



**THEME STUDY**  
**The Gospel of the Resurrection**  
**First Corinthians 15:1-58**  
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	<b>A Socio-Rhetorical Study</b>

**The Gospel of the Resurrection, 15:1-58.**

The challenge to understand the thinking of Paul on this topic of resurrection is substantial because his mind functioned within the framework of a first century Jewish Christian arguing his view within the structural framework of classical Greek deliberative rhetoric. One of the functional results of this is that a modern oriented, logical based outlining of this text is impossible to do with accuracy and integrity to the thought of Paul.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The above Quick Reference set of links represents an experiment on my part. Clearly the classical elements of deliberative persuasive speech standard in Paul's day serve as a structural framework around which Paul develops his view. Here use is made of the narratio, refutatio, conformatio, and peroratio devices. But his training as a Pharisee in methods of Jewish scribal argumentation is quite evident as well as he utilizes some of these patterns in his presentation as well.

Now the challenge: how to present this way of thinking to a modern readership accustomed to a view point being presented in a clearly defined logical progression of ideas from beginning to ending. Rather than sacrificing the integrity of the text for the sake of contemporary clarity of idea expression, I have opted to present in essence a multi-tiered structure in arranging the thoughts of Paul.

Noted are the units of material that are organized according to the classical rhetorical pattern that Paul uses. But also presented are the headings in topic form of natural units of material that the apostle develops. Hopefully, you the reader, can better appreciate the enormous creativity of the apostle in arguing his point about the resurrection to a perversion of the Gospel that existed only at Corinth among all the churches the apostle was connected to. Paul's sole intention was to address that unique situation the most effective way possible to his Greek speaking readers in mid-first century Corinth. He had no intention or desire to write some kind of treatise on the topic of resurrection for general reading. His pastoral concerns dictated his approach to present the apostolic Gospel to this one congregation suffering from aberrant views floating around the various house church groups. We are privileged to read that pastoral expression. But in order to make proper application of it in our day, we must first correctly understand what Paul was

One should note that this article is a modification of the one-volume overview commentary as volume 10 on First Corinthians in the [BIBLICAL INSIGHTS COMMENTARY](#) series at [cranfordville.com](#). Additionally, it comes from chapter ten of [THE APOSTLE PAUL: SERVANT OF CHRIST](#) also at [cranfordville.com](#).

With the language of introducing a subtopic, Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, *And I want to let you know, brothers, the Gospel which I proclaimed to you....*, the apostle Paul now turns to a detailed explanation of his Gospel message, after the blunt warning in 14:37-40 over rejecting his message as apostolic declaration of divine revelation. Very important then is to see a close link of chapter 15 to chapters 12-14. In no way does he arbitrarily jump to a new theme with no connections to previous emphases. In 1:18-31 Paul had labeled the Gospel as Ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις μωρία ἐστίν, τοῖς δὲ σωζομένοις ἡμῖν δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν. *For the message of the cross to those perishing on the one hand is foolishness, but to those of us being saved it is God's power* (v. 18). The falsely assumed superiority of the wisdom of the Corinthian elitists did not grasp this perspective because they did not understand the centrality of the resurrection of either Christ or of believers, as well as what resurrection means. Their false Greek wisdom ridiculed the idea of actual resurrection since every thinking Greek knows that the ψυχή, *soul*, and the σῶμα, *body*, are completely incompatible with one another due to the σῶμα being irretrievably corrupt and evil. This universally embedded Greek dualism in the world of Corinth then necessitated some 'creative' twisting of the Gospel decla-

doing in chapter fifteen of this letter to the church at Corinth. To this end stands this commentary study.

ration of resurrection as necessary to the eternal order of things. In his discussion in chapter fifteen, Paul rips to shreds this phony thinking against the framework of his contentions about the Gospel in chapter one.

The way that Paul organizes his ideas about resurrection in chapter fifteen is a masterful blending of both Greek and scribal Jewish patterns of argumentation.<sup>2</sup> The Greek aspect points to the Greek based reasoning of the Corinthian elitists, while the Jewish style argumentation centers on affirmations of resurrection experience both of Christ and of believers, which was utterly foreign to Greeks. The analysis below will point out these features. A mere glancing at [the block diagram](#) of chapter fifteen visually illustrates these patterns very clearly.

**How is the material then put together?** The following represents an assessment based on the syntactical diagram of the entire chapter.

The **core theme** is introduced in verses one and two with extensive expansion elements:

Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

This beginning declaration asserts the apostle's intention to elaborate on the apostolic Gospel that lay at the very heart of the Christian commitment of true followers of Christ.

He then proceeds in this beginning sentence of the chapter to offer several explanatory amplifications of the meaning of this τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. These five relative clauses modify the word for Gospel and expand its meaning in a way appropriate to the situation at Corinth:

ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν,  
ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε,  
ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε,  
δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε,  
τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν  
εἰ κατέχετε,  
ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπίστεύσατε.

which I proclaimed to you,  
which also you received  
in which you have also taken a stand  
through which you also are experiencing salvation  
by a specific message I 'gospelized' you,  
since you hold fast to it  
except if you have believed in vain.

This final dependent clause ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπίστεύσατε primarily serves to set up a lengthy **justifying state-**

**ment** (γὰρ) contained in the one sentence found in vv. 3-8. This is then followed by a second justifying statement (γὰρ) in vv. 9-10 centering on Paul's ministry at Corinth initially. The implications (οὕτως) of both justifying statements is then drawn in v. 11 in the declaration: οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπίστεύσατε, **thus we preach and thus you believed.**

With this combined theological and historical foundation laid concerning his Gospel, then Paul moves toward establishing **the nature of this message in regard to the issue of resurrection**, both of Christ and of believers, vv. 12-58.

The necessity for this discussion is seen in the introductory topic sentence in v. 12: Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται, πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; **Now since Christ is being preached that He was raised from the dead, how are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?**

Now we see why Paul treated this topic. Some professing believers in the Corinthian Christian community were denying the possibility of anyone being raised from the dead. The pure Greek paganism out of Platonic dualism that Paul had earlier encountered in Athens on the second missionary journey, Acts 17:32, has crept into the thinking of some inside the church at Corinth. And Paul is countering it very straightforward.

**He first (vv. 13-19) poses a scenario assumed to be the thinking of some in the church:** εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν..., Now since you assume there is no resurrection of the dead (v. 13a), and εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, for assuming that the dead are not being raised.... (v. 16a). These two ways of describing the same hypothetical situation -- but assumed to be the thinking of some in the church via the 1st class protasis for both -- are linked together via the causal γὰρ with the second protasis asserting what would be the spiritual reality if such an assumption were actually correct. One important connecting link is the central principle of Christ's resurrection and that of believers being totally dependent upon Christ's resurrection. Additional 'if clauses' emerge off of this central scenario. See the conjunction εἰ in vv. 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19.

**Second in vv. 20-28, Paul shifts from the false but existing thinking in the church that questioned the resurrection over to the opposite view of the resurrection of both Christ and believers being reality.** Most of what Paul says is justification of the initial declaration in v. 20: Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων. **But in fact Christ was raised from the dead, a first fruit of those sleeping (in death).** See the repeated use of the causal conjunction γὰρ in vv. 21, 22, 25, 27.

<sup>2</sup>The use of Greek deliberative rhetorical structures by Paul follows the pattern of:

Narratio, vv. 1-11

Refutatio one, vv. 12-19

Conformatio one, vv. 20-34

Refutation two, vv. 35-49

Conformation two, vv. 50-57

Peroratio, v. 58

**Third, in vv. 29-34, Paul continues his defense of the claim of Christ having been raised from the dead with a series of rhetorical questions**, some of which use Greek axioms of denial of resurrection etc. Verse 34 with its central admonition signals a shift away from a very Greek way of arguing a point.

**In v. 35 the Greek diatribe structure is used to introduce a new aspect on the nature of the resurrection body: Ἄλλ' ἔρεϊ τις, But someone objects....** But **Paul's own answer to this objection in vv. 36-59** has a very Jewish scribal tone of argumentation with short pointed statements, rather than the more complex syntax that has dominated the first 34 verses. OT references about death surface in this answer as an important foundation for Paul's explanation of the nature of the resurrection body.

His answer in vv. 36-58 goes in a variety of directions to the objection in v. 35b: Πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται; **How are the dead being raised? And in what kind of body do they come?** Here the apostle seems to be trying to accomplish two objectives. First, he points out to the Corinthian elitist deniers what a resurrection body, ποίῳ σώματι, is as far as can be explained with human, earth bound language. Second, this explanation provides important insight to the majority of the Corinthian believers who had not accepted the denial of these elitists, thus fortifying them against the arguments of the deniers. The language of comparison is central to his explanation.

Sources come out of the natural world of sowing and germination (σπείρεται / ἐγείρεται), divine creation of different kinds of bodies with resulting effect in appearance and fundament nature etc. The discussion is closed in vv. 56-58 with celebration (vv. 56-57) and admonition (v. 58).

From the standpoint of ancient deliberative rhetoric these units naturally fall into the follows structure:

- Narratio, vv. 1-11
- Refutatio 1, vv. 12-19
- Conformatio 1, vv. 20-34
- Refutatio 2, vv. 35-49
- Conformatio 2, vv. 50-57
- Peroratio, v. 58

Paul's use of this classical Greek structuring of his presentation enables him to argue against the Corinthian elitists who depended on Greek reasoning as foundational to their alternative view. Additionally, this struc-

ture provided the apostle with an established way to present a coherent view in terms that his Greek speaking readers were both familiar with and comfortable with. Yet inside this framework, the apostle doesn't hesitate to utilize scribal Jewish patterns of argumentation, e.g., the Adam/Christ analogy, in order to make his case more persuasive. Because neither of the approaches to presenting one's viewpoint has a counterpoint in modern western culture, they have proven to be difficult to follow quite often. Consequently, twisting and misunderstanding of this text surface frequently in the history of the interpretation of this passage.

Now, let's take a closer look at each of these segments.

**NARRATIO, vv. 1-11.** The purpose of the narratio was primarily to narrate the issue to be presented. Paul does this by laying the broad foundation of the Gospel centered in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as the center piece of this message.

**a) Core topic, vv. 1-2.** Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε, 2 δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε, τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν εἰ κατέχετε, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπίστεύσατε. **And I want you to know, brothers, the Gospel which I proclaimed to you, which you received, in which you also have taken a stand, through which also you are being saved, by this word I preached to you since you hold it fast, unless you have believed in vain.**

<p>15.1</p> <p>637</p> <p>15.2</p>	<p>Ἄλλ' ἔρεϊ τις,</p> <p>Γνωρίζω ὑμῖν,</p> <p>ἀδελφοί,</p> <p>τὸ εὐαγγέλιον</p> <p>ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν,</p> <p>ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε,</p> <p>ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε,</p> <p>δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε,</p> <p>τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν</p> <p>εἰ κατέχετε,</p> <p>ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπίστεύσατε.</p>
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Paul's core expression Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, **And I want to make known to you the Gospel**, doesn't signal that this is the first time that his message has been explained to them. The verb Γνωρίζω does at times serve as a new topic indicator in Paul's writings but the other use of it in First Corinthians (12:3) is only partially in such a role. Here it denotes mostly a switch in direction but also a continuation of some of the emphases already put before the readers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>The older commentary view that chapter fifteen is a self-contained unit of material developed independently of the rest of First Corinthians has long since been shown to be utterly false and a failed attempt at eisegesis. Much of this comes out of Martin Luther's praise of the chapter as the high point of the entire letter. Chapter fifteen does indeed display unique literary qualities not

Central to the apostle's concern is to amplify τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, *the Gospel which I proclaimed to you*. The Corinthians had heard him many times elaborate on the heart of this message of salvation. Some of them evidently did not grasp the implications of this message regarding the issue of resurrection. Those failing to understand were the Corinthian elitists whose adoption of Greek ways of thinking over God's ways excluded the idea of a bodily resurrection after physical death. Exactly what they were arguing in place of the apostolic Gospel is not totally clear from Paul's words. The closest Paul gets to defining their viewpoint comes in v. 12 with the assertion ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, *that there is no resurrection of the dead*. But this doesn't provide as much clue as might be assumed. It seems to point to a denial of a bodily resurrection after death, but such is not entirely clear by the statement.<sup>4</sup> One has to be extremely careful to not inject either consciously or otherwise the accumulated philosophical baggage attached to the theme of resurrection to any great extent elsewhere in the letter, but this is due to the theme of resurrection and Paul's creative way of making his point through an ingenious combining of both Greek and scribal Jewish patterns of argumentation.

"Luther and Calvin were no less certain that the resurrection chapter addresses issues central to the gospel and to the whole epistle. If a person does not believe in the resurrection, Luther asserts, 'he must deny in a lump the Gospel and everything that is proclaimed of Christ and of God. For all of this is linked together like a chain.... Whoever denies this article must simultaneously deny far more ...', in brief, *that God is God*' (my italics).<sup>5</sup> What could be more central to this epistle than that God is God? Paul is concerned 'about the kind of God God is, but mostly [also] with what God does.'<sup>6</sup> Barth speaks of 'this 'of God' ' (cf. 1 Cor 4:5) as 'the secret nerve' of the whole epistle.<sup>7</sup>"

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1169–1170.]

<sup>4</sup>"Before we set forth the rhetorical and logical structure of Paul's argument in this chapter, is there any reasonable consensus about the precise nature of the problem over the resurrection of the dead which Paul addresses? The first eleven verses do not seem to take the form of a 'reply' introduced by identifying a topic, although the problem becomes more clearly identified in 15:12 with reference to a group or groups within the church at Corinth (ἐν ὑμῖν τινες, v. 12, not outsiders) who λέγουσιν ... ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν. Several theories overlap and crisscross once writers try to be more specific than state that 'some' at Corinth denied the reality or possibility of the resurrection of the dead. In broad terms, surveys of the reconstructions follow the same identification of different possibilities in monographs or essays by Wilson (1968), Spörlein (1971), Plank (1981), Sellin (1986), Wedderburn (1987), M. C. de Boer (1988), G. Barth (1992), my own discussion (1995), Joost Holleman (1996), and A. Eriksson (1998, followed in outline by Collins, 1999).<sup>22</sup>" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1172.]

rection over the past almost two years of speculation and debate.

Historically and contextually the segment of the church at Corinth that expressed their denial did so out of the context of contemporary Greek dualistic thinking that dominated the thinking of the first century world. Some other influences coming out of alternative ways of thinking from various non-Greek cultures that were represented in the population of the city in the mid first century may have played some role in formulating the alternative view or views to the apostolic Gospel. But all of these are very difficult to sort out and to pin down with substantial documentation from primary ancient sources.

One must first acknowledge that views of some form of after life were far less common in the first century world than usually assumed. Among the Greeks the Epicureans adamantly argued that one's existence ended with physical death. Interestingly, this overlapped to some extent with the Jewish Sadducean denial of life after death.<sup>5</sup> But it is indeed hard to imagine a 'Sadducean' type Christian view emerging in the church at Corinth. To be sure, Paul does use the pessimistic Epicurean maxim in v. 32b, but the manner of his usage doesn't imply that this elitist Corinthian group was adopting it. Neither can any of Paul's statements be understood to imply that this group denied any future life after death. What seems to be the issue is what kind of future life awaits the believer, not whether or not one exists. The traditional Greek dualism from Plato also asserted that at the death of the physical body the ψυχή, *soul*, which is eternal in nature simply returns to a static eternity and reunites with the eternal Ψυχή which it already belonged to. The idea of a conscious exist-

<sup>5</sup>"Over the centuries patristic, Reformation, nineteenth-century, and more recent writers have compared the philosophy of the Epicureans in the Graeco-Roman world with the traditions of the Sadducees even within Judaism, and have emphasized that belief in life after death was less widespread in the first century than is often supposed. Appeal has been made to several classical specialists for this view.<sup>23</sup> This view was held by G. Estius (1613), H. Grotius (1645), and subsequently especially by W. M. L. de Wette (1845) and more recently W. Schmithals (Eng. trans. 1970).<sup>24</sup> Calvin and Heinrici are often credited with this view, but Calvin concludes that in the end he is 'undecided,' and Heinrici also combines more than one approach.<sup>25</sup> Such writers regularly appeal to Paul's use of the Epicurean maxim 'let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die' (15:32b) and to the notion that for those who deny the belief in question faith is empty or futile (15:17); if in this life only they have hope, they deserve only pity and are still in their sins (15:17, 19). Spörlein believes that this view of 1 Corinthians 15 typified the period of F. C. Baur, de Wette, and the 1840s, although Schmithals and others have also urged it more recently.<sup>26</sup>" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1172–1173.]

tence in an afterlife was not a part of the Greek philosophical teaching, although primitive versions of such did exist among many of the Greco-Roman religions, especially the so-called mystery religions. Given the pagan religious influence on the elitists at other points such as the tongues issue, it is more likely that influences from these sources helped shape the thinking of this Christian section of the Corinthian church.

Another aspect of this challenge is whether Paul is addressing a single unified alternative view or whether, as is more likely, he is addressing alternative versions to the apostolic Gospel. His approach to defending the apostolic Gospel lends itself easily to being a critique of a fluid alternative approach that had numerous versions from house church to house church. This helps explain a significant difficulty to being able to pin down the precise nature of the issue over resurrection in the church. Thus Paul's defense centers on a positive affirmation of the Gospel teaching, far more than on a negative critique of the alternative views held by the Corinthian elitists. As an example, most of the apodoses in the conditional sentence rhetorical questions thus go in a variety of directions rather than point to one central view being condemned by Paul. The apostle is far more interested in establishing the correctness of the Gospel teaching on resurrection, than he is on proving the wrongness of the alternative thinking going on at Corinth, however it may have taken shape.<sup>6</sup>

The relative clause qualifications in vv. 1-2 attached to τὸ εὐαγγέλιον serve to define the direction that Paul desires to go in affirming the role of resurrection in his Gospel message.

