the former text and "the word of God" which appears twice in the latter are similarly described as the direct moment, or the agent through which the food becomes the Eucharist, that is, Christ's body and blood. In order to clarify this parallel between ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ and ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, it is helpful to compare the sentences:

IV.18.5	V.2.3	
The bread	When the bread	A grain of wheat
... produced from the earth	that has been made	falling into the earth
when it receives	receives	having received
<i>the invocation of God</i>	<i>the word of God</i>	<i>the word of God</i>
is no longer common bread		
but the Eucharist	becomes the Eucharist	becomes the Eucharist
the Lord's body	of Christ's body	which is Christ's body <sup>7)</sup>

Thus, in the structure of the sentences, "the invocation of God" and "the word of God" are set in clear parallel. The vital question of my concern is what Irenaeus actually means by these terms, which bear an essential role in the structure of the passage as the direct agent of "consecration." Concerning the interpretation of these somewhat enigmatic phrases, there are different groups of scholars' opinions.

The first group views both ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ and ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ as essentially synonymous and interchangeable in their parallelism, and interprets both phrases as indicating the entire Eucharistic prayer. In this case, "the bread and cup receive the invocation of God/the word of God" actually signifies "the Eucharistic prayer is said over the bread and cup," and so it is said that the food and drink become the Eucharist, Christ's body and blood, through that prayer.<sup>8)</sup>

6) AH V.2.3 (SC153, 34-41; Power, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 23-24)

7) E. Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, tr. M. J. O'Connell (Collegeville, 1999), 111.

8) Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 111-13; Power, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 23, n. 4; A. Rousseau, SC152.212-13 (note for AH V.2.3: 35, n.2); D. Unger, 'The Holy Eucharist According to St. Irenaeus', *Laurentianum* 20 (1979), 103-64, esp. 147-48 and 156. Among them, Rousseau and Unger tend to think that the Eucharistic prayer called "the word of God" should have included Jesus' words of institution, while Mazza and Power consider that it did not necessarily imply the institution narrative. Power suggested that, while the phrase "the word of God" primarily indicates the entire prayer, it could reflect a connection between the words of the Eucharistic prayer and the personal Logos of God: "possibly, the words spoken are associated with the Word in whose name they are invoked."

On the other hand, the second group considers ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ as the specific invocation/epiclesis of the Logos, and ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ as “the Logos of God,” the second person of the Trinity, who descends to the bread and the cup in response to that specific epiclesis.<sup>9)</sup> This understanding is naturally connected to the view that Irenaeus understands what happens in the Eucharist as an analogy to the incarnation of the Logos.<sup>10)</sup>

Considering the above comparisons, it appears most reasonable to understand both ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ and ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ as signifying primarily the entire prayer of the Eucharist. However, as the interpretation of the second group is also possible, it is necessary to confirm this view through further evidence. To that purpose, first, I examine the relation of both ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ and ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ to the verb εὐχαριστεῖν that Irenaeus uses concerning the bread and cup in the other passage. This examination will endorse that the two phrases mean the entire prayer of the Eucharist, and also show that the keynote of this prayer is thanksgiving. Then, investigating ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ and ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ individually, I will demonstrate that these terms themselves can be considered as names for the Eucharistic prayer with this keynote.

### III. The Idea of Thanksgiving

To confirm the parallelism between ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ and ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, and their meaning as “the entire Eucharistic prayer,” it is first necessary to examine another passage of Irenaeus, which also refers to the prayer of the Eucharist spoken over the bread and cup, in comparison with the three sentences presented above. The text is taken from *AH* IV.18.4, in which Irenaeus primarily speaks about the offering of Christians continuing the argument starting from IV.17.1.<sup>11)</sup>

Emphasizing the necessity to make an offering of the first-fruits of creation to God the Creator with a pure mind and thanks, Irenaeus claims the exclusive right of the church to make this offering to God, which is most probably the bread and cup used in

9) J. Betz, *Die Eucharistie in der Zeit der griechischen Väter I/1* (Freiburg, 1955), 272-75; Idem, *Eucharistie in der Schrift und Patristik*, Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte IV. 4a (Freiburg, 1979), 36; J. Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London, 1948), 267-68; P. Rodopoulos, ‘Irenaeus on the Consecration of the Eucharistic Gifts’, in *Kyriakon*, ed. P. Granfield and J. A. Jungmann (Münster, 1970), 844-46. While interpreting “the Word of God” and “the epiclesis of God” in such a relationship, Rodopoulos thought that the agent who came and worked in response to the epiclesis was actually the Holy Spirit who was the organ of the Logos (see 845-46). Y. de Andia also interpreted “the epiclesis of God” as the consecratory invocation addressed to God to send the Holy Spirit in order to transform the food and drink into Christ’s body and blood. On the basis of this, de Andia considered ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ as “the word (*la Parole*) of God” that sent the Holy Spirit and transformed the elements: Y. de Andia, *Homo vivens* (Paris, 1986), 240-41, esp. n. 13.

10) Betz, *Die Eucharistie I/1*, 272-75; Lawson, *The Biblical Theology*, 267-68. See also Donovan, *One Right Reading?*, 143-44.

11) This argument on Christian offering and sacrifice is developed in IV.17.1-18.6 (SC 100.574-615).

the Eucharist, and he attacks the inappropriateness of offerings made by the Jews and the heretics. In this context, again pointing out the contradiction between doctrine and practice in the Gnostics, Irenaeus continues:

But how can they be sure that the bread over which thanks has been given (*in quo gratiae actae sint*) is the body of their Lord, and the cup his blood, if they do not call him the Son of the Creator of the world, that is, God's Word...<sup>12)</sup>

In this passage, where Irenaeus refers to his Eucharistic practice and belief when arguing against the Gnostics' misuse of the Eucharist,<sup>13)</sup> the significant phrase of my concern is *in quo gratiae actae sint*, which is translated as "over which thanks has been given." This passage survives only in the literal Latin translation and there needs to be some consideration on this phrase.

There is no doubt that *in quo gratiae actae sint* translates into Greek εὐχαριστηθέντα, which is derived from εὐχαριστεῖν.<sup>14)</sup> The verb εὐχαριστεῖν originally meant "to thank" in a general sense, but in a religious context, it signified "to say a prayer of thanksgiving." And, in the Christian church of the second century, it came to be used as a sort of technical term that indicated "to say the Eucharistic prayer over the bread and cup." Furthermore, deriving from this, the verb simultaneously came to imply "to make the bread and cup the Eucharist (namely, consecrate them as the Eucharist) by that prayer."<sup>15)</sup>

We can see such an early formation of the technical use of εὐχαριστεῖν in Irenaeus. It is certain that in this passage of Irenaeus, εὐχαριστηθέντα primarily means "over which the Eucharistic prayer has been said." But at the same time, considering that Irenaeus uses εὐχαριστεῖν to indicate rather "to consecrate, or make, the cup the Eucharist" in the description of the Gnostic Marcosian rite,<sup>16)</sup> it is natural to interpret εὐχαριστηθέντα in IV.18.4 as also implying "which has been made the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer."

However, it should be noted that even though Irenaeus uses εὐχαριστεῖν in a technical sense in liturgical contexts, this use is never detached from the original meaning of the verb. Namely, it is most likely that, while Irenaeus uses the verb to technically indicate "to say the Eucharistic prayer" and "make the food the Eucharist," those uses were firmly connected with its original meaning, "to thank" or "to give thanks." I will now

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12) SC 100.608-9; Power, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 20.

13) From the passage and from IV.18.5 and V.2.3, it appears that despite their contempt of creation and their association of it with evil, the Gnostic groups whom Irenaeus argues against used the bread and cup, which were fruits of creation, in their ritual meals, holding that after thanks has been given they were Christ's body and blood. Therefore, the use of such a prayer and the understanding of its function, namely to make food into body and blood, are basically common both to Irenaeus and the Gnostics, though the basic contents of the prayer, as we shall see later, would be different.

14) See the Greek retranslation of SC 100.608-9.

15) See Betz, *Eucharistie in der Schrift*, 27

16) *AH I.13.2* (SC 264.190-93)

demonstrate this from two pieces of evidence.

Firstly, this is indicated by the broader context in which IV.18.4 is located. As mentioned, in *AH* IV.17 and 18, Irenaeus speaks about the true sacrifice or offering that pleases God. On the one hand, Irenaeus emphasizes that God seeks no material sacrifice or holocaust from human beings, but the faith, obedience, and righteousness that bring salvation.<sup>17)</sup> But on the other hand, Irenaeus stresses the necessity of the church's offering of the first-fruits of creation, an offering made with true faith and love, which is essential not because God needs it but in order that believers may not be unfruitful and ungrateful.<sup>18)</sup> From Irenaeus' reference to the institution narrative, it becomes clear that this offering of first-fruits directly indicates the bread and cup used in the Eucharist.<sup>19)</sup> In this process of the argument, Irenaeus clearly describes this offering of the bread and cup as the visible expression of believers' thanksgiving:

For it is necessary for us to make an offering to God and to be found in all things grateful to the Creator... Moreover, the church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering from God's own creation, with thanksgiving (*cum gratias actione*).<sup>20)</sup>

This emphasis on gratitude or thanksgiving in the making of offerings is repeated in other passages.<sup>21)</sup> Thus, Irenaeus puts great stress on Christian thanksgiving in his argument on the offering of the bread and cup in these chapters, and it becomes clear that he understands the Eucharist above all as a symbolic act of gratitude and thanksgiving. It should be noted that the term εὐχαριστηθέντα concerning the bread and cup appears in that very context. Considering this, it is entirely reasonable to understand εὐχαριστεῖν here as literally meaning "to thank" in connection with the basic character of the bread and cup; more precisely, as implying, to verbally confirm and clarify thanksgiving and gratitude, which was symbolically expressed by the presentation of the bread and the cup, through the Eucharistic prayer.

Secondly, the parallelism of εὐχαριστεῖν to Jesus' thanksgiving in the institution narrative supports this view. Irenaeus refers to the institution narrative in relation to the theme of offering, and through this he connects the offerings well pleasing to God to the bread and cup used in the Eucharist:

The Lord gave directions to his disciples to offer first-fruits to God from God's

17) *AH* IV.17.4 (SC 100.590-91)

18) *AH* IV.17.5; 18.1; 18.3; 18. 6 (SC 100.590-95; 596-97; 598-607; 612-15)

19) *AH* IV.17.5 (SC 100.590-95). The quotation of Malachi 1:10-11 in relation to this offering confirms the connection between the offering or sacrifice spoken here and the Eucharist. In the early period, that passage from the Old Testament is quoted to indicate a type of the Eucharistic offering of the church. See the *Didache* 14; Justin, *Dial.*41.2.

20) *AH* 18.4 (SC 100, 606-7; Power, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 19-20)

21) *AH* 18.1; 18.6 (SC 100.596-97; 612-15)

own creatures, not as though God stood in need of them, but that they themselves may be neither unfruitful nor ungrateful. Thus, he took the bread which comes from creation, and he gave thanks (*gratias egit*), saying: "This is my Body". He did likewise with the cup, which is part of the creation to which we ourselves belong, declaring it to be his blood, and [so] he taught the new offering of the new covenant. This is the offering which the church received from the apostles and which it offers throughout the whole world, to God who provides us with nourishment, the first-fruits of divine gifts in this new covenant.<sup>22)</sup>

An important observation is that Irenaeus quotes the institution narrative here in order to point to the origin and background of the bread/cup offering of the church in the Eucharist. According to Irenaeus, the church offers the bread and the cup, which are described as "the new offering of the new covenant," in obedience to the commandments of Christ in the institution narrative. Thus, Irenaeus quotes the institution narrative primarily as the setting in which Jesus gave to the disciples the directions concerning the offering of the first-fruits.<sup>23)</sup>

However, simultaneously it is possible to see that by referring to the narrative Irenaeus indicates the origin of other aspects of the Eucharist. This explains why the church uses part of creation in the Eucharist and receives the Eucharist as Christ's body and blood. Therefore, while this narrative is quoted to show chiefly the origin of the offering in the Eucharist, it also functions as the ultimate basis of the entire act of the Eucharist.