First comes ὁ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, *which I proclaimed to you*. Paul uses the noun τὸ εὐαγγέλιον eight times in First Corinthians -- 4:15; 9:12, 14 (2x), 18 (2x), 23; 15:1 -- to define his message as an apostle of Christ. This connection between τὸ εὐαγγέλιον and his being an apostle is especially prominent in chapter nine. But he also uses the verb εὐαγγελίζω that comes from the same root stem some six times in First Corinthians: 1:17; 9:16 (2x), 18; 15:1, 2. The verb εὐαγγελίζω simply means to orally communicate the understood content of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. The assertion made in 1:17 lays out the basics in simple expression: οὐ γὰρ ἀπέσειλέν με Χριστὸς βαπτίζειν ἀλλ' εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἵνα μὴ κενωθῆ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. *For Christ did not commission me to baptize but to proclaim the Gospel so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.* As Paul continued to assert in 1:18-2:5 this message of the cross was infused with the divine power to trans-

<sup>6</sup>There are some important application insights here. A Gospel witness is an affirmation of the correctness of the Gospel. We never get very far by just pointing out the wrongness of the alternative views to the Gospel. Showing that others are wrong in their thinking does nothing to establish the correctness of our thinking.

form lives through forgiveness of sins and recreation of new life inside the individual believer. The aorist verb εὐηγγελισάμην points back to the initial proclamation of that message when in the city on the second missionary journey (cf. Acts 18:1-18). Luke's emphasis centers on his summarizing statement in v. 5: Ὡς δὲ κατήλθον ἀπὸ τῆς Μακεδονίας ὃ τε Σιλᾶς καὶ ὁ Τιμόθεος, συνείχετο τῷ λόγῳ ὁ Παῦλος διαμαρτυρούμενος τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις **εἶναι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν**. *When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus.* The cross and resurrection of Jesus as the Christ clearly were central to that proclamation as 1 Cor. 1:18-25 assert. But in the meanwhile some in the Corinthian church have decided on a different understanding than the one Paul presented to them.

The second, third, and fourth qualifiers center on the initial acceptance of this message proclaimed by Paul: ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε, δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε, *which you also received, in which you also have taken a stance, through which also you are being saved.* One should note the formal language of transmitting a set of ideas introduced by παρελάβετε (v. 1) and παρέδωκα (v. 2). This does not justify the creedal interpretation often given by modern commentators coming out of a modern creedal oriented church heritage. But what it does assert clearly is that in Paul's view there was a genuine, official acceptance of his message and action taken in commitment to Christ as presented by Paul to the Corinthians. This would have been formally expressed by believer's baptism initially as a public commitment to obey the risen Christ in their living. As Paul earlier made clear in 1:13-17 it is the commitment to Christ rather than the formal ceremony of baptism that is central. But this does not diminish the need for baptism as the public expression of a genuine commitment to Him.

Not only did the Corinthians accept this message from Paul (ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε), their baptism expressed taking a public stance of commitment to Christ as the foundation of a new spiritual existence: ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε. Thus it is through this risen Christ that they are continuing to receive God's saving deliverance since that beginning point: δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε. Their entire religious experience as Christians is then centered in the risen Christ as their Savior, Lord, and hope for eternity.

The fifth qualifier, τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν εἰ κατέχετε, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε, comes back to repeat the first qualifier, ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, but with more precise terms, e.g., τίνι λόγῳ, *by a certain message*. The apostle now begins to zero in on to the apostolic Gospel alone as the vehicle of this conversion. This excludes the emerging alternative views happening

among some of the Corinthians. Some basic affinity exists with Paul's denial of the Judaizing version of the Gospel in Gal. 1:6-7, ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο, another Gospel which is not actually another. But the Corinthian alternative was not adding Judaism on to faith commitment to Christ as was true in Galatia. Instead, it was a Greek philosophical based twisting of the idea of Jesus as the risen Christ. Being more subtle it needed different counter arguments in order to demonstrate its spiritual dangers to one's eternal relationship with God through Christ. But to be clear Paul soundly rejects the validity of both approaches to tampering with the authentic apostolic Gospel.

The first class protasis εἰ κατέχετε assumes a continuing commitment to this apostolic Gospel. Such steadfastness of commitment demonstrates sincere initial commitment rather than a shallow or phony profession. By so structuring this restatement Paul opens the door for questioning the genuineness of the commitment of some of the Corinthians, who have wavered and moved toward the alternative views of the elitists.

The final qualifier ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε points also to the same direction of a shallow or insincere initial commitment.<sup>7</sup> The idiomatic nature coupled with the double negative structure signals this lack of sincere commitment as a real possibility by some of the Corinthians. Thus the burden of failure in authentic faith commitment rests upon these Corinthians and not upon any failure by Paul to present the correct form of the Gospel to them. The two sets of justifying statements that follow in vv. 3-11 make this abundantly clear.

#### **b) Justification of the idea of resurrection, vv. 3-11.**

First in vv. 3-8 Paul asserts his faithfulness in communicating this divinely revealed Gospel to them. Then in vv. 9-11, he affirms his sense of indebtedness to God to be chosen for such a marvelous task.

#### **First, faithful transmission of the Gospel, vv. 3-8.**

3 παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς 4 καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς 5 καὶ ὅτι ὠφθη Κηφᾶ εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα·

<sup>7</sup> “To translate εἰκῆ as *in vain* (NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB, AV/KJV, Collins) causes needless difficulties and forces Paul into an aggressive irony that undermines his seeking common ground by appealing to the shared tradition, calling the readers ἀδελφοί and establishing the previous points. There is firm lexicographical evidence for the meaning *without due consideration*, or *in a haphazard manner* (e.g., Epictetus, Dissertations 1.28.28; 6.7) or *thoughtlessly* or *at random* (1 Clement 40:2).<sup>77</sup> Here Paul envisages the possibility of such a superficial or confused appropriation of the gospel in which no coherent grasp of its logical or practical entailments for eschatology or for practical discipleship had been reached. Incoherent belief is different from believing in vain.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1186.]

6 ἔπειτα ὠφθη ἐπάνω πεντακοσίοις ἀδελφοῖς ἐφάπαξ, ἐξ ὧν οἱ πλείονες μένουσιν ἕως ἄρτι, τινὲς δὲ ἐκοιμήθησαν· 7 ἔπειτα ὠφθη Ἰακώβῳ εἶτα τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν· 8 ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὠφθη κάμοι.

3 For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, 4 and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

This sentence in vv. 3-8 constitutes the first of two sets of justifying statements given as a basis for the declaration in vv. 1-2. The core assertion as is illustrated by the diagram is παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, for I passed on to you what I also received. Again the technical language of transmitting tradition is used by Paul in order to assert that his Gospel message was not dreamed up by himself out of his own thinking, in contrast to that of the Corinthian elitists. The object functioning relative clause ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον defines τὸ εὐαγγέλιον mentioned in verse one. The main clause παρέδωκα ὑμῖν defines ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν in verse one. Thus Paul now describes his preaching of the apostolic Gospel to the Corinthians in terms of passing on a message already established and set inside Christian tradition. Again, this stood in stark contrast to the new version created by the Corinthian elitists which had no established background or widely recognized legitimacy.

As the diagram below visually illustrates, a series of ὅτι clauses then are set forth in apposition linkage to ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον. These define specific content of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον the Gospel which Paul had preached to the Corinthians. The prepositional phrase ἐν πρώτοις attached to the main clause verb παρέδωκα specify these aspects of the Gospel as having high priority.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>“REB’s **first and foremost** well captures the logical rather than temporal force of ἐν πρώτοις in this context, i.e., *of first importance* (as NRSV, NIV).<sup>78</sup> NJB’s *handed on to you in the first place* too readily suggests sequence, but does have the advantage of retaining the double meaning which the word first can convey in both Greek and English, depending on its context. REB explicates the relative pronoun ὃ by Eng. the tradition, which was indeed implied by the two verbs (see above and on 11:23), but in view of the mistakenly negative overtones generated by the notion of tradition by those who have not yet been liberated from the worst aspects of Enlightenment rationalism it may be better not to import the word unnecessarily here. Paul does, however, refer to a continuity of handing on and receiving which constitutes, in effect, an early creed which declares the absolute fundamentals of Christian faith and on which Christian identity (and the experience of salvation) is built.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*:  
Page 6

15.3	γὰρ	
638	παρέδωκα ὑμῖν	
	ἐν πρώτοις,	
	ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον,	
	ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν	
	ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν	
	κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς	
15.4	καὶ	
	ὅτι ἐτάφη	
	καὶ	
	ὅτι ἐγήγερται	
	τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ	
	κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς	
15.5	καὶ	
	ὅτι ὤφθη Κηφᾶ	
	εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα·	
15.6	ἔπειτα ὤφθη ἐπάνω πεντακοσίοις ἀδελφοῖς	
	ἐφάπαξ,	
		ἐξ ὧν οἱ πλείονες μένουσιν
		/-----
		ἕως ἄρτι,
		δὲ
		τινὲς ἐκοιμήθησαν·
15.7	ἔπειτα ὤφθη Τακῶβω	
	εἶτα τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν·	
15.8	δὲ	
	ἕσχατον πάντων	
	ὡσπερ εἰ τῷ ἐκτρώματι	
	ὤφθη κάμοί.	

That is, these ὅτι clauses spell out a critically important center of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον as a message of salvation. Yet, the emphasis made by Paul is customized to the situation at Corinth, thus signaling some hints at what was going on in the alternative views among the elitists in the church.<sup>9</sup> From all indication, he does draw

*A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1186.]

<sup>9</sup>To be sure, key elements of what Paul says to the Corinthians surface elsewhere both in his writings and in some other NT writers as well.

The number of studies on Paul and tradition are too many to list. Among influential works in the earlier part of the second half of the twentieth century, Oscar Cullmann (French 1953, English 1956) states in relation to this verse, 'The very essence of tradition is that it forms a chain.... It is sometimes Paul, sometimes the Church which 'received'. The word καὶ must be particularly noticed, for it certainly belongs to the formula derived from the paradosis terminology ... in 11:23 and ... in 15:3, but also in 1 Cor 15:1.... 'I received the tradition in the same way as I handed it on to you—by mediation' ' (Cullmann's italics, last quotation cited from E.-B. Allo).<sup>79</sup> The relation between 'fragments of Creeds' in 1 Corinthians 15 and elsewhere in Paul and the steady development of early Christian creeds is traced by Hans von Campenhausen and also by J. N. D. Kelly. Kelly argues that 1 Cor 15:3–6 is 'manifestly a summary drawn up for catechetical purposes or for preaching: it gives the gist of the Christian message in a concentrated form.'<sup>80</sup> As Kelly observes, we should not assume that 1 Cor 11:23–25 and 15:3–5 provide the only such examples from Paul. From 1 Corinthians, we noted Eriksson's identification of pre-Pauline tradition in 8:6; 8:11b; 10:16; 12:3; 13 (and also 16:22);

upon pre-existing Christian tradition, but it would be a serious mistake to see Paul as merely quoting from it. He puts his own distinctive stamp largely because he is speaking to a unique situation at Corinth, not espousing some kind of systematic theology.

Central to the issue is both the death and the resurrection of Christ. The four ὅτι clauses define this twin affirmation with first assertion then evidence. That is, Christ died as evidenced by His burial, and He was raised back to life as evidenced by the listing of different groups and individuals who saw Him personally. The major stress here is upon the latter since the issue of resurrection is what Paul is speaking to in the Corinthian situation.

i) ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς, **that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.** This emphasis goes back to Ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ

Kelly also compares Rom 1:3–4; 4:24; 8:34; Gal 1:4; 1 Thess 4:14; 5:9; and from later material 1 Pet 3:18–20 and 1 Tim 2:5–6, 8 and 6:13–14. The juxtaposition of confession in the saving efficacy of the cross and the divine vindication or glorification of Christ in the resurrection feature in virtually all of these passages as an emergent core pattern of the earliest Christian confessions or creeds within the pages of the New Testament.

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1186–1187.]

σταυροῦ, *the message of the cross*, in 1:18 (cf. 1:18-31). The phrase ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, died for our sins, most likely is grounded in Isa. 53, esp. vv. 5-6 or 11-12. Thus Paul's κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς, *according to scriptures*, alludes especially to this OT text.<sup>10</sup> But the generalized nature of κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς is more inclusive than of just a single OT passage. Central to the affirmation is that Christ's death is an atoning, sacrificial death on the cross to cover the guilt of human sinfulness. As he said earlier in Gal. 1:4, this death of Christ targets the objective of rescuing repenting sinners: κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, ὅπως ἐξέλθῃ ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, *of our Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself from our sins so that He might rescue us out of this present age of the Evil One according to the will of God even our Father*.

The evidence of actual death by Christ is seen in Him being buried: καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη. If some of the elitists were troubled by a physical death of Christ due to their pagan background reasoning, the actual burial of Jesus dismisses such thinking completely. It would be hard to deduce here a later Gnostic view of Jesus not being a real human being and only a 'ghost' with human form.<sup>11</sup> But it is possible, given the triumphalist

<sup>10</sup>“The phrase ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν may perhaps reflect an allusion to the LXX of Isaiah 53 (perhaps 53:5–6, or vv. 11–12).<sup>99</sup> However, in view of the generality of the principle expressed by the phrase κατὰ τῆς γραφᾶς it is neither convincing nor necessary to isolate any single specific biblical reference, still less to speculate about an allusion to a Targumic VS of Isa 53:5.<sup>100</sup> Stanley, e.g., makes no reference to this passage in his work *Paul and the Language of Scripture* other than a passing mention in the course of his discussion of Gal 3:13.<sup>101</sup> What is at issue is the affirmation ‘that this atoning death fulfilled the scriptures’ of which one instantiation among others is ‘the classic passage ... Isa 53, the great description of the redemptive suffering of the servant of the Lord,’ although ‘Psalm 22 ... has a number of details appropriate to a notable victim of public rejection,’ while the promise of Deut 18:15, 18 and the sorrow of Lam 1:12, 18 cannot be excluded as irrelevant.<sup>102</sup> The key points in the phrase according to the scriptures, as Barrett observes, are (1) the continuity of the cross of Christ with the history of the saving purposes of God as revealed in the Old Testament, which find their climax and fulfillment in the saving work of Christ; and (2) understanding the meaning of the saving role of the death of Christ by means of ‘interpretation in OT categories—for example, of sacrifice ... atonement ... sufferings ... the good time to come.’<sup>103</sup> The work of C. H. Dodd in this area remains of permanent value.<sup>104</sup> Blomberg comments that ‘the first Christian writers saw all of the Scripture pointing to Christ.’<sup>105</sup>” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1190–1191.]

<sup>11</sup>“Significantly even by the time of the epistles of Ignatius (around AD 108), Ignatius alludes to those who claim that Christ's sufferings were merely ‘apparent,’ ‘seeming,’ or ‘in semblance’ (λέγουσιν τὸ δοκεῖν αὐτὸν πεπονθέναι).<sup>114</sup> This tendency to docetism was a threat, then, from virtually the first century, and

tendency of these elitists, that they were troubled by the reality of Christ actually dying.

ii) καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς καὶ ὅτι ὠφθη Κηϑᾶ εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα, *and that He was raised on the third day according to scriptures and that He was seen by Peter then by the Twelve*. The second assertion centers on the resurrection of Jesus with evidence attached. Paul's language here is deliberate and intentional. The passive voice ἐγήγερται, He was raised, underscores God's role as the agent of raising of Christ.<sup>12</sup> He uses ἐγείρω here rather than ἀνίστημι because it makes a stronger point about coming back to life, even though both verbs contain the idea.

The qualifiers τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς, *on the third day according to the scriptures*, further underscores the divine plan being carried out according to schedule. The time reference to the third day reflects the ancient approach of counting on a part of a day against it Ignatius declared that Christ suffered ‘for us’ (δι’ ἡμᾶς) ... truly (ἀληθῶς ἔπαθεν) just as he truly (ἀληθῶς) underwent resurrection.<sup>115</sup> In his attack on gnostic dissociation between ‘Jesus’ the man and the exalted heavenly ‘Christ’ Irenaeus quotes the Pauline and pre-Pauline tradition exactly as it stands here, including the claim he was buried.<sup>116</sup> Docetic Christology is ascribed to Cerinthus c. AD 120–30. Tertullian gives us several examples of an emphasis on Paul's words he was buried, in some contexts to underline the reality of death; in others, to stress the reality of the resurrection.<sup>117</sup> The Epistle to Rheginus (or the treatise *De Resurrectione*, from Nag Hammadi) appears to dissociate ‘the psychic preaching which he shares with the other apostles’ from a more ‘spiritual’ Pauline ‘gnostic’ understanding.<sup>118</sup>” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1192.]

12 “M. E. Dahl is utterly and entirely right to insist that we take the passive force of the verb seriously.<sup>122</sup> Dahl notes (also anticipating Barrett and Ortkemper). ‘God is practically always the subject of ‘resurrection’ verbs in the NT. The only instances of explicit statements that Christ (not his resurrection) causes our resurrection are John 6:39, 40, 54. These could mean that Christ as the divine Logos is the Cause.... The vast majority of texts containing ἐγείρω and ἀνίστημι ... in a transitive, active sense have God as subject and Christ or man as object (Acts 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 37; Rom 4:21; 8:11 [bis]; 10:9; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:15 [bis]; 2 Cor 4:14a; Gal 1:1; Col 2:12; 1 Thess 1:10.... In nearly all other cases the verb is in the passive—or middle—voice.’<sup>123</sup> The effectively single counterexample has to do with a distinctive issue in Johannine Christology and belongs to a different soteriological logic from Paul's normal formulation. Dahl's linguistic tables confirm the data.<sup>124</sup> Rom 8:11 summarizes the Pauline logic formulated more fully in 1 Corinthians 15: ‘if the *Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead* dwells in you, then the *God who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his indwelling Spirit*’ (REB, my italics). God will raise the in-Christ corporeity who are identified with Christ in the event in which God raised Christ.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1193–1194.]



as a day. Jesus was actually in the tomb less than 36 hours from late Friday afternoon until before sun up on Sunday morning. The reference to scriptures again is general in scope rather than limited to one or two OT passages.<sup>13</sup>

The evidence of the resurrection of Jesus provided by Paul begins with a reference to Peter and the Twelve and is defined four times as ὤφθη, [He was seen](#).

The precise meaning of ὤφθη has occasioned considerable discussion over the centuries. This in part because this aorist passive voice form of the verb has an idiomatic usage out of the LXX translation of the Hebrew Bible that denotes a divine manifestation often through the vehicle of a vision or trance. It as a passive voice verb is then often translated as '[He became visible](#)' or '[He appeared](#).' Thus does Paul's use of it here denote something beyond a physical sighting of Christ as a risen person?