Significantly, Irenaeus refers to *gratia* that Jesus said over the bread and cup. The original Greek of *gratias egit* is undoubtedly ἡὐχαρίστησε, the aorist tense of εὐχαριστεῶ.<sup>24)</sup> If this institution narrative is presented to indicate the origin and warrant of the church's act of the Eucharist, it is probable that the εὐχαριστεῖν of

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22) *AH* IV.17.5 (SC 100, 590-93; Power, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 15-16).

23) The exact content of the Eucharistic offering suggested here is not very clear; in fact, it has been a matter of much debate among scholars. Therefore, what Irenaeus intends when he says that the Christians offer first-fruit of creation according to Christ's directions in the institution narrative should be questioned. Rowan Williams argued that a first-fruit offering does not indicate simply the offering of bread and wine, but it is associated with the body and the blood of Christ, namely the sacrifice of Christ, which are the new offerings of the new covenant to provide nourishment for us: R. Williams, *Eucharistic Sacrifice*, GLS 31 (Nottingham, 1982), 9-12. See also K. W. Stevenson, *Eucharist and Offering* (New York, 1986), 18-19. However, it seems more reasonable to me to interpret "first-fruits offering" in the Eucharist just as bread and cup which are created materials, and to consider that, after thanks are given over them, they will be "the first-fruits of divine gifts in this new covenant," which are most likely Christ's body and blood. For this kind of view, see R. C. P. Hanson, *Eucharistic Offering in the Early Church*, GLS 19 (Nottingham, 1979), 8-10; Power, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 16, n. 1, 2; W. Rordorf, 'Le sacrifice eucharistique', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 25 (1969), 335-53, esp. 348-49; F. M. Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom* (Philadelphia, 1979), 261-62. In this context, I interpret the expressions such as "offering" and "offer" corresponding not to the body/blood-sayings of Jesus over the bread and cup, but to the actions of Jesus in the narrative: He *took* the bread and the cup, which are part of the creation, and He *gave thanks* over them.

24) See SC 100.591.

Jesus in the narrative is considered to be the origin of the church's εὐχαριστεῖν over the bread and cup. If this is right, Irenaeus probably uses εὐχαριστηθέντα in IV.18.4 in parallel with Jesus' εὐχαριστεῖν in the institution narrative, and we can suppose that Irenaeus considers the church's εὐχαριστεῖν as deriving from and being modeled on Jesus' εὐχαριστεῖν in the narrative.

It is natural to consider that in drawing such a parallel between the εὐχαριστεῖν of Jesus and that of the church, Irenaeus fully realizes that Jesus' εὐχαριστεῖν was actually "to give thanks," namely "to say prayer of thanksgiving to God," which was thanks given after the tradition of the Jewish meal prayer: the body/blood-sayings are undeniably not part of that prayer, since they are presented rather as the words of distribution coming after the prayer of thanksgiving.

If Irenaeus understands the church's εὐχαριστεῖν in parallelism with Jesus' εὐχαριστεῖν, and considers the former as deriving from the latter, such ideas are probably formed on the basis of the actual similarity between these two εὐχαριστεῖν: just as Jesus' εὐχαριστεῖν was literally "to say thanksgiving," so also the church's εὐχαριστεῖν is, in its essence and content, "to give thanks to God." In other words, the principal content of the Eucharistic prayer familiar to Irenaeus was actually giving thanks to God.

These two considerations strongly indicate that, while Irenaeus uses εὐχαριστηθέντα in IV.18.4 in a technical sense, this term is closely connected with its original and more general meaning, "to thank." This term can be interpreted as meaning "over which thanks has been given," and "the bread over which thanks has been given" is understood as something set apart from ordinary use simply because thanksgiving to God has been said over it.

This is the meaning of εὐχαριστεῖν in Irenaeus. In relation to this meaning of εὐχαριστεῖν, the meaning of ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ and that of ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ will be correctly understood.

In order to clarify this relationship, it is useful to add the sentence from IV.18.4 to the comparison of the sentences made above, and here it is probably better to make the comparison in the original languages of the surviving texts:

IV.18.5	V.2.3	IV.18.4
ὣς ὁ ἄρτος	Ὅποτε ὁ ἄρτος/ὁ κόκκος τοῦ σίτου	panem
προσλαζόμενος	ἐπιδέχεται/προσλαμζάνόμενα	<b>in quo gratia actae sint</b>
τὴν ἐπίκλησιν τοῦ Θεοῦ	τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ	(εὐχαριστηθέντα)
ἐστίν εὐχαριστίας	γίνεται εὐχαριστία	
... τοῦ σώματος τοῦ	σῶμα Χριστοῦ/	corpus esse Domini
Κυρίου	ὅπερ ἐστὶ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ	... constabit <sup>25)</sup>

25) SC 100.610-13; 153.34-37; 100.608-9

It is obvious that these sentences parallel each other in their structure and content, and it is natural to regard the phrases in bold letters as equivalents. In this correspondence, *in quo gratia actae sint* (εὐχαριστηθέντα in original Greek) of IV.18.4 corresponds to the phrases concerning "receiving of the invocation/word of God" of IV.18.5 and V.2.3. Given my exploration of the connection between the technical senses of εὐχαριστεῖν and its original meaning, it is probable that ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ and ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ actually indicate "the entire Eucharistic prayer which is thanksgiving to God." Therefore, from this comparison, it is possible to see that Irenaeus understood that through the invocation or the word of God, the food has been thanked because the contents of them are thanksgiving.

On the basis of this conclusion, I will next examine carefully the meanings of the phrases ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ and ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, and demonstrate that these phrases themselves are to be considered as terms for the entire Eucharistic prayer, the essence of which is thanksgiving.

#### IV. The Invocation of God

As mentioned, some scholars considered ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ as the specific epiclesis that invoked the advent of the Logos to the bread and cup, and interpret that ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ does not mean "the word of prayer" but exclusively indicated "the Logos of God." In order to show that both of these terms equally designate the same prayer, in this chapter, I will try to demonstrate that the phrase ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ in Irenaeus can be reasonably understood as a term for the entire Eucharistic prayer, the keynote of which is *anamnetic*-thanksgiving.

Certainly, a majority of scholars agree that ἡ ἐπίκλησις in Irenaeus' use should be interpreted, not as a developed liturgical term for the prayer that invoked the Spirit or the Logos as in the later Eastern Anaphoras, but as a general term that broadly designated "the prayer" or "address to God".<sup>26)</sup> Although such a view appears to be correct as a conclusion, the reason for this has not been sufficiently illustrated: the understanding of ἡ ἐπίκλησις not as liturgical terminology but as a general term was generally on the basis of a conjecture from the liturgical view, that is, the use of the technical epiclesis must have begun at a later time, and it was not demonstrated from Irenaeus' texts themselves.

In fact, it should be noted that, when Irenaeus uses the term ἡ ἐπίκλησις in another passage that is a description of the Gnostic Marcosians' rite, ἡ ἐπίκλησις appears to have an implication closer to the later liturgical terminology:

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26) See R. H. Connolly, ' "The Meaning of ἐπίκλησις": A Reply ', *JTS* 25 (1924), 339-64, esp. 361-62.; N. Förster; *Marcus Magnus* (Tübingen, 1999), 75-6; Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 111-14; Power, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 13, n. 2; 21, n.3; Idem, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 110; J. H. Srawley, *The Early History of the Liturgy* (third edition; London, 1949), 36-37; Unger, 'The Holy Eucharist According to St. Irenaeus', 110-11, 155.

Feigning to eucharistise (προσποιούμενος εὐχαριστεῖν) the cup mixed with wine and drawing out at length the word of invocation (τὸν λόγον τῆς ἐπικλήσεως), he makes the cup appear purple and red, so that Grace, who is among the superior beings, may be thought to drip her own blood into that cup through means of his invocation (διὰ τῆς ἐπικλήσεως), and that those who are present might greatly desire to taste of that drink, so that Grace, who is invoked by the magician, might drip on them too. Again, handing mixed cups to the women he commands them to give thanks in his presence. And when this has been done, he himself brings forth another cup much larger than the one over which the deluded woman has given thanks, and pours from the smaller cup over which the woman had given thanks into the one which he himself brought forward, saying over it: May that Grace who is before all things, unthinkable and unspeakable, fill your inner self and increase in you her knowledge, planting the mustard seed in good ground...<sup>27)</sup>

Considering the Marcosians' ritual meal as a kind of imitation of the church's Eucharist, Irenaeus criticizes the fact that it is not a Eucharist but a false magic performance that deludes people. In this context, Irenaeus describes that, feigning to eucharistise (προσποιούμενος εὐχαριστεῖν) the cup, Marcus draws out at length the words of invocation (τὸν λόγον τῆς ἐπικλήσεως). This most likely indicates that, simulating the act of the church's Eucharist, more specifically, pretending to make the cup the Eucharist, Marcus says the words of the epiclesis over the cup.<sup>28)</sup>

The effect of this epiclesis is clearly described: it is thought that, through the means of Marcus' epiclesis, the blood of Grace might drip (στάζειν) into the cup, and that through drinking that cup, Grace herself might drip on to the participants. Therefore, the term ἐπίκλησις in this passage is naturally understood as indicating the specific invocation that asks the divine being to descend. Furthermore, it is most probable that the description of the prayer, which comes at the end of the quotation, corresponds to the actual content of

27) *AH I.13.2* (SC 264.190–93; Power, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 13–14). However, I have made some changes in the English translation of Power concerning the interpretation of εὐχαριστεῖν: for this matter, see the next footnote.

28) Regarding the phrase προσποιούμενος εὐχαριστεῖν, Förster interpreted it as “simulating the church's Eucharist” in a general sense: Förster, *Marcus Magnus*, 74–75. However, Joncas and Unger understood it as “feigning to eucharistize” in a more technical sense: J. M. Joncas, ‘Eucharist among the Marcosians: A Study of Irenaeus’ *Adversus Haereses* I, 13:2’, *Questions Liturgiques* 71 (1990), 99–111, on this 102–3; Unger, *The Holy Eucharist According to St. Irenaeus*, 106–10. I consider that both are right in this context. Power translated εὐχαριστεῖν as “to give thanks”: Power, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 13, n.2. However, “feigning to give thanks, drawing out ... the word of invocation” appears to have no sense in this passage. On the other hand, it is probable that ἡὐχαρίστησε and ἡὐχαριστημένου used concerns the women are to be interpreted in the sense of giving thanks or saying thanks-prayer: see Joncas, ‘Eucharist among the Marcosians’, 103–7.

that epiclesis as said by Marcus.<sup>29)</sup> Certainly, that prayer is not strictly an epiclesis in its form: it is said not in the form of an invocation that asks Grace to descend, but in the form of a wish concerning the effects of Grace accomplished in the participants. Regarding the content, however, it is reasonably classified as a sort of epiclesis in a technical sense. This prayer asks for the dwelling of Χάρις and her γνώσις within the participants as the final result of her advent into the cup.<sup>30)</sup>

If this sort of epiclesis is a part of Marcus' simulation of the church's Eucharist, it is not unreasonable to think that ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ of the church (IV.18.5) is, as the model of Marcosian epiclesis, a similar kind of prayer that invokes the descent of divine beings such as the Logos or the Holy Spirit and the effect of this. Therefore, if one claims that the phrase ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ in IV.18.5 should be understood not in this technical sense but as "the prayer" in a general sense, more careful examination of its relation to the Marcosians' ἐπίκλησις is needed.

According to the analysis of Niclas Förster, the term ἐπίκλησις in I.13.2 is most likely used to emphasize a dubious performance of a magician. That is to say, in this passage, Irenaeus tries to depict Marcus as a magician, and with that intention, refers to Marcus' "word of invocation at length" as the typical mark of a magician. Therefore, ἐπίκλησις in this context should be understood as a sort of magic spell that is mumbled at length by a magician.<sup>31)</sup> This interpretation is supported by the fact that Irenaeus uses the term ἐπίκλησις usually as designating a magical invocation.<sup>32)</sup>

This understanding encourages us to conclude that, by using the term ἐπίκλησις to point out the Marcosians' prayer, Irenaeus intends to distinguish clearly between the Marcosians' prayer and the Eucharistic prayer of the church. If this is correct, it is reasonable to assume that Irenaeus' use of ἐπίκλησις in I.13.2 would indicate that the Eucharistic prayer of Irenaeus' church was *not* an epiclesis in a technical sense, and namely not a prayer that invokes the divine to descend on the elements, but something different in its content.