Of the five uses of ὀράω in First Corinthians only 9:1 contains an active voice form: οὐχὶ ἴησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἑώρακα; [Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?](#) The other four uses are found in chapter fifteen as the passive voice ὤφθη: vv. 5, 6, 7, 8. Does Paul's rhetorical question in 9:1 imply that the apostle saw Jesus with his physical eyes? Of course, this alludes to the Damascus road experience described by Luke in Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-11; 26:12-18. Luke stresses Paul's hearing the voice of Jesus and only seeing a blinding light. Interestingly in 26:19, Paul, in Luke's words, describes his experience as τῆ οὐρανίῳ ὀρασίῳ, [Heavenly vision](#). Yet the four gospels consistently depict Jesus' resurrection appearances clearly as physical sightings, occasionally with a strong emphasis upon physical contact with Jesus and/

<sup>13</sup>“This paves the way for our understanding the particular nuance of the phrase according to the scriptures when it is applied as a context for understanding the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (a) First, it does indeed relate this divine act of vindication and sovereign action to the theme of promise. Its occurrence rests not only on divine power and divine grace, but also on divine faithfulness to vindicate his obedient messianic agent. (b) Second, therefore, it would amount to unintended reductionism and constraint if we seek to isolate some specific individual text (e.g., Ps 2:7; 16:9, 10; or Hos 6:2) rather than understanding the resurrection of Christ as the witness to a climactic fulfillment of a cumulative tradition of God's promised eschatological act of sovereignty and vindication in grace. In this respect the phrase operates in precise parallel with its use in relation to Christ's death for our sins in v. 3.135 (c) Third, it bears witness to the character of God whom the scriptures portray as a giving and gracious as well as a sovereign, faithful creator. If creation itself is God's gift, the new creation which begins with Christ's resurrection and promises the resurrection of believers is no less so. That is why it serves to sharpen all that Paul has said about grace (1:4, 26-31; 3:5, 22; 4:7; 6:20; 8:13; 9:13; 10:16; 11:24; 12:4; 15:8-10). 15:8-10 especially will take up this theme.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1195.]

or Him eating food etc.

The debate in First Corinthians centers on whether Paul is intending to describe the resurrection appearances of Jesus as a vision or as a physical sighting. Then growing out of this is whether Jesus was raised in bodily resurrection or in some kind of spiritual body, that is, does ὤφθη a spiritual mode of resurrection over against a bodily mode of resurrection? But the discussion misses the point of Paul's use of ὤφθη.

By describing the resurrection appearance with ὤφθη, Paul seeks to emphasize the visibility of Christ in His resurrection body. Christ clearly presented Himself to these various groups and individuals as being alive and functioning rather than still a corpse in the tomb. The subsequent discussion of resurrection in vv. 12-58 attempts to define both Christ's existence and the believers' experience of resurrection existence -- no small task since Christ is the only one who has been alive on earth in such an existence. Thus resurrection existence has both continuity and discontinuity with physical existence.

Thus Paul's approach here must be correctly understood as (sacrificial) death evidenced by burial, and coming back to life as evidenced by His presenting Himself to various individuals. The repeated use of the idiomatic ὤφθη stresses these appearances as divine manifestations confirming His claim to be God's Son. The Corinthian elitists' view was somehow missing this point due to the short sightedness of their pagan Greek reasoning.

Another part of the debates here centers on both inclusion and exclusion of the resurrection appearances of Jesus. In Mark 16:9 and John 20:2-18, Mary Magdalene was the first person to see Jesus. Did Paul deliberately leave out this appearance because it was to a woman? But Paul has no desire to describe every one of the appearances. It's not the number of appearances that gives credibility to Jesus' resurrection.

What Paul intends by his selection of individuals and groups in his account is the clear affirmation that God affirmed the reality of Jesus' resurrection in the way they took place. And that these appearances came to a variety of individuals, both leaders and others, as a motivation to increased faith commitment to the risen Christ. He had no interest in a modern style 'objective' validation of the resurrection of Jesus, which would require appearances to non-believers as well. Peter and James are signaled out due to their leadership roles of the apostles and of the pastoral leaders in the church at Jerusalem.

Further, the need of postulating a pre-existing creedal structure for Paul's expression here is a completely false trail. When Paul visited Peter and James in Jerusalem, as Acts records after his conversion on



and so you have come to believe.

In this second set of justifying statements (vv. 9-10), Paul amplifies his position as one to whom Jesus made an individual appearance but as distinct from the other appearances. Then in v. 11, he draws the inference (οὖν) that both he and the others are preaching the same risen Christ that the Corinthians placed faith in at conversion. That proclamation comes out of the same eye-witness encounter with the risen Christ.

Paul's depiction becomes necessary from the different nature of his resurrection encounter (v. 8) with Jesus from those described in vv. 4-7. It could well have been the case that the Corinthians elitists were using that difference to depreciate the merits of Paul's claim to apostleship, and to represent the apostolic Gospel.

What does ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι, but last of all as one untimely born, (v. 8) mean? Paul's approach to defending himself illustrates what he earlier said about the attitude of outsiders in 1:18, Ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις μωρία ἐστίν, τοῖς δὲ σωζόμενοις ἡμῖν δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Every action of God toward the apostle was in no way based upon his superior achievements. Just the opposite, the grace of God shines forth most brightly because humanly speaking in regard to Paul he stood as a persecutor of both Christ and His church. Note how he emphasizes this in statement #639 above. That everything come out of God's grace and has nothing to do with humanly achieved merit or superiority had been missed by the Corinthian elitists. Their Greek reasoning glorified individual achievement through personal self-disciplined training. Their false sense of superiority was propped up by tongues speaking etc. (cf. chaps. 1-14 for detailed listing) and reflected their pagan ways being incorporated into their view of Christianity.

But such is not the way of God working out of grace through the Gospel. This Paul had learned some twenty years earlier out of his encounter with the risen Christ. His Pharicism had put him on a somewhat similar path of elitism for entirely different reasons than for these Corinthian elitists. But out of his meeting the risen Christ had come the realization that everything centers on God's grace and this divine dynamic that transforms and changes one's life: χάριτι δὲ θεοῦ εἰμι ὃ εἰμι, And by God's grace I am what I am (v. 10a).

What Paul had become in God's grace is affirmed passionately in v. 10b: καὶ ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ ἡ εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ κενὴ ἐγενήθη, ἀλλὰ περισσώτερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα, οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλ' ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ [ἡ] σὺν ἐμοί. and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

Captured here is the heart of the meaning of God's grace, ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ.<sup>15</sup> In no way is it something we earn or merit. Instead, it is given by God as an implanted divine dynamic: ἡ εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ κενὴ ἐγενήθη, As such it will put us to working hard in service and commitment to Christ: ἀλλὰ περισσώτερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα, Yet this hard work does not represent our actions but rather the enabling powerful presence of God in our lives that guides and strengthens these activities: οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλ' ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ [ἡ] σὺν ἐμοί. Here Paul captures the essence of his foundational view of the believer being ἐν Χριστῷ, in Christ, (cf. Rom. 3:24; 6:11; 8:1, 2 etc. totalling 84 uses, including 13 uses in First Corinthians). This is both the essence and the mystery of the Gospel. Authentic Christianity means to be in spiritual union with Christ as the risen Lord.

What does all this imply in regard to the Corinthians? The inferential conjunction οὖν meaning therefore sets up this concluding declaration as making explicit something clearly implied in what Paul has said in vv. 1-10: εἴτε οὖν ἐγὼ εἴτε ἐκεῖνοι, οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε, Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe. This in no way signals a return to the main topic with vv. 8-10 as some kind of digression, as has been falsely suggested.<sup>16</sup>

15 “Undeserved, unmerited **grace** (χάρις) which springs from the free, sovereign love of God alone and becomes operative in human life not only determines Paul's life and apostolic vocation but also characterizes all Christian existence, not least the promise of resurrection and the reality of the activity of Christ as Lord. “The double εἰμί is firmly assertive—‘I am what I am’ is the favour, utterly undeserved, that summoned Saul of Tarsus ... (Gal 1:13ff).”<sup>244</sup> The gist of Paul's point is twofold: (i) God has made him what he is as sheer gift; (ii) in addition to being operative toward or on him, this grace has also been operative through him in making him an apostolic agent for the benefit of others. The usual meaning of κενός is *without content, without substance, or empty*. However, BAGD show (with examples) that it also means *without result, without effect, to no purpose* (as indeed in 15:58).<sup>245</sup> Hence with Robertson and Plummer and with Conzelmann (against Findlay) we translate **fruitless**.<sup>246</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1211–1212.]

<sup>16</sup>“Paul is not ‘returning from a digression,’ since his combined emphasis on resurrection, witness, and grace was all of a piece and he did not digress to “defend” his apostleship (see above).<sup>251</sup> Conzelmann identifies the central connection of thought. In the light of grace (vv. 8–10) ‘Paul relativizes the *human* differences in favor of the essential thing, proclamation and faith’ (his italics).<sup>252</sup> In other words, whether we are talking about how God's grace became operative through other apostles (e.g., Peter or the Twelve) or we are considering Paul as an example of one who received grace and witnessed Christ's appearance, the apostolic kerygma retains the common basis to which the common tradition (vv. 3b–5; corroborated by vv. 6–7, and further instantiated by vv. 8–10) bears united witness. This clearly looks back to 1:10–12, 18–25, and forward

Instead, Paul applies the principle of divine grace as it applies to all the individuals who received an appearance from the risen Christ. This τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is preached as the verb κηρύσσομεν asserts with virtually identical meaning to εὐηγγελισάμην used at the beginning. The independent phrase εἶτε ἐγὼ εἶτε ἐκεῖνοι, *whether I or those*, makes clear the inclusiveness of Paul's expression as covered by the first person plural verb κηρύσσομεν. The adverb of manner οὕτως repeated before both verbs contextually alludes not so much to how τὸ εὐαγγέλιον was proclaimed and believed as it does to the content of what was preached and believed.<sup>17</sup> The use of the present tense verb κηρύσσομεν, we are proclaiming, emphasizes the continual preaching of the same essential Gospel by all those representing an apostolic witness to Jesus' resurrection. But the shift to the aorist verb ἐπιστεύσατε in the ingressive function of the aorist tense, *you came to faith commitment*, matches the aorist παρελάβετε, *you received*, in v. 1 with both as a reference to the conversion commitment of the Corinthians to Christ through

to 15:12–58. There is no **is** in the Greek: the implied verb is one of logic, not of past description.<sup>253</sup> NJB's rendering of the connective οὐν as **anyway** admirably picks up the resumptive force of the logical consequence.<sup>254</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1212–1213.]

<sup>17</sup>“The Gk. οὕτως is emphatic, which we try to convey by **it is this that we proclaim**. Although the Greek is strictly adverbial (*thus, in this manner*), NIV, REB, and NJB render it as a demonstrative pronoun: *this is what we all proclaim* (REB); *this is what we preach* (NJB), although NRSV leaves the construction open to an adverbial understanding: *so we proclaim and so you have come to believe*. The context suggests that the context of the kerygma, not its mode of communication, is what is at issue. **This** is therefore entirely appropriate not least because οὕτως may in any case be used as an adjective.<sup>255</sup> On the other hand, although this is more probable for **that you came to believe**, an adverbial *thus*, in this way would be no less possible as a translation (with AV/KJV). The change from the present **we proclaim** to the aorist **you came to believe** need not of itself imply ‘that the Corinthians were beginning to waver somewhat in their belief.’<sup>256</sup> It is probably an ingressive aorist which, as Wolff notes, looks back at the end of this unit (vv. 1–11) to vv. 1–2.<sup>257</sup> Paul concludes this first foundational section of the resurrection chapter by asserting, This is what matters: whether you are proclaiming the gospel or responding to it as a Christian believer. Margaret Mitchell is right to stress both the unifying dimension of these verses and, no less, that the basis for such common faith remains the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ: ‘Paul emphasizes the importance of the things all Christians share: a common faith in the same received παράδοσις.’<sup>258</sup> ‘Ecumenicity’ is not the lowest common denominator in a miscellany of individual experiences. For Paul it is defined by the common kerygma of a shared, transmitted gospel tradition, anchored in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as ἐν πρώτοις (15:3).” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1213.]

the preaching of the apostolic Gospel.

Thus in magnificent fashion the apostle has laid the foundation for his discussion of resurrection in the remainder of the chapter. Proper understanding of it can only come out of understanding the Gospel and the significant role that resurrection plays in that message. Gospel then provides the only legitimate framework for comprehending the idea of resurrection. Here is where the elitists missed the boat. The inadequacy of their pagan Greek reasoning prevents them from grasping the true meaning of resurrection.

**REFUTATIO 1, vv. 12-19.** The objective of a refutatio was to expose the weaknesses and failures in the alternative view point. In this first unit, the apostle attacks the basic denial of the idea of resurrection floating around in the church.

### *c) Addressing the denial in the church, vv. 12-58.*

The way Paul addresses the topic of resurrection is determined by the nature of the issue in the Corinthian church, not by an attempt at systematic presentation of the topic. Paul's interest centered on challenging the wrong headed thinking at Corinth and, if possible, persuading the elitists to adopt God's way of thinking in abandonment of their pagan Greek thinking. His beginning strategy is to defend and define the idea of resurrection, vv. 12-34. Then he focuses on defining and describing the resurrection body in vv. 35-58.

The challenges here are huge since he is describing something no human being outside of Christ has ever experience while existing on earth. Thus extensive use of analogous language becomes necessary. But one must always remember that the earthly comparisons used by Paul only touch on a small portion of the larger spiritual reality being described. The topic under consideration imposes these limitations, and means that only partial understanding is possible. Resurrection must be experience in order to be understood fully.

### *i) The denial of resurrection in the church, vv. 12-19.*

12 Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται, πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; 13 εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· 14 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν· 15 εὐρισκόμεθα δὲ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι ἠγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν, ὃν οὐκ ἠγειρεν εἴπερ ἄρα νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται. 16 εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· 17 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν, 18 ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο. 19 εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἠλπικότες ἐσμέν μόνον, ἔλεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμέν.

12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the

dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. 17 If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. 19 If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

is made that Christ as the risen One is being preached as the apostle asserted pointedly in v. 11.

**Rhetorical question, v. 12.** Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται, πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; And since Christ is being preached that He has risen from the dead, how are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Although comments were made at the beginning regarding this verse, a closer examination is now merited in order to set the statement in clearer focus. The rhetorical question that forms the sentence is set up in

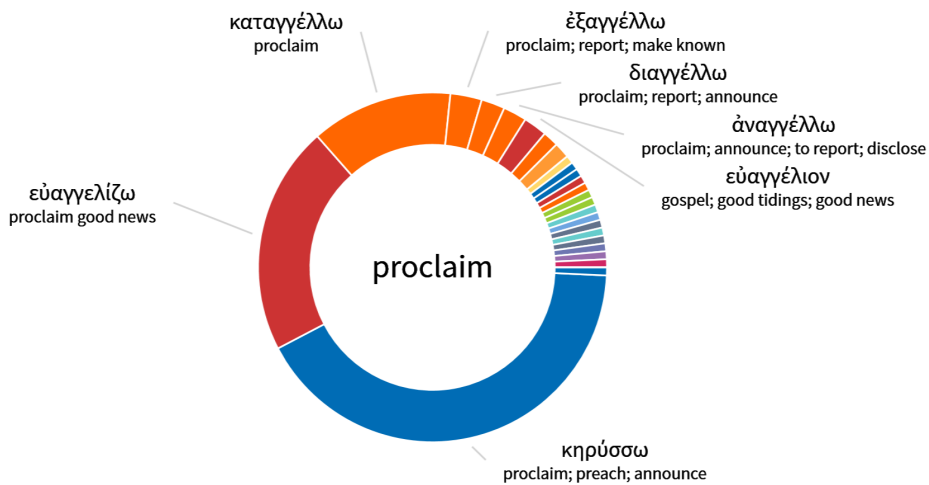
15.12	δὲ	Εἰ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται	ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται,
647	πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες	ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν;	
15.13	δὲ	εἰ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν,	
648	οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ·		
15.14	δὲ	εἰ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται,	
649	(ἐστὶν) κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν,		
650	(ἐστὶν) κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ·		
15.15	δὲ	εὐρισκόμεθα καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ,	
651	ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν _____	κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ	ὅτι ἤγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν,
			ὃν οὐκ ἤγειρεν
		εἶπερ ἄρα νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται.	
15.16	γὰρ	εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται,	
652	οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ·		
15.17	δὲ	εἰ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται,	
653	(ἐστὶν) ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν,		
654	ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν,		
15.18	ἄρα	καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο.	
654			
15.19		ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ	
		ἐν Χριστῷ	
655	ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμέν.	εἰ... ἡλπικότες ἐσμέν μόνον,	

the first class structure of assumed reality in the dependent clause labeled the *protasis*: Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται, And since Christ is being proclaimed as having been raised from the dead. In this depicted scenario, Paul assumes the affirmations made in vv. 1-11 about Christ's resurrection. Literally this links vv. 1-11 to this pivotal statement in v. 12. The inclusive nature of the passive voice κηρύσσεται, is being preached, not only references the various individuals to whom Christ presented Himself (vv. 6-10) including the apostle himself, but extends to those in the Corinthian church who have remained true to the apostolic Gospel in contrast to the Co-

As [the diagram above](#) illustrates, the introductory verse occupies a pivotal role not just in introducing vv. 13-58 but in bringing to a climax vv. 1-11. The first class conditional sentence nature of this rhetorical question posed by Paul pulls the two sections closely together with the protasis pointing back to vv. 1-11 while the apodosis points forward to vv. 13-18. The assumption

is made that Christ as the risen One is being preached as the apostle asserted pointedly in v. 11. clearly suggests some of the faithful people, as well as the structuring of the main clause in v. 12 referencing only some at Corinth denying the resurrection.

The use of the verb κηρύσσεται from κηρύσσω is used four times in First Corinthians: 1:23; 9:27; 15:11, 12. The use here of κηρύσσω is most likely influenced



by its use in the immediately preceding verse. This serves as a scribal Jewish ‘header’ link between the two units of text material.<sup>18</sup> No real distinction in meaning from εὐηγγελισάμην from εὐαγγελίζω in vv. 1-2. The cognitive meaning is essentially the same, while the tone of ‘heralding’ the Gospel or “goodnewsizing” the Gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) is the only difference in meaning. The same action is intended by both verbs. These are but two of numerous Greek verbs used in the NT to proclaim orally the message of the Gospel, as the chart illustrates.<sup>19</sup>

The main clause, labeled the apodosis or conclusion, sets up the discussion to follow: πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; **How are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?** Those denying the idea of resurrection are in direct conflict with those preaching the resurrection of Christ. Several aspects of Paul’s statement merit comment.