This appears to be the most reasonable conclusion drawn from the interpretation of ἐπίκλησις as used in I.13.2. However if this is right, one difficult question arises: if Irenaeus uses the term ἐπίκλησις with such a critical tone, why does he use the phrase

29) Joncas considered that in this passage Irenaeus presented two different accounts of Marcosians' Eucharistic rite: the rite performed by Marcus alone and the one by him and the women: Joncas, 'Eucharist among the Marcosians', 102-8. Even if this is correct it is reasonable to consider that the prayer quoted in the second account corresponds in some way with the content of the epiclesis that is mentioned in the first account.

30) It is possible to see the similar structure of ideas in the epiclesis of the Holy Spirit in the *Apostolic Tradition* 4, and in the epiclesis found in the *Acts of Thomas* 133.

31) Förster, *Marcus Magnus*, 75-76. Connolly also saw here a sample usage of the term "epiclesis" in a negative sense, writing, "this refers to a formula ... which is not a prayer in any sense of the word": Connolly, ' "The Meaning of ἐπίκλησις" ', 351-52.

32) *AH* I.24.5 (SC 264.330); II.32.5; II.6.2 (SC 294.342; 62). See Förster, *Marcus Magnus*, 75-76, n. 102.

ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ to indicate the Eucharistic prayer of the church in another passage? As mentioned, scholars who understand ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ not as the epiclesis in the technical sense, consider that this phrase indicated more broadly “the prayer to God.” Taking account of Irenaeus’ use of ἐπίκλησις in I.13.2, it would be somewhat odd for Irenaeus to dare to use a term with a negative connotation in his argument against Gnostics to simply indicate “the prayer.”

The only possible answer would be that the Eucharistic prayer of the church known to Irenaeus was in its content ἐπίκλησις, but in a “positive” sense; not because it was an “invocation” of the divine to come down like the Marcosians’ epiclesis, but because it was the prayer “calling upon” God, using a concrete expression close to the term ἐπίκλησις.

To this opinion, the short study of Klaus Gamber, which examined the liturgical text in Irenaeus as a sort of epiclesis, gives very significant support.<sup>33)</sup> Gamber looked at *AH* III.6.4, which is a kind of liturgical confession beginning with the phrase *invoco te* (I call upon you; in the original Greek most probably ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε).<sup>34)</sup> Comparing this with the texts of early Eucharistic prayers of Egypt that also starts with or includes the similar phrase “I (or We) call upon you,” Gamber concluded that this passage of Irenaeus reflected the introduction of the Eucharistic prayer known to Irenaeus.<sup>35)</sup> Furthermore, observing the content and phraseology in *AH* III.6.4 in comparison with those of the early liturgical texts, Gamber considered that this text of Irenaeus also showed the basic themes of the extemporized Eucharistic prayer, namely, the themes of creation and salvation through Christ.<sup>36)</sup>

Gamber concluded that in Irenaeus there was an example of the Eucharistic prayer, the whole of which was in the form of “epiclesis,” and from the similarity between Irenaeus’ text and the early Egyptian prayers of the Eucharist, suggested the possibility that this Eucharistic prayer of an epiclesis type was commonly used in certain areas before the epiclesis of the Holy Spirit, which was specifically the consecratory part of the Eucharistic prayer, was introduced and came to be commonly used.<sup>37)</sup>

In the process of this argument, Gamber referred to *AH* IV.18.5 in which Irenaeus speaks about the “consecration” of the bread and cup through ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ. Identifying ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ with the Eucharistic prayer of the epiclesis type

33) K. Gamber, ‘Das Eucharistiegebet als Epiklese und ein Zitat bei Irenäus’, *Ostkirchliche Studien* 29 (1980), 301-5.

34) “Therefore I also call upon you, Lord, God of Abraham, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob and Israel, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God who, through the abundance of your mercy, has had a favour towards us, that we should know you, who has made heaven and earth, who rules over all, who is the only and the true God, above whom there is none other God; grant, through our Lord Jesus Christ, the governing power of the Holy Spirit; give to every reader of this book to know you, that you are God alone, to be strengthened in you, and to avoid every heretical, and godless, and impious doctrine.” (SC 211.74-77: The English translation is based on *ANF* 1, 419).

35) Gamber, ‘Das Eucharistiegebet als Epiklese’, 301-2. As the texts of that kind of Eucharistic prayers, Gamber looked at the Deir Balyzeh Papyrus, the Coptic Ostrakon B.M. 32.799 and 33.050, and the Anaphora of Sarapion.

36) Gamber, ‘Das Eucharistiegebet als Epiklese’, 302-4.

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36) Gamber, ‘Das Eucharistiegebet als Epiklese’, 302-4.

suggested in III.6.4, Gamber argued that in Irenaeus the entire Eucharistic prayer could be considered as an epiclesis, and that the consecration of the bread and cup into Christ's body and blood was ascribed to that entire prayer, and not to a specific part such as the epiclesis of the Holy Spirit or Christ's words in the institution narrative.<sup>38)</sup>

Therefore, Gamber's study showed, as other scholars had also suggested, that ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ in IV.18.5 indicated the entire prayer of the Eucharist. According to Gamber, however, it did so not unconditionally, but for the specific reason that the Eucharistic prayer known to Irenaeus actually began with the phrase *invoco te*, namely with a calling upon God's name, and in this way the entire prayer was put in the framework of a calling on God, in other words, an epiclesis of God.