Most importantly is to not overlook ἐν ὑμῖν τινες, **some among you**. Paul does not see this issue as dom-

<sup>18</sup>Such headers served as links between two units of text via a repetitive word, phrase etc. being placed in the beginning sentence prefield of what follows the first unit of text, as happens in the protasis here in v. 12. This was a often used device among Jewish scribes in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek in this period of time. .

<sup>19</sup>“The first *refutatio* now addresses what in the language of deliberative rhetoric would be called the ‘disadvantages’ (or, for Paul, dire, unacceptable consequences) of any attempt to deny the possibility or applicability of resurrection as a reality or concept in principle. Such a denial would entail the unimaginable claim that Jesus Christ himself had not been raised from the dead. If the *universal principle* has no currency, by deductive logic a *particular instance* of it has no currency either. Any possible sense of confusion for the modern reader arises because the resurrection of Christ is also regarded (in vv. 20–34) as the paradigm case of resurrection in reality. Hence it may appear that Paul is turning an anticipated argument upside down. In practice, however, these two approaches represent different and complementary arguments: there is no contradiction of logic between vv. 12–19 and 20–34, providing that we keep in mind their different methods and aims.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1214–1215.]

inating the larger Christian community. Perhaps a few leaders of a small number of house churches had taken the denial stance, but not the majority of the leaders nor of the house churches in the city.

The verb λέγουσιν in the present tense pictures the issue as currently active at the time of the writing of this letter some several years after the founding of the church by the apostle on the second missionary journey. It wasn’t in the church at the beginning but had surfaced later and continued to assert itself. Paul knew that it needed to be corrected and thus devotes a major section of the letter body to countering this view point.

Exactly what does ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, **that there is no resurrection of the dead**, mean?<sup>20</sup> As I concluded in the earlier discussion of this point above, the wording of the Greek text precludes precise identification and allows for a plurality of viewpoints floating around the community in Corinth. The way Paul defends the apostolic understand of resurrection in vv. 13-58 certainly lends itself to a variety of perspectives that were all built off the Greek negative view of the material and the physical. I wouldn’t be a bit surprised to learn that among the elitists who held this general denial were individual efforts to ‘out Greek’ the others in spinning their theories. Culturally this would have been the norm, and the variety of ways Paul defends the idea of resurrection clearly lends itself to such an understanding.

<sup>20</sup>“We discussed the precise form which the claim **there is no resurrection of the dead** (v. 12) may have taken at Corinth in some considerable detail in our introduction to 15:1–58. (To avoid undue replication, see above.) We alluded to the useful surveys of possible views in Wilson, Spörlein, Sellin, Wedderburn, de Boer, G. Barth, and Holleman.<sup>3</sup> In summary we distinguished between four broad diagnoses of the problem which **some at Corinth** (τινες ἐν ὑμῖν) experienced: **(i)** a lack of belief in any form of postmortal existence, perhaps similar to certain Epicurean attitudes (W. M. L. de Wette, W. Schmithals, and [on the basis of Paul’s misunderstanding their problem] Bultmann); **(ii)** belief that the resurrection was ‘inner’ or ‘spiritual’ and had already occurred in the case of “spiritual” believers (Heinrici, Schniewind, Wilckens); **(iii)** specific doubts about the possibility of ‘bodily’ resurrection, whether because of the nature of ‘body’ or because of a confusion with the immortality of a continuing ‘soul’ (Weiss, Sellin, Dale Martin); and **(iv)** the view that **some** may represent one problem, and **some** another (Mitchell, Saw, Erickson, Luther). The strengths and weaknesses of these theories are discussed above (see the introduction to 15:1–58).” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1216.]

The central point of Paul's statement ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν is the assertion that none of these alternative views measured up to the apostolic view and thus are false. And may very well signal deeper spiritual issues in the life of those holding to one of them.

**Defense, part one, vv. 13-14.** 13 εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· 14 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν· 13 *If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.* Here Paul utilizes two first class conditional statements to make his point:

<i>εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν,</i>	protasis
<b>οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται·</b>	<b>apodosis</b>

<i>εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται,</i>	protasis
<b>κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν,</b>	<b>apodosis</b>
<b>κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν·</b>	<b>apodosis</b>

The first scenario, εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, adopts the language of the ὅτι clause in verse 12: ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν. Paul presents this as a view currently existing among some in the church. What does this mean should it be correct? The apodosis draws the conclusion οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται, **Christ has absolutely not been raised** (from the dead)! Perhaps some were seeking to distance Christ's experience from the general principle of resurrection. Paul will have none of this. Christ's resurrection depends upon the general principle of resurrection being true. The two cannot be disconnected from one another.

The second scenario εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται assumes the inseparable link of Christ's resurrection and the principle of resurrection. So if there is no resurrection either generally or more specifically of Christ, not only does this deny Christ's resurrection, but it has profound impact on Christian proclamation and faith: κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν.<sup>21</sup> The addition of ἄρα heightens the importance of these two conclusions drawn by Paul. Plus the use of καὶ with both conclusions links them closely together.

Two items then are labeled as κενὸν / κενή: τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, **our Gospel message**, and ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, **your faith**. The adjectives κενὸν (neuter sing) / κενή (femine sing) denotes that which is empty of any content and

<sup>21</sup>“Most MSS (e.g., 8, A, D<sup>2</sup>, F, G, Syriac, Coptic, et al., with UBS 4th ed.) read ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, **your faith**, at the end of v. 14, but B, D\*, and 33 read ἡμῶν, *our faith*. This could easily be an assimilation to the previous ἡμῶν, as Metzger notes, and the UBS editors classify the text presupposed in our translation as ‘B,’ i.e., ‘almost certain.’ This is confirmed by the undisputed reading of v. 17.<sup>122</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1218.]

thus worthless. A preaching and a faith without being based upon the resurrection of Christ is not just false. More significantly, they are an empty shell with nothing of spiritual value inside them. The preacher and the believer are committed to nothing of value. Here stands a sharp critique of the elitists' denial of resurrection, as well as their twisting of the idea of Christ's resurrection.

Paul links a legitimate πίστις to the apostolic κήρυγμα. The risen Christ is the One to whom we commit ourselves in salvational faith. And no one else! In verse 11, Paul had affirmed this for the Corinthians in their conversion. Experientially, then the Corinthians should realize this critical link between faith and the risen Christ as presented in the apostolic Gospel.

**Defense two, v. 15.** εὕρισκόμεθα δὲ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι ἠγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν, ὃν οὐκ ἠγειρεν εἴπερ ἄρα νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται. **We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ — whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.** Paul personalizes the principles just stated. The first person plural includes not just himself but the others mentioned in vv. 4-7. The entire apostolic witness would be in jeopardy if the denial of the resurrection were correct.<sup>22</sup> For Paul -- and for all believers -- the sense of accountability before Almighty God should always stand as a part of our commitment to God since Judgment Day will demonstrate just how thoroughly accountable every human being is before God. The final judgment is clearly implied in the use of εὕρισκόμεθα even though it is present tense. But the exposure as false witnesses would not be limited just to Judgment Day.

**Defense three, summary, vv. 16-18.** 16 εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· 17 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς

<sup>22</sup>“In accordance with the aim of a rhetorical refutatio Paul pushes the opposing axiom to its further disastrous (‘disadvantageous’ in deliberative rhetoric) consequences: the apostles became **exposed as liars** (the practical force of Gk εὕρισκόμεθα, *we shall be found, i.e., discovered to be, revealed to be, ψευδομάρτυρες, false witnesses, i.e., liars in what we witness concerning God*).<sup>16</sup> The objective genitive for τοῦ θεοῦ, **concerning God**, seems to fit the context better than a subjective genitive (*in God's service*).<sup>17</sup> ὅτι has causal or explanatory force: **because we gave testimony against God (κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ) that he raised Christ when if, as they say, it were the case...** Barrett (with Edwards) explains the otherwise difficult syntax: *as they say* represents a classical use of ἄρα (BDF sect. 454).<sup>18</sup> The preposition κατὰ with the genitive retains its proper meaning **against** and cannot be reduced to περί, *concerning*.<sup>19</sup> Paul traces a downward spiral of devastating consequences. Those who accept the counterproposition or opposing axiom to that of the kerygma find themselves in open opposition to God by denying the veracity of his vindication of Christ and initiation of new creation in Christ's resurrection.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1219.]

οὐκ ἐγγήγερται, ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν , ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν, 18 ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. 17 If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. Paul offers two more first class conditional statements as justifying (γὰρ) declarations of the previous statements in vv. 13-15.

*εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται,* protasis  
*οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγγήγερται·* apodosis

*εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγγήγερται,* protasis  
*ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν,* apodosis 1  
*ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν,* apodosis 2  
*ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο. “ 3*

The two above protases essential repeat the earlier sequence of general resurrection and Christ’s resurrection in vv. 13-14. Also the first apodosis, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγγήγερται, repeats the apodosis in v. 13. Again the first class conditional protasis here assumes the reality of the resurrection denial by some of the Corinthians (v. 12). If their thinking should be correct, what would also be correct?

The three fold apodosis in vv. 17-18 represent summarizing assessment with new wording. Not only is the Corinthians faith worthless -- κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, v. 14b -- it also is ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, i.e., *no better than pagan idolatry*. The more severe ματαία than κενὴ raises the condemnation a notch. This adjective in the NT follows the LXX usage of referring to the worthless of pagan idolatry. Unquestionably asserted here is that the elitists’ denial of resurrection signals no conversion to Christianity by them. Even though claiming to be Christian, they are no where closer to God than when they were practicing pagans. This is a stinging rebuke of them by Paul.

Second, with their worthless faith ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν, *you are still in your sins*. Without resurrection, there is no divine forgiveness of sins. The simple logic is that faith is what triggers divine forgiveness and thus without a legitimate faith the possibility of divine forgiveness doesn’t exist.

Third, without resurrection, those who die claiming Christ do not go to Heaven, v. 18: ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο. *Then also those having fallen asleep in*

653 *εἰ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγγήγερται,*  
*(ἐστὶν) ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν,*  
654 *ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν,*  
*ἄρα*  
654 *καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο.*

Christ have perished. Note the special emphasis placed on this third consequence of a no resurrection scenario (#654).

The use of ἄρα with καὶ heightens the focus on this apodosis considerably. The euphemistic οἱ κοιμηθέντες, *those who have fallen asleep*, for having died carries with it the expectation of awakening in a new day with God in Heaven. If there’s no resurrection, this doesn’t happen. Of the six uses of ἀπόλλυμι in First Corinthians, 1:18 parallels the use here with the aorist ἀπώλοντο in reference to eternity. The sense is not cease to exist, but rather perish in eternal damnation in Hell. Without the resurrection of Christ all humanity is destined for eternal damnation completely cut off from God.

**Defense four, the sad situation of believers, v. 19.**

*εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἡλπικότες ἐσμὲν μόνον, ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμὲν. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.*

15.19 ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ  
ἐν Χριστῷ  
εἰ...ἡλπικότες ἐσμὲν  
μόνον,  
655 ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμὲν.

Again another first class conditional sentence assuming the stance of the elitists of ‘no resurrection.’ The protasis εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἡλπικότες ἐσμὲν μόνον pictures believers living their earthly life with hope in Christ limited only to this life and not to anything beyond death. Although the precise scenario can be understood different ways, the sense of it most likely is Christians living in hope in this life but having nothing beyond death that will happen to them as divine blessing. They have lived their entire Christian life in the delusion that Heaven awaits them after death. The placing this in a first class protasis rather than the hypothetical third class protasis strongly hints that this is likely the case for the elitists at Corinth. The first person plural ἐσμὲν, *we are*, takes some of the sting off the severe indictment built into the first class structure. That is, Paul is implying, if I were in your shoes, but of course I’m not.

The apodosis ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμὲν draws the conclusion implicit in this scenario: *we are of all people most to be pitied*. The superlative adjective ἐλεεινός, -ή, -όν is used only twice in the NT: 1 Cor. 15:19 and Rev. 3:17. Both times the picture is of individual totally duped into assuming something about themselves that utterly doesn’t exist. What this produces is the human reaction of “O those totally stupid people! How could anyone be so dumb?” They are not themselves aware of their deception, and the reaction to them is of mockery and ridicule. Paul looks upon



such individuals adopted the position of the elitists at Corinth as the most foolish of all humanity.

Thus in vv. 12-19 Paul makes his first defense of the principle of resurrection by attacking denials of it and showing what their denial actually means for Christian belief. In short, without the principle of resurrection there is no Christianity. To be sure, it may exist in the thinking of individuals, but they are among the most foolish of all human beings.

In application to modern Christianity, this fundamental assertion by Paul needs to be remembered. A lot of twisting and distorting the principle of resurrection, and especially, that of Christ can be found in today's world. From Paul's apostolic perspective such people in no way are authentic Christians and are living a life of self-delusion

that will prove eternally fatal once they step into eternity at death.

**C O N - F O R M A T I O N 1, vv. 20-34.**

The objective of an ancient confirmation was to affirm the validity of one's view over against that of the opponent. Here Paul stresses the necessity of the resurrection of Christ for the resurrection of believers as the second coming.

*i i )*  
**The reality of resurrection, vv. 20-28.**

20 Nunì δε Χριστός ἐγήγερατο ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων.

21 ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν. 22 ὡσερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. 23 Ἐκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι· ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, 24 εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῷ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν. 25 δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν ἄχρι οὗ θῆ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. 26 ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος· 27 πάντα γὰρ ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. ὅταν δὲ εἴπῃ ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται, δῆλον ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα. 28 ὅταν δὲ ὑποταγῆ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τότε [καὶ] αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν.

15.20	δε	
656	Νυνὶ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερατο	ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων.
15.21	γὰρ	
657	ἐπειδὴ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, (ἐστὶν) καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν.	
15.22	γὰρ	
658	οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται.	ὡσερ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν,
15.23	δε	
659	(ἐστὶν) Ἐκαστος ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι·	ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ,
15.24		εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῷ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν.
15.25	γὰρ	
660	δεῖ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν	ἄχρι οὗ θῆ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ.
15.26	ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος·	
15.27	γὰρ	
662	πάντα ὑπέταξεν	ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ.
	δε	
	ὅταν εἴπῃ	ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται,
663	δῆλον	ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα.
15.28	δε	
664	τότε [καὶ] αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα,	ὅταν ὑποταγῆ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν.

20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. 21 For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; 22 for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. 28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.

With verse twenty, Paul switches sides in the argument to now describe actual reality verses the what it would be if that characterizes vv. 13-19. In other words, he switches from the viewpoint of the Corinthian elitists to the apostolic Gospel perspective. Verses 20-28 is the first of a two part defense of this Gospel perspective that runs through verse thirty-four.

The rhetorical structure of vv. 20-28 is laid out clearly in the block diagram. The central affirmation in v. 20 (#656) is then justified by a series declarations grouped into four sets by γὰρ: v. 21, vv. 22-24, vv. 25-26, vv. 27-28. Here Paul’s creativity comes to the forefront in the way he presents his argument. He shifts the argument from Christ’s resurrection being dependent upon resurrection generally (vv. 13-18) to resurrection of humans being dependent upon Christ’s resurrection. This focus has wide ranging implications for his discussion which is spelled out in detail both in vv. 20-28 and vv. 29-34. Christ as the only resurrected individual to ever appear physically to humans upon the earth then becomes critical for comprehending some of the aspects of the resurrected body for believers in eternity (vv. 35-58).<sup>23</sup>

**Thesis: Christ has been raised, v. 20.** Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων. **But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of**

<sup>23</sup>“After refuting the counteraxiom of the denial by ruthlessly exposing its unacceptable logical consequences Paul reverses the direction of argument to establish the remarkable consequences for which the axiom of resurrection, and in particular the resurrection of Jesus Christ, stands as the foundation.<sup>36</sup> Again, in terms of deliberative rhetoric, he unfolds a series of ‘advantages,’ i.e., fundamentals of Christian life and eschatological promise. After he has addressed the ‘conceivability’ of future resurrection (vv. 35–37), Paul will return to this practical dimension in his conclusion to the whole argument in v. 58.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1223.]

those who have died. This declaration reflects the apostolic Gospel that Paul has proclaimed to the Corinthians from the beginning. His declaration is emphatic as reflected in the use of the emphatic adverb Νυνὶ. Contrary to the elitists’ denial, Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. This is reality! This picks up on the appearances described in vv. 4-11 and builds off that foundation of validation of Christ’s resurrection.

But a new dimension is added to this direction that has already been affirmed in terms of an inseparable connection of Christ’s resurrection and human resurrection. Christ in resurrection becomes ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων, a first fruit of those who have fallen asleep (in death). The reference to τῶν κεκοιμημένων alludes back to οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ, those having fallen asleep in Christ, in v. 18. The shift from the aorist passive participle κοιμηθέντες to the perfect passive participle κεκοιμημένων stresses that the moment of dying is not the end or disaster, but instead the beginning of something wonderful for believers. They are inseparably linked to the risen Christ and thus experience a resurrection to eternal life that He provides.

The idea of ἀπαρχὴ comes out of the Israelite sacrificial system with the grain offerings given in the Jerusalem temple.<sup>24</sup> The Jewish festival of Pentecost was the most important one of these festivals in its original

<sup>24</sup>The background religious meaning of ἀπαρχὴ is overwhelmingly Jewish in nature. In the Greek secular usage it generally designated a properly owed ‘tax’ from goods etc.

In the oldest literary example (Hdt., I, 92) ἀπαρχὴ means not only a. the true “firstfruits” of natural products<sup>1</sup> but also b. the “proportionate gift” from the earnings or possessions of the pious giver, then “thankoffering” for any success,<sup>2</sup> and finally c. any “offering” to the deity or to the servants or sanctuary of the deity, whether as a special or a regular offering. Hence it is used even of the Jewish tax<sup>3</sup> (Jos. Ant., 16, 172), or first-fruits to the state, or an inheritance tax. For details, cf. the similar usage in the LXX. Figuratively it is used in Eur. Ion, 401 f.: προσφθεγμάτων ἀπαρχαί, for the first greeting or address (to Apollo). ἀπαρχὴ then comes to have, like ἀρχή, the sense of “beginning” (hence the textual variations between ἀπαρχή(ι) and ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς), and finally the sense of certification of birth.

Religiously the offering of men as ἀπαρχὴ is of interest. To be sure, the expression is rare in this sense.<sup>4</sup> When used, it is often not subject to historical control, since it refers to the offerings of whole portions of the population of a city (usually to the Delphic Apoll.) with a view to colonisation.<sup>5</sup> Yet the clear impression remains that these are regarded as religious acts and are undertaken as such.<sup>6</sup> In addition we read that individuals are offered as → ἀνάθημα to a deity (Eur. Ion, 310, cf. Phoen. Schol. on 214); ἀπαρχὴ might easily be substituted; and men who dedicated themselves to the service of the sanctuary, or who were made over to the temple by their parents or masters (ιερόδουλοι etc.; → δοῦλος),<sup>7</sup> were in fact called ἀπαρχὴ (cf. Diod. S., IV, 66, 6).

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:484–485.]

conception in the OT.<sup>25</sup> The offering up of selections of wheat and barely at the beginning of the early summer harvest period was both an acknowledgement that the harvest belongs to God and the offering signified God's promise of a full harvest yet to come. Christ as the offered up sacrifice guarantees the full harvest of believers yet to come. How all of this will play itself out is now to be explained by Paul in the sets of justifying statements in vv. 21-28.

**Reasons for and implications of this resurrection of Christ, vv. 21-28.** As visually depicted in [the above diagram](#), Paul presents a series of justifications for this affirmation of the resurrection of Christ and its implication for believers. The repetition of the causal conjunction γάρ defines four groups of reasons. These naturally come together in two groups of vv. 21-24 and 25-28.

**Christ and Adam, vv. 21-24.** 21 ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν. 22 ὡςπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. 23 Ἐκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι· ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, 24 εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν. 21 For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; 22 for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power.

Paul's scribal Jewish heritage as a Pharisee gives him insight here for developing his argument.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup>By the time of the life of Jesus, the focus of the Pentecost festival had shifted. This in large part because Jewish society in Judea was no longer rural and agricultural but now urban and business oriented in orientation. It centered on the giving of the Torah to Moses on Mt. Sinai as divine promise of still greater things yet to come. For many first century Jews the greater thing guaranteed by the giving of the Torah to Moses was the anticipated coming of the expected Messiah, who according to some traditions would make His appearance on the Day of Pentecost from the Mt. of Olives. This background perspective stands behind the Acts 2 account of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost for Christians.

<sup>26</sup>Both 1 Cor. 15:21-28, 45-58 and Rom. 5:12-20 stand as the two NT sources for this discussion. One must understand the Jewish mind here where not only Adam and Christ signify religious principles but Abraham as well in Rom. 4.

Whereas Paul's use of Abraham typology (e.g., Romans 4) underlines the continuity of God's faithful acts, "the Adam typology," Beker observes, "operates not in terms of continuity but in terms of discontinuity. Here the last (eschatological) Adam reverses radically what the first Adam has initiated in world history (Rom 5:12-17; 1 Cor 15:20-22), so that the ... apocalyptic thrust of the Adam typology underscores the radical newness of God's act in Christ."<sup>26</sup> The background to this typology is therefore the apocalyptic background

He begins with a general principle: ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν, for since through a man is death, also through a man is resurrection of the dead. This principle is now repeated but with individuals named: ὡςπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. For since in Adam all died, so also in Christ will all be made alive. The third step is then an emphasis upon the proper sequence of being made alive: 23 Ἐκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι· ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, 24 εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power.

In this pattern of argumentation, the apostle builds off the principle found in Genesis 1-4 that the source of physical death among humans is traced back to Adam.<sup>27</sup> He follows the traditional Jewish interpretive view

of the two ages with its "ontological antithesis of death and life."<sup>27</sup> Beker works out the implications of this apocalyptic background convincingly and in detail.<sup>28</sup> Building on the work of P. Vielhauer and Klaus Koch, he shows that for Paul "the final resurrection is total renewal in an apocalyptic sense: 'the new world' ... so that the resurrection of Christ announces the ... dawn of the general resurrection to come."<sup>29</sup> In Becker's view it was failure to grasp "the apocalyptic connection" that constituted the heart of the problem at Corinth, and hence "constitutes the basis of Paul's argument (15:20-28)."<sup>60</sup> The resurrection is not less than, but far more than, "the enthronement of Christ as 'Lord.' ..." Thus Beker concludes, in 1 Cor 15:22 we might "expect 'For as by a man came death, by a man came also life,' but instead we read 'by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead' " (his italics).<sup>61</sup>

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1226.]

<sup>27</sup>"It is essential to hold the double set of parallels together since the two respective referents of ἀνθρώπου in v. 21 are explained at once in v. 22 as (i) Adam and (ii) Christ. As the double γάρ, for, indicates, Holleman's emphasis on representation (vv. 21-22) as complementing temporal priority and promise in firstfruits (v. 20) finds classic expression here. In Bruce's words, 'Paul now draws an analogy between two uniquely representative men: Adam, head of the old creation, in whom all die, and Christ, head of the new creation, 'the first-born from the dead' (Col 1:18; cf. Rev 1:8) in whom all are to be made alive in resurrection.'<sup>246</sup> Adam is, for Paul, both an individual and a corporate entity: 'he was what his Hebrew name signifies—'mankind'. The whole of mankind is viewed as originally existing in Adam.'<sup>247</sup> These verses may appear more logically problematic in the light of modern Western individualism and supposed autonomy than they are. Today, with globalization and international economics, it should be clearer than ever before that humanity as a whole is 'bound up in a bundle of created existence' (Robinson's phrase), i.e., of structural and corporate sin and fall-  
enness. (However, see the warning note of Fitzmyer, below).<sup>48</sup> In  
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of both individuality but solidarity of the human race in Adam.<sup>28</sup> Adam is both an individual and typologically a signal of humanity simultaneously. In this kind of reasoning, Paul develops his Jewish oriented argument for the resurrection being connected to believers through Christ. But one should avoid seeing this Jewish source as the basis for Paul's viewpoint here. It merely served to give a legitimizing framework for such typology, but Paul's view both in First Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 is distinctly Christian in its content.

A related question then arises: Does Paul's use of Jewish based arguments here suggest a Jewish background for the elitists in the Corinthian church? Probably not, although the possibility of some of them being Jewish Christians with heavy Hellenistic influences is very real. Greek traditions, both religious and philosophical, did not tend to trace human origins back to a single human, although they did often tend to trace these origins back to some god who took on human form. It is distinctly the Jewish heritage with divine creation of Adam and Eve that stood apart in the ancient world. And to this heritage Paul appeals in his arguments here.

Christ has reversed the destructive path that Adam's sin put humanity on. By coming into connection with the risen Christ, believers then share in the marvelous resurrection experienced by Christ. But there is a divine τάγμα<sup>29</sup> at work here (v. 23). It is then defined

continuity with the promises of the OT Paul thinks of **Adam** and of **humankind** both in structural-corporate and individual terms, just as the language concerning the righteous Suffering Servant in Isaiah 40–55 oscillates between depicting the Servant as an individual and as a corporate people.<sup>49</sup> Even so, the argument that humanity is, simply as a brute fact, bound up in the solidarities, vulnerabilities, and consequences of the life and destiny of **Adam** finds its saving parallel in the gospel assurance that the new humanity is bound up in the solidarities, atoning work, and resurrection victory and promise of **Christ** as the 'last' (i.e., eschatological) **Adam** (see 15:45). J. A. T. Robinson observes, 'Solidarity [jointly sharing liabilities and advantages] is the divinely ordained structure in which personal life is to be lived.'<sup>50</sup> Davies further claims that 'Paul accepted the traditional Rabbinic doctrine of the unity of mankind in Adam.' But Fitzmyer adds a note of warning: none of the rabbinic passages 'says a thing about the 'inclusion' of all humanity 'in' the body of Adam in the manner of 1 Cor 15:22.'<sup>51</sup>' [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1224–1225.]

<sup>28</sup>It is interesting to notice that the overwhelming bulk of the Adam typology discussion in Jewish literature of the period comes from Hellenistic Judaism and very little from the more traditional Hebraistic Judaism. Also it is this same Jewish literary source where most of the Messianic discussion about eschatological end times is found as well.

<sup>29</sup>'The word τάγμα, that which has been **arranged**, thing placed in its **proper order**, hence in a military context a corps, troop division, or rank of troops, underlines both the purposive ac-

in v. 24 as

ἀπαρχή Χριστός,

*Christ as first fruit*

ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ,

*then those in Christ at His coming*

εἶτα τὸ τέλος

*then the end*

Thus Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday morning becomes the basis for the resurrection of believers at the return of Christ. This then triggers the very end of human history which is defined by the two temporal clauses:

ὅταν παραδιδῶ<sup>30</sup> τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ,

*whenever He gives the Kingdom to God the Father.*

ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν.

*whenever He has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power.*

The twin temporal clauses define simultaneous activity rather than sequential actions. The most graphic picture of this in the NT is presented by John in a multi segment depiction of the same event in Rev. 19:11-16, 17-21; 20:7-10.<sup>31</sup> Paul's more graphic depiction is in 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11. Here in First Corinthians he sketches out broad contours of events as a part of his affirmation of the connection of believers' resurrection to that of Christ. Faith commitment to the risen Christ has linked us to Jesus and will enable the sharing of resurrection experience at the end of human history in the second coming of Christ. It is this resurrection experience that gives ultimate victory to the believer that lasts for all eternity.

*Christ's ultimate triumph over death, vv. 25-28. 25*

tivity of God and the apocalyptic context of thought.<sup>797</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1229.]

<sup>30</sup>One should note the text confusion created by the present tense subjunctive παραδιδῶ and the aorist subjunctive καταργήσῃ. Due to the futuristic nature of both clauses some copyists felt compelled to switch the present tense παραδιδῶ over to the aorist tense παραδῶ in order to match the aorist καταργήσῃ: K L P 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1881. 2464 *M* latt. But the present tense παραδιδῶ has stronger support as the original wording of the text: P<sup>46</sup> x A D Ψ 0243. 0270. 1505. 1739. (B F G). [Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 549.]

The meaning of both subjunctive mood forms is not much different. The process action of the present tense sees the handing over of rule by Christ to God including a process, while the destruction of death is a decisive action as the point of the aorist verb.

<sup>31</sup>For an in depth analysis of the Revelation text see my 1,100 page plus commentary on Revelation in the BIC commentary series at [cranfordville.com](http://cranfordville.com): [http://cranfordville.com/BIC/Index\\_BIC\\_Revelation.html](http://cranfordville.com/BIC/Index_BIC_Revelation.html)

δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν ἄχρι οὗ θῆ ἅπαντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. 26 ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος. 27 πάντα γὰρ ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. ὅταν δὲ εἶπη ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται, δῆλον ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα. 28 ὅταν δὲ ὑποταγῆ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τότε [καὶ] αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. 28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.

This second set of justifying statements amplifies the necessity of Christ coming to absolute power and control over all things and all people in creation. The central goal of this is to destroy the last and most powerful of enemies, i.e., ὁ θάνατος (v. 26). Death was introduced through Adam and now it will be destroyed through the last Adam, Christ.

Once all this is accomplished then Christ Himself comes under full submission to God the Father: ὅταν δὲ ὑποταγῆ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τότε [καὶ] αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν (v. 28). The play on the verb ὑποτάσσω here is fascinating although somewhat confusing. Indeed, this verse stood prominent in many of the church controversies over the nature of Christ in the third, fourth, and fifth century councils.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup>“Not surprisingly the exegesis of this verse featured prominently in the controversies of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. Origen expounds this verse in the context of the temporality of the world, which has God as its Source and End.<sup>140</sup> However, he has also to correct the view of ‘the heretics’ who regard the verse as ascribing a ‘demeaning’ subjection to the Son: the emphasis, Origen replies, is on the triumph of God in which the ‘subjection’ of all things is ‘extremely rational and logical’ if God is God and if all things have been restored to their proper order.<sup>141</sup> Chrysostom spreads his comments on v. 28 over what amounts to the equivalent of nearly a dozen columns.<sup>142</sup> This verse, he insists, cannot contradict Christ’s exaltation in Phil 2:9. Paul does not say that Christ will cease to reign, only that his reign will not cease before all things have been set to right: Christ will not be ‘without power.’<sup>143</sup> That God may be all in all means that all things may be ‘dependent on him.’<sup>144</sup> This change of emphasis reflects a history of debate in which Arians appealed to this verse for a subordinationist Christology. Augustine is still more emphatic. ‘We should not think that Christ will so give up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that he shall take it away.’<sup>145</sup> In 1 Cor 15:24–28 ‘he must reign’ determines the relativity of ‘until.’ Thus when he hands over the rule to God (v. 24) means ‘when he shall have brought believers to the contemplation of God,’ while ‘subjection’ to God (v. 28) means change from ‘the substance of a creature’ (in the incarnation) to ‘become the substance of God.’<sup>146</sup> Augustine’s treatise On the Trinity ends with the acclamation of ‘the one God, the Trinity,’ as He who re-

One should not read some system of subordination of Christ into Paul’s statement here. A key to this verse is the purpose clause ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν, that God may be all things in all things. Obviously such an esoteric statement as this it has a particular situation in mind. Clearly Paul is not advocating the Stoic pantheism with used similar statements in both Greek and Latin.<sup>33</sup> Although possible grammar wise, it’s not likely either that the πᾶσιν should be taken as masculine rather than neuter with the resulting translation of ...may be all things among everyone. Was the case that some of the Corinthian elitists had adopted a mystical, philosophical based understanding of Christ and even of God? Some commentators have suggested the so-called “Christ party,” ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ, alluded to in 1:12 may very well be the target in mind here by Paul. The adoption of elements of the Stoic concept has injected a static idea of eternity and the divine into Christianity that Paul clearly refutes by the dynamic emphasis here on God taking over control of all things in every aspect of His creation. Contextually the point of the purpose clause is to affirm the achieving by God of His original goal in creation of a created order purged of all evil and where He can be fully Himself without having to confront evil every place in creation. Clearly this is the portrait painted by John in Revelation 22 using images of city, garden etc. to portray the eternal order of things. I strongly suspect that this is Paul’s intended point here as well.

Also important to note is that in the background of the terminology used by Paul in vv. 26-27 stands Psalms 8:5-8 and Psalm 110 (LXX 109).<sup>34</sup> Both the poems ‘all in all.’<sup>147</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1238.]

<sup>33</sup>“Although the expression τὰ πάντα was used in Stoic thought to denote the universe and ‘the All,’ the dynamic, eschatological movement of Pauline thought precludes any affinity with Stoic pantheism. Far from identifying God with ‘the All,’ Paul sees God as the source and goal of a world in need of reconciliation and salvation through (δι’ αὐτοῦ, Rom 11:36) God in Christ.<sup>151</sup> Schweitzer comments that whereas ‘in the Stoic view the world is thought of as static.... The world is Nature.... Paul lives in the conception of the dramatic world-view characteristic of the late Jewish eschatology.... He concludes ... ‘For from Him and through Him and unto Him are all things’ (Rom 11:36); but he cannot ... add that all things are in God’ (his italics).<sup>152</sup> Into this frame of reference Schweitzer places 1 Cor 15:26–28, with its conscious emphasis on succession and purposive process.<sup>153</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1239.]

<sup>34</sup>Psalm 8:5-9 (LXX). 5 τί ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος, ὅτι μνησκή αὐτοῦ, ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, ὅτι ἐπισκέπη αὐτόν; † 6 ἠλάττωσας αὐτόν βραχὺ τι παρ’ ἀγγέλους, δόξη καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν; † 7 καὶ κατέστησας αὐτόν ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου, πάντα ὑπέταξας

etic expression and the emphasis upon God's sovereign control over His creation in these psalms provide a defining framework for Paul's application of them to the Son of David, Christ, in an eschatological realization. If Greek mystical, esoteric thinking had penetrated into the views of the elitists, then Paul busts it to pieces with the eloquent Hebrew affirmation of God working through His Son in order to achieve absolute sovereignty over a purged and evil free creation at the end of history. With the destruction of death, nothing but nothing stands in the way of God's complete sovereignty being expressed over His creation. Remember that sovereignty and power in this world stand against enemies seeking to destroy. Once all these enemies have themselves been destroyed, sovereignty and power take on a new marvelous meaning of security and blessing for those experiencing it. God's sovereignty is threatening only to those opposing Him. Yielding to it brings peace and blessing.

### iii) Further defense of Christ's resurrection, vv. 29-

34.

29 Ἐπεὶ τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν; εἰ ὄλως νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, τί καὶ βαπτίζονται ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν; 30 Τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν; 31 καθ' ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω, νῆ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ, † 8 πρόβατα καὶ βόας πάσας, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὰ κτήνη τοῦ πεδίου, † 9 τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἰχθύας τῆς θαλάσσης, τὰ διαπορευόμενα τρίβους θαλασσῶν. †

4 what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? 5 Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. 6 You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, 7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

**Psalm 110 (LXX 109).** 1 Τῷ Δαυιδ ψαλμός. Εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου. † 2 ῥάβδον δυνάμεώς σου ἐξαποστελεῖ κύριος ἐκ Σιων, καὶ κατακυριεύει ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἐχθρῶν σου. † 3 μετὰ σοῦ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τῆς δυνάμεώς σου ἐν ταῖς λαμπρότησιν τῶν ἁγίων· ἐκ γαστροῦ πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐξεγέννησά σε. † 4 ὤμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται Σὺ εἶ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδεκ. † 5 κύριος ἐκ δεξιῶν σου συνέθλασεν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ βασιλεῖς. † 6 κρινεῖ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, πληρώσει πτώματα, συνθλάσει κεφαλὰς ἐπὶ γῆς πολλῶν. † 7 ἐκ χειμάρρου ἐν ὁδοῦ πίεται· διὰ τοῦτο ὑψώσει κεφαλὴν. †

Of David. A Psalm. 1 The Lord says to my lord, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." 2 The Lord sends out from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes. 3 Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day you lead your forces on the holy mountains. From the womb of the morning, like dew, your youth will come to you. 4 The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." 5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. 6 He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter heads over the wide earth. 7 He will drink from the stream by the path; therefore he will lift up his head.

[ἀδελφοί], ἢν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν. 32 εἰ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐθηριομάχησα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, φάγωμεν καὶ πίωμεν, αὐριοὶ γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν. 33 μὴ πλανᾶσθε· φθείρουσιν ἡθὴ χρηστὰ ὀμιλῖαι κακαί. 34 ἐκνήψατε δικαίως καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε, ἀγνωσίαν γὰρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν, πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῶν λαλῶ.