This appears to be the most plausible explanation as to why Irenaeus uses the phrase ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ to point to the entire Eucharistic prayer while he uses the term ἐπίκλησις with a negative tone in other contexts. Certainly, as Gamber himself emphasized, it is wrong to regard the content of AH III.6.4 as being the text of the Eucharistic prayer known to Irenaeus. However, Gamber strongly persuades us that the content of the passage is based on the conventional structure and themes of the Eucharistic prayer, especially with his comparison of the opening phrase "I call upon you" with the other examples of the Eucharistic prayers, which shows that this phrase of Irenaeus is most likely taken from the introductory part of the Eucharistic prayer.<sup>39)</sup>

Agreeing with Gamber, I consider that AH III.6.4, which is the liturgical confession beginning with an epiclesis of God, reflects in some way the Eucharistic prayer familiar to Irenaeus, and that for this reason the entire Eucharistic prayer is called ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ. Therefore, it becomes more probable that this phrase does not indicate the epiclesis in the later technical sense, namely the invocation for the Logos or the Holy Spirit to come down. Probably, in Irenaeus' mind, ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ is clearly distinguished from ὁ λόγος τῆς ἐπικλήσεως of the Gnostic Marcus, being a magic spell asking the divine to descend, which is in its form, though not in essence, is closer to the epiclesis of the later technical sense.

## V. The Word of God

If ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ in IV.18.5 does not indicate the specific invocation for the Logos or the Holy Spirit to descend, it also becomes certain that ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ,

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37) Gamber, 'Das Eucharistiegebet als Epiklese', 304.

38) Gamber, 'Das Eucharistiegebet als Epiklese', 302.

39) In his more recent study, Gamber summarized his argument in the essay that I have referred to, and there he presented examples of the liturgical prayers of the West, which were not the Eucharistic prayers proper but contained the similar epicletic phrases to the opening of AH III.6.4: K. Gamber, *Die Epiklese in abendländischen Eucharistiegebet*, *Studia Patristica et Liturgica* 18 (Regensburg, 1988), 36-39.

which the bread and cup receive (V.2.3), does not directly mean the Logos of God descends to the bread and cup in response to the invocation. However, considering that ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ indicates the entire Eucharistic prayer that was said in the framework of calling on God's name, it becomes probable that ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ is another term for the same Eucharistic prayer as a whole, and that it directly points to the "words" of that prayer.

However, one question arises in this context. If ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ is a term for the Eucharistic prayer, it is not a very usual one: it would be natural for us to think that the prayer that calls upon God's name is not "the word of God," but rather "the human word addressed to God." Therefore, it is necessary to question why Irenaeus uses such a turn of phrase to indicate the Eucharistic prayer. In fact, there is a straightforward answer to this question, and I will examine it in this chapter. Through that examination, the identification of the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ as a term for the entire Eucharistic prayer, the main content of which is thanksgiving and remembrance of God's deeds, will be confirmed.

The unusualness of ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ as a term for the Eucharistic prayer naturally suggests that Irenaeus did not create this phrase to point the prayer of the Eucharist, but employed a fixed formula that came to be a kind of conventional term for the prayer said over the bread and cup. In fact, there is very significant evidence in the New Testament concerning this matter; this is the passage from 1 Timothy in which we find a similar phrase used in the same context:

They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving (μετὰ εὐχαριστίας) by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving (μετὰ εὐχαριστίας); for it is sanctified by *word of God* and prayer (διὰ λόγου θεοῦ καὶ ἐντιεύξως).<sup>40)</sup>

Arguing against those who forbid marriage and demand abstinence from certain foods, the author of the Epistle stresses the goodness of God's creation, and emphasizes that no food that God created to be received with thanksgiving should be rejected.<sup>41)</sup> At the end of this argument, the author refers to the sanctification of the food by the "word of God and prayer." At first glance, the similarity of λόγος θεοῦ in this passage to ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ in Irenaeus is easily recognized: both of these

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40) 1 Tim 4:4-5

41) 1 Tim 4:1-5

phrases are set in relation to the sanctification of food, in somewhat unusual ways. The similarity encourages us to infer the possibility that Irenaeus draws on this passage of 1 Timothy in his use of the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ in the context of the sanctification of food. This is also supported by the fact that Irenaeus most probably knew 1 Timothy as a written document.<sup>42)</sup>

To explore this possibility, it is first necessary to understand correctly the meaning of λόγος θεοῦ in 1 Timothy. Scholars generally agree that "thanksgiving" (εὐχαριστίας), which appears twice in vv. 3 and 4, refers specifically to the blessing or grace at meals,<sup>43)</sup> and that "prayer" (ἐντευξις) in v. 5 is equivalent to "thanksgiving" in that sense. However, regarding the meaning of "word of God" (λόγος θεοῦ) juxtaposed with "prayer," there have been different opinions: (1) λόγος θεοῦ refers to God's creative word, perhaps specifically in Gen. 1:31, and the phrase reflects the idea that the ultimate source of sanctification of food is God's word of creation<sup>44)</sup>; (2) λόγος θεοῦ indicates the Gospel as the message that promises eschatological salvation, and that salvation is anticipated in the present moment as sanctification that is the response to prayer<sup>45)</sup>; (3) vv. 4-5 are directly concerned with the theme of the Eucharist, and in that context λόγος θεοῦ refers to the words of the Eucharistic prayer over the bread and cup, which comes from Christ<sup>46)</sup>; (4) λόγος θεοῦ is to be understood as referring to table prayers using biblical expressions and phraseology, therefore it is equivalent to "thanksgiving."<sup>47)</sup>

As to the first possibility, "God's creative word" appears to be involved more with

42) There are a good number of references to, or quotations from 1 Timothy in the writings of Irenaeus: *AH I.Pr.* 1; 8.1; 10.2; 13.7; 16.3 (SC 264.18-19; 116-17; 160-61; 204-5; 262-63); II.14.7; 17.1 (SC 294.140-41; 156-57); V.1.1; 17.1 (SC 153.18-19); *Dem.*35 (SC 406.132-33). Moreover, the possibility that Polycarp of Smyrna, who influenced Irenaeus in his youth, already quotes some passages from 1 Timothy in his *Letter to the Philippians* would be further confirmation of this view: see A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids and London), 1982, 12; J. Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus* (Zürich, 1988), 45.

43) In the New Testament, the verbs εὐχαριστέω (to give thanks) and εὐλογέω (to bless) are completely interchangeable when they are used concerning foods. In those cases, both of them refer to the practice of blessing God for the gift of food and drink at meals. See e.g. Mk 8.6-7; 14. 22-23; 1 Cor 10.16.

44) R. F. Collins, *1&2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary* (Louisville and London, 2002), 118; B. S. Easton, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London, 1948), 143; J. L. Houlden, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London and Philadelphia, 1980), 88; L. T. Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (New York, 2001), 242.

45) J. Roloff, *Der erste Brief*, 227.

46) A. T. Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles* (London, 1968), 97-109; Idem, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 88-89.

47) M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, tr. P. Buttolph and A. Yarbro (Philadelphia, 1972), 64-65; H. J. Holtzmann, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (Leipzig, 1880), 337-8; J. Jeremias, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus* (Göttingen, 1963), 27-28; J. N. D. Kelly, *The Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London, 1963), 96-97; C. Spicq, *Les Épitres pastorales I* (Paris, 1969), 499-500. Holtz saw the Eucharistic reference in this passage but interpreted λόγος θεοῦ as table-prayers: G. Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (Berlin, 1965), 103-4.

the thinking that “everything created by God is good” (v. 4), and it is not correct to consider the role of God’s word of creation as the medium of *present* sanctification.<sup>48)</sup> The second possibility is based on the other use of λόγος θεοῦ by the same author.<sup>49)</sup> However, it is going too far to read such a theological implication in λόγος θεοῦ in this context, and this view does not match with the expression διὰ λόγου θεοῦ. The third possibility also presents difficulties simply because of the context: the author speaks about the goodness and holiness of food in general, not particularly about the Eucharistic bread and cup.

The fourth possibility is the most plausible. In the context of the passage, both λόγος θεοῦ and ἔντευξις should be understood as developing the content of εὐχαριστία: food, which is already good in its essence because God created it, is given its true significance and proper understanding as being sacred by εὐχαριστία, grace at meals, said over it<sup>50)</sup>; that εὐχαριστία is composed in the biblical phrases (λόγος θεοῦ), and said in the form of a prayer in which God’s name is invoked (ἔντευξις).<sup>51)</sup>

The New Testament and the earliest Christian documents show that blessing or thanksgiving at meals was a common and essential practice among Christians,<sup>52)</sup> and it is certainly necessary to think of the Jewish tradition of table prayers as the background to this. Although the first clear reference to the Jewish *berakah* (blessing) recited both before and after meals is found in the *Mishnah* that was compiled around 200 CE (M.Ber. 3.3-4), scholars consider that observance of grace before and after meals was already a common practice of the Pharisees of the first century CE, by the time of Jesus.<sup>53)</sup>

48) See Roloff, *Der erste Brief*, 227.

49) 2 Tim 2:9; Tit 2:5

50) See Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 96-97.

51) Regarding this implication of ἔντευξις, I agree with Collins’ explanation. See Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 118. It is also possible that ἔντευξις at the same time refers to the element of petition within table prayers.

52) See e.g. Jn 6.11; Acts 27.35. It is reasonable to also see the Last Supper-accounts as reflecting this Christian practice of saying grace or thanksgiving not only in the Eucharist but also at meals in general: Mk 14.18-26; Mt 26. 21-30; Lk 22. 14-23; 1 Cor 11.23-25. This is true also in chapters 9-10 of the *Didache*: that passage is undoubtedly concerned with the earliest form of the Eucharist, but at the same time, it reflects common practice of saying grace or thanksgiving before and after meals, out of which in fact the Eucharistic prayer developed.

53) Recent Jewish scholars consider that the religious practice concerning daily meals derive from the *Havurah*, fellowship of the Pharisees, which was formed for the purpose of practicing ritual purity (M.Dem.2:3; Tos.Dem.2-3): see B. M. Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder* (Berkeley, 1984), 10-12, 55; J. Heinemann, ‘Birkath Ha-Zimmum and Havurah-Meals’, *The Journal of Jewish Studies* 13 (1962), 23-29; Idem, *Prayer in the Talmud* (Berlin, 1977), 113-22; L. A. Hoffman, ‘Liturgy of Judaism: History and Form’, in *The Encyclopedia of Judaism*, vol. II, ed. J. Neusner, A. J. Avery-Peck, and W. S. Green (Leiden, 2000), 823-32, on this 823; J. Neusner, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden, 1973), 64-71. It is also pointed out that the *Havurah*-tradition was faithfully represented in the practice of the Qumran Community in their gathering including meals: C. Rabin, *Qumran Studies* (Oxford, 1957), 30-35. In addition to these, there is suggestion that custom of grace at meals itself could be much older than the Rabbinic period: see S. C. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer* (Cambridge, 1993), 85. The English translation of the various texts of Jewish prayers at meals is presented in: A. Stewart-Sykes and J. H. Newman (eds.), *Early Jewish Liturgy: A Sourcebook for use by students of Early Christian Liturgy*, Alquin/GROW Joint Liturgical Studies 51 (Cambridge, 2001).

Therefore, it is entirely reasonable to think that the meal blessings of Jesus and the first Christians, which are recounted in the New Testament, derive from this Jewish practice, and that the words of 1 Timothy 4:5 should be understood in this context. If this is right, the actual form and content of λόγος θεοῦ and ἔντευξις are most likely modeled on those forms of Jewish grace at meals. The *Mishnah* provides the actual wording of blessings before the eating of various kinds of food. For example, it presents the blessing over the bread in this form: "[Blessed are you, O Lord, our God, King of Universe] who brings forth bread from the earth."<sup>54</sup> As for the grace after meals, the *Birkat ha-mazon*, it is basically made up of remembrance and supplication, but its content can be divided into three parts: a blessing (*berakah*) for the gift of the food; a thanksgiving (*hodayah*) for the gift of the land, the covenant, and the law; and a supplication for mercy on the people, the city of Jerusalem, and the Temple.<sup>55</sup>

Looking at the content and wording of Jewish blessings both before and after eating, it is immediately noticeable how much they rely on the biblical ideas and phrases, which is "the word of God": for instance, the form of blessing over the bread is based on Psalm 104:14; the basic idea of the first blessing after a meal is found in Psalms 136:25 and 145:15-16; some of these phrases of the second blessing after a meal are based on Jeremiah 3:19, Exodus 2:2, and Deuteronomy 7:8.<sup>56</sup> This observation certainly helps us to understand why 1 Timothy 4:5 uses the phrase "word of God" to indicate the table prayers of the Christians based on the Jewish blessings.