29 Otherwise, what will those people do who receive baptism on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?

30 And why are we putting ourselves in danger every hour? 31 I die every day! That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you—a boast that I make in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If with merely human hopes I fought with wild animals at Ephesus, what would I have gained by it? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." 33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." 34 Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

In this unit of text the apostle continues his defense of the resurrection of Christ and then of believers. But here his pattern of argumentation shifts into a new direction that includes quoting Greek philosophers etc. Verse 34 concludes with an admonition to the Corinthians to 'get their act together' for they are missing opportunities to lead people to saving faith in the risen Christ.<sup>35</sup>

**The example of proxy baptism in the church, v. 29.** The first supplementary argument for resurrection comes in verse 29, and is one of the strangest statements found inside the NT.<sup>36</sup> Critical to making sense of these two

<sup>35</sup>"In vv. 29–34 Paul turns from his majestic contemplation of God's ordered eschatological, sovereign purposes to resume his emphasis on the consequences of denying the resurrection. The thought begun in v. 20 confirmed the cause and ground for such belief; vv. 29–34 focus on the consequences of belief or unbelief in terms of a consistency and ethics of lifestyle: (a) baptism for the sake of (or for) the dead would be senseless if resurrection is denied (v. 29); (b) Paul's own sacrifice of his life would be equally pointless and stupid (vv. 30–32a); (c) why not go the whole way and relapse into a lifestyle concerned only for pleasure in this life (vv. 32b–34)?" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1240.]

<sup>36</sup>"Verse 29 is a notoriously difficult crux: the most 'hotly disputed' in the epistle (Conzelmann); 'it is not clear precisely what this practice was' (Dale Martin); 'everything must be understood as tentative' (Fee); a variety of understandings emerge 'given the enigmatic nature of the practice' (Collins).<sup>155</sup> By 1887 Godet had counted 'about thirty explanations' for baptized for the dead, while B. M. Foschini and R. Schnackenburg allude to 'more than forty.'<sup>156</sup> Wolff's commentary includes seventeen subcategories with seven issue-centered general approaches.<sup>157</sup> A vast literature stretches from the second century to the present day. Mathis Rissi devoted an entire book to this one verse, categorizing a mass

15.29 Ἐπεὶ  
**665** τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι  
 ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν;  
 εἰ ὅλως νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται,  
**666** τί καὶ βαπτίζονται  
 ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν;  
**667** 15.30 τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν  
 πᾶσαν ὥραν;  
**668** 15.31 καθ' ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω,  
**669** νῆ (ἐστὶν) τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν,  
 [ἀδελφοί], | ἣν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.  
 15.32 εἰ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐθηριομάχησα  
 ἐν Ἐφέσῳ,  
**670** τί μοι (ἐστὶν) τὸ ὄφελος;  
 εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται,  
**671** φάγωμεν  
 καὶ  
**672** πίωμεν,  
 γὰρ  
**673** αὐριον ἀποθνήσκομεν.  
**674** 15.33 μὴ πλανᾶσθε·  
**675** φθείρουσιν ἤθη χρηστὰ ὁμιλίαι κακαί.  
**676** 15.34 ἐκνήψατε  
 δικαίως  
 καὶ  
**677** μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε,  
 γὰρ  
**678** ἀγνωσίαν θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν,  
 πρὸς ἐντροπὴν  
**679** ὑμῖν λαλῶ.

rhetorical questions is νεκροὶ and βαπτίζονται. The natural sense of οἱ νεκροὶ is referencing individuals who have physically died. Also of βαπτίζονται, the Christian initiation ordinance of water baptism is the most common meaning, especially the passive voice usage. But such a practice is unknown in ancient Christianity of views on the history of interpretation under four main groups, with variations in each group. (a) One category adds σωματῶν to ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν, and identifies the dead with those who are being baptized. (b) A second view understands baptism as the suffering and death of martyrdom. (c) A third interprets baptism broadly as washing (where the Hebrew but not the Greek may use a common word). (d) The fourth understands this as vicarious baptism on behalf of people who are dead. Rissi rejects the 'sacramentalism' often implied in this.<sup>158</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1240.]

outside of this one isolated reference. Thus from the second century on Bible interpreters have questioned this meaning of Paul's statements.

The two rhetorical questions pose the issue, but not until the second one in the form of a first class conditional sentence is the connection of this to the larger issue of resurrection seen.

Ἐπεὶ  
 τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν;  
 εἰ ὅλως νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται,  
 τί καὶ βαπτίζονται ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν;

Also central to the meaning of this verse is the precise sense of the future tense ποιήσουσιν, which has an enormous of legitimate potential meanings.<sup>37</sup> The un-

<sup>37</sup>The semantic range of ποιέω is vast, as the sheer column-inches in BAGD and Grimm-Thayer bear witness, although proportionately much less space is devoted to the word in Lid-

dell-Scott-Jones or Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon*.<sup>159</sup> The relevant possibilities for exploration in this verse may be summarized as (a) achieving, bringing about; (b) intransitive doing as an activity; (c) fashioning, perhaps in an indulgent, self-generating way; and (d) doing with a future to indicate the subjective dimension also implicit in (c), i.e., doing in terms of what one thinks one is doing. (i) NJB's *What are people up to who ...?* is very tempting and could be right. We included it as our translation in an earlier draft, but it misses the subjective dimension which several writers perceive (probably rightly) here. Worse in this respect is (ii), *What do they achieve ...?* (cf. Grotius, "quid efficient?"). P. Bachmann, A. Schlatter, and Barrett (in part) argue for this view, but Meyer comments that a notion of 'achievement' by baptism would be 'a thought foreign to the apostle. He wished to point out the subjective absurdity of the procedure.'<sup>160</sup> (iii) Weiss understands τί ποιήσουσιν as 'indeed of course a mode of logical future,' but renders it, 'What should they resort to... What will they do in the future?'<sup>161</sup> This accords with Barrett's second point that the future

derstanding of Thiselton answers more of the lexicographical and contextual aspects and thus represents a more likely meaning intended by Paul: *What do those people think they are doing who ...?*

What οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν alludes to is understood from the second century beginning with the church father Tertullian is that some believers at Corinth were undergoing the rite of Christian baptism in behalf of friends and family who professed faith in Christ while living but were unable to follow through with the rite of baptism for some reason. In the solidarity of a collective oriented society, these individuals felt it important for their deceased friends to have credited to them the experience of baptism vicariously as a proxy experience. To be sure, such a view has numerous question marks attached to it. A modification of this view is that the living friends and family did this action in behalf of their deceased believing family members and friends in the hope of securing a shared experience of resurrection with the deceased.<sup>38</sup>

may convey the force of, *What will they do next?* (i.e., when it is discovered that there is no resurrection).<sup>162</sup> Barrett agrees that the net force is subjective or self-involving: ‘Will not these people look fools when ...?’ (iv) NRSV, NIV, *what will they do ...?* (with Wolff and Collins) is similar, but loses both the logical and subjective force.<sup>163</sup> (v) Curiously REB underlines the subjective aspect, but transfers this to the readers rather than those to whom the text refers: *What do you suppose they are doing?* (vi) Moffatt can find more lexicographical support than we might imagine for *What is the meaning of people getting baptized ...?* and is a possible way forward. (vii) All in all, **What do those people think they are doing who ...?** does justice to (a) the use of the future as a logical present; (b) the subjective or self-involving aspect; (c) an open-ended appeal to them to reflect on their self-consistency of thought and action; and (d) the wide semantic range of the word.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1241.]

<sup>38</sup>“J. K. Howard fully supports and develops this view against those which favor vicarious baptism. He writes that baptism for (for the sake of) the dead is ‘not in order to remedy some deficiency on the part of the dead, but in order to be reunited with them at the resurrection.’<sup>218</sup> Schackenburg agrees that ‘the argument does not step outside the frame of primitive Christian views and above all fits excellently into the resurrection chapter.’<sup>219</sup> The linguistic force of ὑπὲρ, *for the sake of*, is preserved, together with a convincing nonmetaphorical meaning for both τῶν νεκρῶν (the Christian dead) and the middle-voice force of οἱ βαπτιζόμενα, *those who have themselves baptized*. We may return to G. G. Findlay’s succinct and careful comments. After exposing the fallacy of some competing views, he observes, ‘Paul is referring rather to a much commoner, indeed a normal experience, that the death of Christians leads to the conversion of survivors, who in the first instance ‘for the sake of the dead’ (their beloved dead) and in the hope of reunion, turn to Christ—e.g., when a dying mother wins her son by the appeal ‘Meet me in heaven!’ Such appeals, and their frequent salutary effect, give strong and touching evidence of faith in the resurrection’ (Findlay’s italics).<sup>220</sup>

“The supposed objection that such conversion would depend

What is clear from the way these rhetorical questions are framed is that this practice was limited to a small number of individuals inside the church at Corinth.<sup>39</sup> Also, that Paul neither approves nor condemns the practice. Such a practice represents an abnormal custom not deemed necessary in apostolic Christianity. But referencing those who engage in this at Corinth helps Paul make the point of why do such a thing if there is no resurrection. Clearly the practice assumed a future resurrection of the dead by those engaging in it. That it is never mentioned elsewhere in the NT and never became a practice in emerging Christianity over the next several centuries strongly suggests that no norm or standard can be assumed here for Christianity generally, contrary to some modern day cults who practice some version of proxy baptism based on this text.

*Paul’s personal experience, vv. 30-31.* 30 Τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν; 31 καθ’ ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω, νῆ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, [ἀδελφοί]<sup>40</sup>, ἦν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ on mixed motives in the first place merely finds replication over the centuries in many pastoral situations, and, second, should not obscure the focus of the confident witness to Christ and to the resurrection which such a plea transparently presupposed. From a dying loved one, this would carry enormous weight. There is no room for pretense or self-interest on a deathbed: the sincerity and transparency of faith and witness become overwhelming. Of two recent articles, the work of R. E. DeMaris on archaeological evidence concerning the importance of the world of the dead in mid-first-century Corinth carries weight, but may in effect count equally in favor of the ‘vicarious baptism’ view or this final argument.<sup>221</sup> For the more significant the fate of the dead, the more important and effective would be the plea of the deathbed Christian, with a view to reunion in the afterlife. On the other hand: most of the arguments against view (11) still apply. J. D. Reaume’s recent article, however, confirms the direction of our own arguments.<sup>222</sup> We see no reason to reject this view (B)(13) as the least problematic and most convincing of all.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1248–1249.]

<sup>39</sup>Given the numerous weird practices and beliefs that Paul references about the elitist groups in the Corinthian church, one should not be surprised at this very unusual practice existing in the church there.

<sup>40</sup>“In v. 31 a number of important early MSS include the vocative ἀδελφοί after καύχησιν, i.e., κ, A, B, as well as 33, Coptic, and the Vulgate. However, it is omitted by the earlier P<sup>46</sup>, together with D, F, G, L, the Syriac, and Ambrosiaster. On the ground that its insertion is so much easier to explain than its omission, and the combination of P<sup>46</sup> and the Western text, most writers regard the P<sup>46</sup> reading as correct. UBS 4th ed. places it in square brackets (as does the 1979 ed. of the Nestle-Aland text). Metzger explains that ‘the Committee was reluctant to drop it from the text altogether’ because of its inclusion in κ, A, and B; but ranked it as ‘C,’ i.e., difficult to decide upon with certainty.<sup>223</sup> NRSV, NIV, and REB retain it (NRSV, NIV, *brothers and sisters*; REB, *my friends*); but NJB (surely rightly) omits it (as does AV/KJV). Why should this term of affection have been omitted by the varied traditions from which it



Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν. 30 And why are we putting ourselves in danger every hour? 31 I die every day! That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you — a boast that I make in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul raises a personal question about his motivation as proof of the resurrection. His life is lived constantly in danger because of his beliefs. Why would he do this if there was no resurrection? It would not make any sense. The sense of καθ' ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω, *every day I die*, is matched by a later statement to the Corinthians in 2 Cor. 1:9a, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς τὸ ἀπόκριμα τοῦ θανάτου ἐσχίκαμεν..., *Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death...* It is a repeating and emphasis on the initial statement *Τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν; Why do we also put our lives in danger every hour?* The particle of emphasis νή sets this first statement up with as much certainty as the second statement, νή τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, [ἀδελφοί], ἣν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν. *Indeed as certain as boasting about you, brothers, which I make in Christ Jesus our Lord.*<sup>41</sup> Paul's conviction of the resurrection of the dead is just as certain as the pride he takes in the church at Corinth. With so many problems existing in the church, the temptation is to wonder about this. But it must always be remembered that all the problems discussed by Paul touched only a small part of the church which in the majority elements was very stable and genuine.

**Paul's experience at Ephesus, vv. 32-33.** 32 εἰ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐθηριομάχησα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, φάγωμεν καὶ πίωμεν, αὐριοὶ γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν. 33 μὴ πλανᾶσθε· φθειροῦσιν ἦθη χρηστὰ ὁμίλια κακαί. 32 *If with merely human hopes I fought with wild animals at Ephesus, what would I have gained by it? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."* 33 *Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."*

Again Paul uses a first class conditional protasis

is absent, unless they reflect the text?" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1249.]

<sup>41</sup>"Paul uses an idiom associated with taking an oath or with 'affirming' in a quasi-legal sense. Grimm-Thayer notes concerning νή: 'a particle employed in affirmations and oaths (common in Attic) and joined to an acc of the pers (for the most part, a divinity) or of the thing affirmed or sworn by ... [often best translated as] by ... 1 Cor 15:31 (Gen 42:15, 16).'<sup>229</sup> BAGD's entry is similar: 'strong affirmation,' with examples from Epictetus and the papyri.<sup>230</sup> The accusative that denotes what Paul affirms or swears by (νή) is τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, the [act of] glorying in you (see Textual Note [2] above). Robertson and Plummer approve of Rutherford's 'I assure you by the [brotherly; see Textual Note (1)] pride in your faith with which I am possessed in Christ Jesus our Lord.'<sup>231</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1250.]

that assumes the reality of an earlier experience he had while in Ephesus: εἰ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐθηριομάχησα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, *if humanly speaking I fought the wild beasts in Ephesus*. The question here is whether Paul meant this literally or metaphorically.<sup>42</sup> Several impossible barriers rise up against a literal understanding. Although Christians in the arena at Rome did undergo such an experience it wasn't until after the coliseum in Rome was constructed until into the second century AD. And those experiences were limited to Rome only. Also, as a Roman citizen Paul could not be forced to such an experience, even though it had been a limited form of execution such before the beginning of the Christian era.

Some think that the 'wild beasts' at Ephesus were Demetrius and his fellow silversmiths who tried to have Paul executed according to Acts 19:23-27. But the problem here is that this event is depicted by Luke as coming at the end of Paul's three plus year stay in Ephesus, while this letter was written by Paul at least one to two years earlier from Ephesus. The only other 'candidate' from Paul's time in Ephesus in Acts 19 would be the Jewish synagogue leaders who ἠπειθοῦν κακολογοῦντες τὴν ὁδὸν ἐνώπιον τοῦ πλήθους, *were speaking evil against the way before the congregation* (v. 9b). But

<sup>42</sup>"*Fighting with wild beasts* (θηριομαχέω) occurs in the aorist, normally to depict a past event, but since Paul writes from Ephesus, **I have battled** becomes the normal English equivalent.<sup>235</sup> Some allude to being forced to fight with wild animals as a punishment for an alleged or actual crime (Diodorus Siculus, 3.43.7 [first century BC]; Josephus, Wars 7.38; Ignatius, Letter to the Ephesians, 1:2; Letter to the Trallians, 10). However, Ignatius uses the compound verb both literally (as above) and metaphorically: *from Syria to Rome I fight with wild beasts, bound to ten leopards, that is a detachment of soldiers* (Ignatius, Letter to the Romans, 5:1).<sup>236</sup> Luther and Calvin discuss in detail forms of persecution at Rome which entailed battling with wild beasts, but these historically belong to a later date than around 54–55.<sup>237</sup> Weiss and Héring regard the allusion as literal but also as merely hypothetical, which seems to reduce the force of an argument which rhetorically demands a climax or peak.<sup>238</sup> On the other hand, Héring's argument that as a Roman citizen Paul could not have been submitted to such a punishment equally points in the direction of metaphor. The catalogue of sufferings in 2 Cor 11:23ff. also makes no mention of this experience. Even if Weiss and Héring can overcome the grammatical problem of the indicative, most understand it as metaphor. Fee contends that it 'must be' metaphor, while Collins sees a metaphorical allusion to the ἀγὼν motif as more probable than some hypothetical event.<sup>239</sup> Tertullian regarded it as a metaphorical allusion to the tumult narrated in Acts 19.<sup>240</sup> R. E. Osborne and A. J. Malherbe consider alternatives and conclude that metaphor is clearly used here.<sup>241</sup> Wolff compares the experience of Paul's coming to this end of himself (or 'receiving a sentence of death'): 'we even despaired of life' (2 Cor 1:8–11).<sup>242</sup> In 1 Cor 16:9 Paul alludes to continuing opposition at Ephesus." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1251–1252.]

the intensity of this early episode coming after three months in the city and Paul's language here in First Corinthians, ἐθηριομάχησα, doesn't match at all, and thus makes the synagogue leaders very unlikely to be the 'wild beasts' that Paul alludes to. A final argument in favor of the figurative meaning is that in the detailed listing of sufferings mentioned in 2 Cor. 11:23-29, no mention is made about fighting wild beasts at Ephesus.

What we must conclude is that a serious confrontation, perhaps violent confrontation, occurred while Paul was in the city and prior to the writing of this letter. Luke, for unknown reasons, chose not to include this episode in his depiction in Acts 19. The figurative meaning of θηριομαχέω in ancient literature -- it is only used here inside the NT -- does normally denote violent confrontation with an opponent or opponents. But what that may have been in Paul's experience in Ephesus remains a mystery.