Understanding the meaning of λόγος θεοῦ in 1 Timothy 4:5 in this way, I will next consider the relation of ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ in Irenaeus to this phrase of the Epistle. As mentioned, the unusualness of the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ as a term for the Eucharistic prayer encourages us to think that it is a quotation of an already fixed phrase, and in this sense, λόγος θεοῦ in 1 Timothy 4:5, which is similarly used in direct relation to the sanctification of food, appears to be the only possible source.

Regarding this use, it is most reasonable to assume that Irenaeus basically understood λόγος θεοῦ in 1 Timothy 4:5 as designating table blessings in general: it was undoubtedly obvious for him from the context of the passage that the author of 1 Timothy was speaking about the sanctification of various kinds of food, not specifically of the bread and cup of the Eucharist. Therefore, it is very probable that, on the basis of the understanding of λόγος θεοῦ in 1 Timothy 4:5 as prayer over food in general, Irenaeus applies this term to the Eucharistic prayer considering the Eucharistic prayer as one essential form of table prayer.

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54) M.Ber. 6.1. The English translation is taken from: J. Neusner (ed.), *The Mishnah* (New Haven and London, 1988), 9.

55) The *Mishnah* refers to three *berakot* recited at the end of a meal (M.Ber.6:8).

56) See A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (New York, 1932), 122-23. Reif considered that "the simple benediction directly addressed God and describing him as blessed was based on biblical Hebrew precedent, particularly the language of the later books of the Hebrew Bible...": Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 82.

It is therefore very likely that, Irenaeus uses the term for meal prayer in 1 Timothy to indicate the Eucharistic prayer, recognizing the close link between both of these prayers and the similarity of their content: namely, the main content of those prayers is *anamnetic*-thanksgiving for God's deeds in the past. If this is right, it is most probable that Irenaeus uses λόγος θεου of 1 Timothy 4:5 with the same understanding as the author: table prayer is called "word of God" because its content very much depends on the use of biblical phrases; so too, the prayer over the bread and cup at the Eucharist, which is one form of table prayer, is "the word of God," because it is, or should be, composed of phrases and expressions of the Bible that is "the word of God."<sup>57)</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

These explorations strongly confirm my suggestion that in Irenaeus' texts concerning the Eucharist, the phrases "the invocation of God" and "the word of God" equally indicate the entire prayer of the Eucharist. Therefore, the view that ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ means "the specific invocation of the Logos" and ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ points to God's Logos, who comes to the bread and cup in response to that Logos-epiclesis, seems to be wrong.

As the examination in the last chapter shows, Irenaeus' use of ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ indicates that the Eucharistic prayer in Irenaeus' mind is a prayer that still has certain similarity to the Jewish meal blessings. The Jewish grace at table, especially after the meal, the *Birkat ha-mazon*, is actually a remembrance of God's work in the past. It is possible to think that the content of the Eucharistic prayer familiar to Irenaeus was basically a Christian version of this kind of Jewish prayer, which enumerated *mirabilia Dei* of the past in thanksgiving form, and given the conclusion of the third chapter, in the framework of calling on God's name.

In this sense, Irenaeus' idea of "consecration" is very primitive, and strongly maintains its connection with the Jewish concept of consecration. Most likely, the Eucharistic prayer known to Irenaeus did not contain specific elements such as the epiclesis of the Logos/Spirit and the institution narrative. Certainly, it would go too far to conclude from limited evidence that those elements were not a part of that prayer.

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57) While there is no evidence of this application of λόγος θεοῦ in 1 Timothy 4:5 to the Eucharistic prayers before Irenaeus, clear evidence is found after Irenaeus, that is, in Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* 11.14 (SC 162.344-46). Dealing with the theme that what truly defiles human beings is not food but the inappropriate heart of the eater, Origen quotes the phrase of 1 Timothy 4:5, "sanctified by word of God and prayer," three times, namely once for general food and twice for the Eucharistic bread, in a longer and more literal form: οὕτως (i.e., "the food") τὸ ἁγιαζόμενον διὰ λόγου θεοῦ καὶ ἐντεύξεως τοῦ ἁγιασθέντος λόγω θεοῦ καὶ ἐντεύξει ἄρτου τὸ ἁγιαζόμενον βρώμα (i.e., "the bread") διὰ λόγου θεοῦ καὶ ἐντεύξεως. Thus it is very probable that, exactly the same as Irenaeus, Origen understood this phrase of the Epistle as referring to table prayers in general, but he applies it to the Eucharistic prayer. From this similarity, it is not unreasonable to suppose that this interpretation of 1 Timothy 4:5 became somewhat conventional at least in some areas of second and third century-Christianity.

However, it is at least reasonable to say that even if the Eucharistic prayer familiar to Irenaeus contained those kinds of elements, they were not considered as the essential part to consecrate, or to change the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood.

Concerning the epiclesis, I argued in the third chapter that ἡ ἐπίκλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ should be understood as the entire prayer said in the framework of calling on God's name. As to the institution narrative, I showed in the second chapter that the narrative was quoted mainly to point to the origin and warrant of the whole act of the Eucharist. Given that examination, it is difficult to think that Irenaeus cited the narrative as a consecratory part of the Eucharistic prayer. Rather, as scholars inferred, it is more reasonable to regard Irenaeus' institution narrative as a catechetical text used *outside* the Eucharistic prayer.<sup>58)</sup>

Therefore, in Irenaeus, the identification of the "thanked food" as Christ's body and blood is not related to the specific consecratory part of the prayer. Probably, in Irenaeus' thinking, that identification is established through the combination of the two ideas: namely, the primitive idea of consecration based on thanksgiving, which is similar to the Jewish concept, and knowledge of the institution narrative, which contains the body/blood-sayings of Jesus.

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58) See P.F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (London 2004), 17.