The apodosis makes the central point in regard to this scenario: τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; **What's the point?** The meaning here becomes clear in the first class conditional sentence that follows:

εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται,  
**φάγωμεν καὶ πίνωμεν,**  
 γὰρ  
**αὔριον ἀποθνήσκομεν.**  
 Since the dead are not being raised,  
**let's eat and drink**  
 for  
**tomorrow we die.**

The protasis εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται repeats the protasis in v. 29b εἰ ὅλως νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, linking the issue back to the core issue πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινας ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; **How are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?** in v. 12. If the denial of resurrection being made by the elitists in Corinthians is correct, then Paul's risking his life to preach the risen Christ is foolishness! In one allusion here in the apodosis, Paul picks up on both an OT episode and several sarcastic references to the Greek philosophy of Epicureanism by others in the Greek speaking world.

In Isa. 22:12-14, many of the desperate inhabitants of Jerusalem facing the seeming destruction of their city by the Assyrians decide to 'party like there is no tomorrow.'<sup>43</sup> They had lost trust in God to deliver them

43 Isa. 22:12-14. 12 καὶ ἐκάλεσεν κύριος σαβαωθ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ κλαυθμὸν καὶ κοπετὸν καὶ ξύρησιν καὶ ζῶσιν σάκκων,† 13 αὐτοὶ δὲ ἐποίησαντο εὐφροσύνην καὶ ἀγαλλίαμα σφάζοντες μύσχους καὶ θύοντες πρόβατα ὥστε φαγεῖν κρέα καὶ πιεῖν οἶνον λέγοντες **Φάγωμεν καὶ πίνωμεν, αὔριον γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν.**† 14 καὶ ἀνακακαλυμμένα ταῦτά ἐστιν ἐν τοῖς ὠσίν κυρίου σαβαωθ, ὅτι οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται ὑμῖν αὕτη ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἕως ἂν ἀποθάνητε.†

12 In that day the Lord God of hosts called to weeping and mourning, to baldness and putting on sackcloth; 13 but instead

and turned toward immorality in a libertine kind of life style.<sup>44</sup> But the use of Isa. 22:13 also picks up on a very common condemnation of Epicureanism by its critics in the Greek speaking world of Corinth. For the Epicureans the heart of living was having fun and this came chiefly through banqueting which also included brazen sexual immorality as well.<sup>45</sup>

Paul ingeniously combines this OT Jewish episode reflecting failed trust in God with the rather sarcastic criticism of the immoral life style of the Epicureans in order to assert that if there is no resurrection these people are correct.<sup>46</sup> There is no tomorrow, and just live for today in the unbridled expression of physical desires. The elitists who depended on their Greek rea-

there was joy and festivity, killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating meat and drinking wine. **"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."** 14 The Lord of hosts has revealed himself in my ears: Surely this iniquity will not be forgiven you until you die, says the Lord God of hosts.

<sup>44</sup>Paul now quotes words of despair about a life with nothing beyond the dissolution of personal existence as the end. Is he quoting from Isa 22:13, or from an Epicurean slogan, or from an anti-Epicurean slogan which offers an ironic overstatement of Epicurean philosophy? C. D. Stanley does not include the quotation in his Paul and the Language of Scripture.<sup>243</sup> Although he omits it from his *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, Hays observes in his commentary that such scepticism as is envisaged would lead the readers to act 'like the frenzied inhabitants of Jerusalem who faced siege and annihilation at the hands of the Assyrians (Isa 22:12-14): instead of facing their fate with repentance and weeping, they decided to 'party like [i.e., as if] there were no tomorrow' ... quoted from Isa 22:13.<sup>244</sup> In practice virtually all major commentators assume or argue that Paul quotes from this passage.<sup>245</sup> The question which arises is simply whether this quotation also coincides with a quotation from hellenistic philosophical or ethical controversy. Epicureanism in its sophisticated form is more than crude materialism, but its opponents readily characterized it as such, especially in popular Stoic-Cynic circles. As Fee reminds us, Plutarch speaks of a life of 'eating and drinking' as a dissolute and empty life, with an anti-Epicurean Tendenz.<sup>246</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1252-1253.]

<sup>45</sup>One of the very interesting aspects of what Paul does with this rebuke of the Corinthian elitists here is to turn their Greek philosophy against them. From having grown up in one of the three major centers of Greek philosophical teaching in the first century world, Tarsus, he knew the teachings of the Greek philosophers as well or better than these Corinthian elitists did. Very cleverly here he uses it against them.

<sup>46</sup>The two sources together form an admirable, logical, and rhetorical bridge to vv. 33-34, as Eriksson points out. Both Isa 22:13 and 'contemporary anti-Epicurean polemic' equally 'designate the libertine life.... Paul uses it to point to the utter futility of a life without the motivation given by the resurrection of Christ.'<sup>247</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1253.]

soning to deny the resurrection can't even make good use of their pagan background, much less get the apostolic Gospel correctly. Any of these elitists who may have had a Hellenistic Jewish background would have felt additionally the sting of the quote from Isa. 22:13 as well.

Paul moves from this rather stinging rebuke of the elitists to a second one in v. 33: μή πλανᾶσθε· φθείρουσιν ἤθη χρηστὰ ὁμιλίας κακαί. **Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."** Here the apostle quotes a very popular Greek maxim in wide circulation during the first century.<sup>47</sup> Probably it originated with the philosopher Menander in a comedy play attributed to him before the beginning of the Christian era. But by the first Christian century it is widely quoted in numerous Greek and Latin sources. What is interesting about the quote is its clear link to Paul's earlier criticism of divisiveness among the Corinthians in 1:10-17. The σχίσματα, **divisions**, in 1:10 now are alluded to in this Greek philosophy quote as ὁμιλίας κακαί, **bad gangs**, in 15:33. The impact of pagan Greek thinking into the life of the church in Corinth is ruining the spiritual life of the church. Ironically, this is confirmed by a Greek maxim no less! Although in the Greek maxim ἤθη χρηστὰ, good morals, has no particular Christian thrust, Paul's use of the maxim contextually thrusts ἤθη χρηστὰ to refer to the general spiritual life and health of the church. The heart of the Corinthian elitists' failure was to not recognize God's way of thinking in contrast to the very different Greek way of thinking. They sought to combine the two and it led to disaster. In issues like resurrection, that difference was very clear and should have been clearly understood by these people at Corinth, but it wasn't.

**Concluding admonitions, v. 34.** ἐκνήψατε δικαίως καὶ μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε, ἀγνωσίαν γὰρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν, πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῶν λαλῶ. **Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.**

<sup>47</sup>“Jerome seems first to have attributed the quotation to Menander's comedy, but there is clear evidence that it had also become a popular maxim.<sup>249</sup> Paul may well have heard it cited more than once as a maxim, and we may infer neither knowledge nor ignorance of Greek literature on Paul's part from this quotation. ὁμιλία deserves a carefully nuanced translation. It does indeed denote *association, intercourse, company*, and then by extension a speech or sermon.<sup>250</sup> However, it conveys the notion of a *clique*, a group, or a 'gang' who regularly do things together and to which people 'belong.' Hence we translate **belonging to bad gangs** for ὁμιλία κακαί. The usual translation is *bad company* (NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB; as against AV/KJV, *evil communications*). But this loses the force of the peer pressure experienced from an 'in' group with which a person's life has become closely bound.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1254.]

Paul brings to a climate this segment of his defense of resurrection with a pair of blunt admonitions that build in the previous one, μή πλανᾶσθε, **stop being deceived**, in v. 33. First is ἐκνήψατε δικαίως. The clear meaning of the aorist imperative verb ἐκνήψω is literally, 'sober up!' Although only used here in the NT, the secular use defines recovering from drunkenness. Thus the figurative meaning is 'come to your senses,' even though this loses the pointed thrust of the Greek verb.

The addition of the adverb of manner δικαίως adds a certain tone to the verb that is not entirely clear.<sup>48</sup> Used just 5 times in the NT, δικαίως comes from the adjective δίκαιος, -αία, -ον with the sense of *right, just, honest*. Here as Paul's words, rather than citation of a Greek source as in the above maxim, the apostle calls upon the Corinthian elitists to realize the corrupting influence of the pagan thinking they have adopted and to abandon it totally. They must come to God's way of thinking which δικαίως alludes to.

This sense of ἐκνήψατε δικαίως corresponds to the second imperative καὶ μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε, **and stop sinning**, which is set up as synonymous parallelism here. Again there is a biting sting to Paul's rebuke. In the Greek paganism being adopted by this group of people in the church the verb ἀμαρτάνω in the prohibitive imperative of the present tense had the sense of stop living in ignorance! But the Christian definition of ἀμαρτάνω based on LXX usage alludes to failure to measure up to God's expectation (cf. Rom. 3:23). Their functioning in a figurative 'drunken stupor' religiously becomes living in ignorance from a Greek perspective. And this in spite of their feeling they were doing superior thinking to Paul's preaching of the Gospel. Thus not only is there the sting of condemnation from the Greek background of these two admonitions, but even more severe rebuke from the Christian meaning of these terms. They were completely out of touch with God and His ways!

Paul issues this pair of severe rebukes on a specific basis as defined in the causal clause (γὰρ) that follows: ἀγνωσίαν γὰρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν, πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῶν λαλῶ. **For some possess ignorance of God, to your shame I**

<sup>48</sup>“The coupling of δικαίως with *rousing oneself from drunken stupor* has been understood in two quite distinct ways, in accordance with the fact that the Greek relates *either* (a) to moral or relational *rightness* or (b) to *conformity to an appropriate norm* which need not always be specified. On the basis of the second meaning Barrett rightly observes: 'Wake up properly (δικαίως, not righteously; for this sense see Kümmel)...'<sup>255</sup> The metaphor requires an English rendering which somehow combines (a) waking to a clear mind after drunken stupor; (b) waking up to reality, i.e., *coming to one's senses*, in place of a fantasy, escapist world; (c) regaining a necessary, *proper sobriety*.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1255.]

say this. The τινες here picks up on ἐν ὑμῖν τινες, *some of you*, in v. 12 in reference to the elitists in the Corinthian church. In spite of claiming to be Christian, these people in the church are not saved believers. Instead, they are living in the delusion of not only being Christian, but be a superior one to Paul himself (cf. μὴ πλανᾶσθε in v. 33 which builds off of 2:1-16). The phrase ἀγνωσίαν... ἔχουσιν is much stronger than just the verb ἀγνοεῖν, *to be ignorant*. It denotes an utter, total ignorance, in this case, θεοῦ, *of God*.<sup>49</sup>

The final comment by Paul, πρὸς ἐντροπήν ὑμῖν λαλῶ, *I say this to your shame*, also has tones in the first century culture of honor/shame that modern readers would tend to miss. This is the second time this exact statement has been made. In 6:5, Paul's rebuke of the tendency to take fusses to the secular courts was severe. Now in 15:34, he shames them again over the issue of denying the principle of resurrection.<sup>50</sup> Modern

<sup>49</sup>“Some people” simply represents τινες, but picks up the resonance to the Greek ear of the some of 15:12 who have, in effect, been the ‘opponents’ for the whole of the treatise from 15:1 up to this point. The first word (before γάρ) in the key clause is ἀγνωσίαν. Whatever our theories about *gnosis*, *knowledge*, in this epistle, it is clearly a favorite word of ‘the strong’ at least. ‘We all have gnosis’ (8:1, in our group?) is characteristically followed by ‘But it is not the case that everyone [in the church at Corinth] has ‘knowledge’ (8:7). Some (τινες) remain more vulnerable (8:8–13). It would be easier to translate simply *some have utter ignorance of God*, which would preserve Paul's word ἀγνωσίαν and its emphasis. But the alpha privative ἀ-γνωσίαν permits the word-play on knowledge to be recognized (e.g., in Eng. unknowledge or non-knowledge; ignorance loses the resonance). To add weight to the solemnity of Paul's ringing indictment we translate γάρ, *for*, after τινες *as you see* (i.e., in a logical sense ‘**some people, you see, have an utter lack of ‘knowledge’ of God**). We need some such word as *utter* (not in the Greek) because ἀγνωσίαν ἔχειν means more than ἀγνοεῖν; in Paul and in much biblical tradition. It is often synonymous, Edwards notes, with a darkened pre-Christian state (1 Clement 59). Since it often characterizes the Gentile mind, the thought seems to be, ‘Some of you are cherishing that ignorance of God which belongs to the heathen.’<sup>2599</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1256.]

<sup>50</sup>“Not surprisingly Paul makes this an issue of what mattered perhaps most of all in a culture oriented to the scale of honor and shame (see above on 6:5, *it is to make you ashamed that I say this to you*). We have only to recall the importance of honor and self-praise, instantiated in rhetoric, benefactions, and monuments, to recall how sensitive the readers (esp. ‘the strong’) would be to praise in their honor or to accusations which would bring **shame**. Bruce Winter includes an illuminating set of contrasts placed on the honor-shame scale with reference to 1 Cor 1:26–28: ‘Status in secular Corinth: σοφοί, δυνατοί, εὐγενεῖς’ (versus τὰ μωρά ... τὰ ἀσθενῆ ... τὰ ἄγενῆ ... τὰ ἐξουθενημένα ... τὰ μὴ ὄντα), side by side with the Sophists’ list which begins ἐνδοξοί, πλούσιοι, ἡγεμόνες ... up to twelve terms.<sup>264</sup> Andrew Clarke similarly, as we have noted above, demonstrates ‘self-praise’ as “a widely accepted practice....”<sup>265</sup> Almost nothing could have brought home to the

western, and especially western hemisphere, individualism blinds us to the enormity of embarrassment felt for being publicly shamed, as Paul does through this letter against these elitists. Few actions that Paul could have taken as a spiritual leader would have had the same impact as these simple words πρὸς ἐντροπήν ὑμῖν λαλῶ. It's likely that this shaming of these people in the church produced, at least in part, the bitter feelings against Paul that he deals with in 2 Cor. 10-13.

**REFUTATIO 2, vv. 35-49.** Here in attacking the alternative view the emphasis is made through a standard Greek diatribe in which an objection to Paul's view is set up in the mouth of an objector raising questions about the apostle's position.

*iv) The nature of the resurrection body, vv. 35-57.* In this section the focus is upon describing what Paul meant by resurrection.<sup>51</sup> Although the thrust is different from the preceding sections, it is closely linked to them. The structuring of the theme introduction in v. 35 makes this very clear: Ἄλλ' ἐρεῖ τις· πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποῖω δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται; *But someone objects, “How are the dead being raised? And with what kind of body do they have?”* In Greek diatribe style, Paul introduces the contrary view of the elitists as an objection to his view of resurrection. Verses 36-57 constitute his reply to this objection. And is introduced in typical Greek rhetorical fashion with ἄφρων, *you fool!* For modern readers this seems harsh but in Paul's Greco-Roman world such blunt language in debate was normative and expected. One should note that the second singular σὺ dominates vv. 36-49 as Paul is carrying on a ‘dialogue’ with his ‘straw man’ objector set up as ἐρεῖ τις, *some one objects*, in v. 35.

Paul dismisses the objection in two *refutatio*: vv. 36-49 and vv. 50-57. These are sometimes also labeled as *confirmatio* by modern students of ancient Greek/Latin rhetoric. The more appropriate label depends

group or groups in question in ch. 15 the enormity of their attitude on their own ground. This verse thus forms the hinge to vv. 35–58, where Paul argues on the basis of the reality of God's creative and sovereign agency through Christ by the Spirit.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1257.]

<sup>51</sup>“Eriksson's recent rhetorical analysis coheres well with emphases identified in some older modern works (Weiss, Kennedy, and Robertson and Plummer) and in some more recent works (M. M. Mitchell, D. F. Watson, and Wolff).<sup>1</sup> Eriksson writes: ‘A new round of argumentation with *refutatio* and *confirmatio* starts in 15:35.... The question concerns the nature of the resurrection, the stasis of quality signaled by πῶς.... The question is more closely specified as ποῖω δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται; this puts the emphasis on the definition of the resurrection body.’<sup>277</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1258–1259.]

upon whether the dominate theme centers on exposing the wrongs of the opponent's view, or espousal of the correctness of one's own view. Here such a mixture of these two elements is present that choosing one or the other label is difficult. Thus different proposals will surface among the commentators with specialized training in ancient rhetoric. Clearly Paul closes in v. 58 with a word of praise and encouragement to his readers adopting his view of resurrection.

**The objection, v. 35.** Ἄλλ' ἐρεῖ τις· πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται; *But someone will object, "How are the dead raised? And what kind of body do they possess in resurrection?"*

15.35 Ἄλλ' ἔρεῖ τις·  
680 πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί;  
δὲ  
ποίῳ σώματι ἔρχονται;

Paul follows the standard diatribe structure that James did in Jas. 2:18 with Ἄλλ' ἐρεῖ τις.<sup>52</sup> While James crushes the objection to his principle that only working faith is saving faith, Paul in his response to this objector to the idea of resurrection affirms consequences of such a denial but without the hugely blunt attacking direct language that James uses.

The objection posed by Paul in the mouth of an objector is framed in two rhetorical questions:

πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί;  
ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται;  
*How are the dead raised?*

*And with what kind of body can they come?*

These move from the broad to the specific and thus signal how Paul is going to respond. Most of his emphasis will fall on the specific question since he has already spent considerable effort responding to the first broad question. Although cognitively the two questions at first appear to be somewhat distinct from one another, in reality the specific oriented second question builds off the premise of the first question. There has to be a resurrection action before there can be a resurrection body! Ultimately not much difference in thrust exists between the two questions. The interrogative adverb πῶς raises the issue of how such an action occurs. And the interrogative adjective ποίῳ is qualitative in meaning thus raising the issue of what is the nature of the product of this resurrection action.

<sup>52</sup>James 2:18-26 is considered by many scholars biblical and classical to be among the best constructed diatribes in ancient Greek literature. James sets up an objector to this assertion in 2:14 that only a working faith is a saving faith. In 2:18-23 he addresses this objector with devastating arguments crushing the objection. And then in vv. 24-26 he engages his readers with a switch to the second person plural forms with further destruction of any objection to his principle of 2:14.

The use of ἔρχονται as a potential present tense function is consistent with the hypothetical nature of the question, and thus is better translated as *can come*.<sup>53</sup> Paul is assuming here the coming out of the grave. The question seems to hint at an assumption that Paul's view follows the typical Jewish apocalyptic view of a physical body brought back to an essentially physical life.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps the Corinthian elitists had some familiarity with the standard Jewish apocalyptic depiction of resurrection which they found easy to dismiss as distastefully crude for an educated person. But this is not entirely clear. And for certain Paul doesn't give anything close of the usual Jewish apocalyptic answer.

<sup>53</sup>“The use of the word **come** (ἔρχονται) may seem unexpected and even puzzling: ‘Paul is probably thinking of real *coming*—out of graves, with Christ’ (Barrett’s italics).<sup>17</sup> However, we must not forget that the issue is that of conceptual and logical possibility in the mouth of the objector (probably real, possibly rhetorical). Hence it is helpful to use the English logical ‘can’: **With what kind of body can they [possibly] come?** REB’s *in what kind of body* simply refuses to take Paul’s use of *come* seriously (cf. *do they come*, NRSV, Collins; *will they come*, NIV; *do they have when they come*, NJB). ‘The real concern behind their denial ... was an implicit understanding that they meant the re-animation of dead bodies, the resuscitation of corpses.’<sup>18</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1263.]

<sup>54</sup>One should note that in the background here stands the Jewish apocalyptic literature of this era -- overwhelmingly coming out of Hellenistic Judaism in the Diaspora including the province of Asia -- which assumes that the resurrection body is composed of rearranged particles of the rotting flesh of the dead corpse.

This is all the more sharply focused when they cite evidence from Jewish apocalyptic which presupposes a view that the resurrection body is an organism composed of particles reassembled from those of the rotting or rotted corpse: “In what shape will those live who live in Thy day?... He answered and said to me.... The earth shall then assuredly restore the dead [which it now receives in order to preserve them]. It *shall make no change in their form* but as it has received, so it will restore them” (2 Baruch 49:2; 50:1–2 [my italics]).<sup>14</sup>

R. H. Charles observes that whereas some of the Pharisees prior to 2 Baruch (i.e., *Apocalypse of Baruch*, dated c. AD 75–100) believed in a transformed mode of resurrection existence, 2 Baruch insists on a crudely materialist view according to which “the earth preserves the body intact, as committed to it.”<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Charles’s note should not be taken to imply an even greater crudity than exists. Sometimes “the earth” is replaced by the notion that the earthly forms are preserved unchanged in Sheol (4 Bar. 21:23; 30:2–5, although 2 Baruch is probably a composite document). The key points are: (i) The questions of 2 Bar. 49:2 are closely similar to those of 1 Cor 15:35; but (ii) the emphasis on no change of 2 Bar. 50:2 is utterly in contradiction to Paul’s “we shall all be changed” (15:51) and “what you sow is not the body that shall be” (15:37a).<sup>16</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1262.]

**First response by Paul, vv. 36-49.** Paul's initial response is a lesson in Jewish agricultural life. He uses the analogy of a seed and a plant in order to compare both the similarities and differences of the physical and the resurrection bodies. First, he affirms God's sovereign control over all this in vv. 36-38. Then in vv. 39-41 he gives a long list of living things etc. in order to illustrate the similarities and differences. Finally, in vv. 42-49 he applies this seed / plant analogy to the physical / resurrection bodies with the emphasis on the latter.

**Death for the seed is necessary for life in the plant, vv. 36-38.**

36 ἄφρων, σὺ ὃ σπείρεις, οὐ ζωοποιεῖται ἐὰν μὴ ἀποθάνῃ· 37 καὶ ὃ σπείρεις, οὐ τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον σπείρεις ἀλλὰ γυμνὸν κόκκον εἰ τύχοι σίτου ἢ τινος τῶν λοιπῶν· 38 ὁ δὲ θεὸς δίδωσιν αὐτῷ σῶμα καθὼς ἠθέλησεν, καὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον σῶμα. **36 Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.**

15.36 ἄφρων,  
**681 σὺ ὃ σπείρεις οὐ ζωοποιεῖται**  
 ἐὰν μὴ ἀποθάνῃ·  
 15.37 καὶ  
 ὃ σπείρεις,  
**682 οὐ τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον σπείρεις**  
 ἀλλὰ  
**683 γυμνὸν κόκκον (σπείρεις)**  
 εἰ τύχοι σίτου  
 ἢ  
 τινος τῶν λοιπῶν·  
 15.38 δὲ  
**684 ὁ θεὸς δίδωσιν αὐτῷ σῶμα**  
 καθὼς ἠθέλησεν,  
 καὶ  
**685 ἐκάστῳ τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον σῶμα.**

One thing that should be remembered by north American readers<sup>55</sup> of this biblical text is the much higher level of bluntness and directness in the first century cultural world of both Jews, Greeks, and Romans. It was much more direct than many traditional modern European cultures of today. And in the Greek world of polemics using insulting labels for one's opponents was both normative and expected but did not trigger the emotional reaction that would happen in today's society. Thus when Paul addresses his objector by calling him a ἄφρων, that is, someone who has lost his mind,

<sup>55</sup>This is even more important for readers coming from an Asian background where politeness is the rule always.

the Corinthian readers heard this as a signal of the beginning of the apostle's response, not as any kind of personal insult.

This attention getting device puts the readers on guard. Why was he foolish? But it becomes clear from the subsequent statements that foolishness lies in failing to realize the necessity of death to life as made clear by seeds and plants. This agricultural metaphor was rather commonly applied to human life in the secular world of that day, although not quite the way Paul develops the metaphor.

The two agents in the sowing process are the individual sowing the seed and God who turns the seed into a living plant through its dying in the ground. Clearly the important agent here is God who does the miracle of turning death into life.

After asserting the principle of planting a seed in the ground where it 'dies' in order to come to life as a plant, Paul takes the logic to the next step: One plants seeds, not fully developed plants: καὶ ὃ σπείρεις, οὐ τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον σπείρεις ἀλλὰ γυμνὸν κόκκον εἰ τύχοι σίτου ἢ τινος τῶν λοιπῶν· **And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.** The very rare NT use of a future tense participle γενησόμενον, what it is going to become, is quite appropriate here. One hopes that the seed will sprout into a certain kind of plant, but it must begin as a bare seed (γυμνὸν κόκκον) and go through the 'dying' process for that to happen. This is true whether the seed is an ordinary grain of wheat, τύχοι σίτου, or some kind of other seeds, ἢ τινος τῶν λοιπῶν. The central point here is both the continuity and discontinuity between the seed and the subsequent plant. They are both connected and yet disconnected. A plant doesn't look like the seed, and the seed doesn't resemble the plant. Yet one comes out of the other. In his unusual use of τὸ σῶμα to refer to the plant in the analogy, Paul strongly points beyond the analogy to the

application of the resurrection body in its linkage to the physical body.

The miracle in the analogy is the necessity of the seed dying before the plant can live. How does this happen? Out of his Jewish heritage, Paul affirms pointedly that this is a miracle of the sovereign God: ὁ δὲ θεὸς δίδωσιν αὐτῷ σῶμα καθὼς ἠθέλησεν, καὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον σῶμα. **But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.**<sup>56</sup> The God who created all seeds is the God who turns the seed

<sup>56</sup>The tendency of a few post Cartesian commentators to read a Cartesian dualism into this, i.e., γυμνὸν κόκκον = bare soul / τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον = clothed resurrection body, is completely false and irrelevant here.

into a plant through its ‘dying.’<sup>57</sup> The Corinthian elitists who may or may not have acknowledged this would not have come to this conclusion out of their pagan religious heritage. But for Jews and Christians such is a given.

That God gives a distinct form to each plant, ἐκάστω τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον σῶμα, is given in language again thacreating diversity in His new age.<sup>58</sup> But this stretches

<sup>57</sup>“If, writes Kennedy, we ask what is the link between the **bare grain** of the old creation or old order and the ‘body’ (σῶμα) of the new, Paul provides ‘the only one [answer] we can expect him to give.... ‘The sovereign power of God.’ ‘He giveth it a **body** according as he willed’ (ἠθέλησεν); ‘the aorist denotes the final [i.e., purposive] act of God’s will, determining the constitution of nature’, so Edwards ad loc. admirably.<sup>24</sup> The present force of δίδωσιν stands in contrast to the aorist of ἠθέλησεν. The aorist in this context denotes ‘not ‘as he wills’ (according to his choice or liking) but in accordance with his past decree in creation, by which the propagation of life on earth was determined from the beginning (Gen 1:11, 12; for the verb cf.... 12:18).<sup>25</sup> Thus REB’s *of his choice* is too bland; NIV’s *as he has determined* is better, recalling the decrees of creation, but misses the purposive aspect, which will be explicated in vv. 39–42. God’s decree was made in the light of the purpose or role which he assigned to each of his creatures. A broad comparison with examples in BAGD but more especially a comparison with the issue of how God apportions gifts to believers within the body of Christ’s church καθὼς ἠθέλησεν (12:18) will corroborate this point (see above on 12:18). Differentiation in accordance with God’s sovereign decree in relation to his future purposes remains a fundamental principle of the ‘ordering’ (15:24–28; 14:40; 12:4–11), whether of the old creation or the new. The use of καθὼς underlines the comparative explication: **just as he purposed**.<sup>26</sup> The position of ὁ δὲ θεός at the beginning of the sentence is properly emphatic: *it is God who gives (to) it a body*.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1264–1265.]

<sup>58</sup>“The καί before ἐκάστω also has an explicative force, denoting namely or that is (i.e.). It is important to note that ‘the singular [of σπέρμα, seed] is used collectively’ of grains or kernels sown; hence when the plural occurs (as here) it often denotes kinds of seeds.<sup>27</sup> English offers parallels in such words as *cheese* or *fruit* where novelists will often write of *cheeses* or *fruits* to denote a bountiful provision of kinds of fruit and types of cheese. The use of ἴδιον σῶμα, **its own particular body** (with REB; cf. *its own body*, NRSV, NIV; *but its own kind of body*, NJB), ranks almost equally in emphasis with God. The key phrase remains **God gives to it a body just as he purposed**, but the second principle is that of contrast, *differentiation*, and *variety* which simultaneously promotes a continuity of identity. This is one reason why ‘order’ becomes so important for chs. 12, 14, and 15: *genuine differentiation and variety* reflects the will of God, provided that it does not collapse into sheer confusion and the loss of the very identity which preserves *the otherness of the other as other* and not a mere replication or projection of ‘the strong’ within any group. If, as Cullmann declares, ‘the Spirit is the anticipation of the End in the present,’ it is not difficult to see why the parallel between 15:38 and 12:18 is so important.<sup>28</sup>” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerd-

over into this age as well from Paul’s parallel statement in 12:18, *συνὶ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τὰ μέλη, ἐν ἑκάστων αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ σώματι καθὼς ἠθέλησεν*. But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

**God’s ordered diversity in things and people, vv. 39-41.**

39 Οὐ πᾶσα σὰρξ ἡ αὐτὴ σὰρξ ἀλλ’ ἄλλη μὲν ἀνθρώπων, ἄλλη δὲ σὰρξ κτηνῶν, ἄλλη δὲ σὰρξ πτηνῶν, ἄλλη δὲ ἰχθύων. 40 καὶ σώματα ἐπουράνια, καὶ σώματα ἐπίγεια· ἀλλ’ ἑτέρα μὲν ἡ τῶν ἐπουρανίων δόξα, ἑτέρα δὲ ἡ τῶν ἐπιγείων. 41 ἄλλη δόξα ἡλίου, καὶ ἄλλη δόξα σελήνης, καὶ ἄλλη δόξα ἀστέρων· ἀστὴρ γὰρ ἀστέρος διαφέρει ἐν δόξῃ. 39 Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory.

686	<sup>15.39</sup> Οὐ πᾶσα σὰρξ ἡ αὐτὴ σὰρξ ἀλλ’
687	ἄλλη μὲν ἀνθρώπων, δὲ
688	ἄλλη σὰρξ κτηνῶν, δὲ
689	ἄλλη σὰρξ πτηνῶν, δὲ
690	ἄλλη ἰχθύων.
	<sup>15.40</sup> καὶ
691	σώματα ἐπουράνια, καὶ
692	σώματα ἐπίγεια· ἀλλ’
693	ἑτέρα μὲν ἡ τῶν ἐπουρανίων δόξα, δὲ
694	ἑτέρα ἡ τῶν ἐπιγείων.
695	<sup>15.41</sup> ἄλλη δόξα ἡλίου, καὶ
696	ἄλλη δόξα σελήνης, καὶ
697	ἄλλη δόξα ἀστέρων· γὰρ
698	ἀστὴρ ἀστέρος διαφέρει ἐν δόξῃ.

Now Paul elaborates on the wide diversity ordered by God in creation. Notice from the diagram how these are grouped. Statement 686 is the header declaration of diversity with the use of σὰρξ, **flesh**, that most immediately applies to the animal world of living creatures in #s 687-690. In shifting to inanimate objects beginning in statement 691, the term shifts to the plural σώματα, **bodies**. Statements 691-694 transition from animals to

the celestial ‘bodies’ which are contrasted then in statements 695-698. With the shift here to δόξα the emphasis shifts to outward appearance with distinct tones of radiance. But the core principle remains the same: God has created items of great diversity and yet they all stand as His creation. Vv. 39-41 become an amplification of the concluding statement in v. 38: καὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον σῶμα, and to each of the seeds its own body, in a context broader than just seeds and plants.

The connection between the three key terms used in this series σὰρξ—σῶμα—δόξα underscores the principle of continuity and discontinuity that is important to the depiction of the resurrection body. First σὰρξ is the stuff out of which a σῶμα is made with an emphasis upon the physical, while δόξα is the outward appearance of the σῶμα that has shape and form. This triad of inner connected terms forms the heart of Paul’s answers to the objector’s two questions in v. 35.<sup>59</sup> The point seems to be the stress on continuity and discontinuity with the emphasis here on the individual’s resurrection body being distinct to who he was in his/her physical body. In this the apostle distances himself from the crude Jewish apocalyptic teaching of resurrection as duplication of the physical body for eternity.<sup>60</sup> But at the same time he rejects the idea of some ethereal ‘spiritual’ body with little or no connection to the physical body. The resurrection body is a real σῶμα with individual distinctives that have links to the previous earthly body but at the same time is unique and not just a reproduction of the physical body.

In the first grouping, v. 39, Paul contrasts the differences between humans (ἀνθρώπων), animals (κτηνῶν), birds (πτηνῶν), and fish (ἰχθύων). This is a rather typical listing found across ancient literature. Also the repeated use of elliptical ἄλλη for ἄλλη σὰρξ stresses distinctions within the framework of commonality.

In the middle transition section in v. 40, he switches over to ἑτέρα for ἑτέρα σώματα which denotes an entirely different form or shape between σώματα ἑπουράνια and σώματα ἐπίγεια. Although most modern western languages are not equipped with vocabulary

<sup>59</sup>“With the help of the series of concepts σὰρξ—σῶμα—δόξα, ‘flesh—body—luster,’ Paul seeks to show that the resurrection from the dead is ontologically possible; that is, he answers the question πῶς; = πῶς σῶματι; ‘how? = with what kind of body?’” [Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 281.]

<sup>60</sup>Endless arguments are recorded in some of this literature over whether a person would have a severed finger restored in the resurrection, at what age would the resurrection body be formed: what it looked like at physical death or at the peak of one’s youth or old age. On and on these arguments went, based on this very false idea that resurrection is but the reformation of the physical body.

to easily signal these shifts as was both classical and koine Greek,<sup>61</sup> the contrast is very pointed. The emphasis now moves from content (σὰρξ) to the shaped form (σώματα) of the content. With the foundational issue being over the earthly body and the resurrection body Paul stresses a profound difference between the two entities with the language of v. 40. The two adjectives ἐπίγεια / ἑπουράνια nicely draw this contrast for Paul. To be sure commentators since the second century have argued over the implications of this contrast, and especially with the sense of ἑπουράνια.<sup>62</sup> Within the metaphor Paul clearly is alluding to those entities one can see in the sky, as v. 41 elaborates.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup>If in Greek I wanted to stress that both humans and dogs belong to the animal world, the Greek pronoun ἄλλος would be appropriate. That is both are animals although different kinds of animals. But ἕτερος with be required in referencing a human and an oak tree. The only commonality here would be ‘living’ while the differences far outweigh this very secondary point of commonality.

<sup>62</sup>“The meaning of σώματα ἑπουράνια (v. 40) has been debated since the patristic era. The Greek simply means *existing in heaven* in contrast to ἐπίγεια, *existing on earth* (ἐπί + γῆ, ἐπί + οὐρανός). But οὐρανός includes (1) the sky above the earth; (2) the sphere of clouds and stars; (3) the abode or sphere of God and angels; and (4), in conjunction with earth, that which denotes the whole universe as a complete entity created by God. BAGD provide instances of authors and texts which demonstrate each.<sup>42</sup> Thus ἑπουράνιος in lexicographical terms includes (1) the dwelling or sphere of God or Christ (esp. 1 Cor 15:48–49; cf. Heb 12:12); and (2) the sphere in which the sun, moon, and stars are located (BAGD cite 15:40 in the light of 15:41); as well as (3), more widely or generally, heavenly things or heaven (2 Cor 12:2; Heb 8:5).<sup>43</sup> In the light of v. 41, it might seem obvious that v. 40 alludes to the sphere of the sun, moon, and stars. However, some interpreters object that Paul would not use σῶμα of an impersonal entity, and that to apply this to astronomical ‘bodies’ either imports a modern meaning of σῶμα or presupposes a view of astral bodies as quasi-personal, as reflected in some non-Christian first-century religions. Meyer and Findlay, among others, argue this forcefully, insisting that Paul alludes to bodies of angels in v. 40, appealing to supposed parallels in Matt 22:30 and Luke 20:36.<sup>44</sup>” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1268.]

<sup>63</sup>“In view of the debate, we have translated the controversial Greek term as **super-earthly bodies** to allow for the wide semantic range of the Greek and the natural contextual influence of v. 41 (cf. NRSV, NIV, NJB, REB, *heavenly bodies*). However, if (1) we follow Schweizer in insisting that in 15:38 body ‘comes close to meaning ‘form,’ (2) we accept that Paul replies to his objectors at this point in terms of the currency which they use, and (3) we recognize that body is used on occasion of inorganic or impersonal entities in Greek writers of Paul’s own day, this leaves no problem in assuming that the primary reference of super-earthly bodies is stars and planets, even if Paul does not explicitly exclude possible allusion to angelic beings.<sup>48</sup>” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1269.]



This allows the apostle to focus on the resurrection body in its outward appearance (δόξα) by association of it with the celestial bodies of the sun (ἡλίου), moon (σελήνης), and stars (ἀστέρων). Note also his return to the pronoun ἄλλη that stresses distinction within the framework of commonality. Thus we have a natural allusion to the resurrection body from a first century world perspective. The sun, stars, and moon can be seen but not a lot about them is known. Jesus in His resurrection body was seen, ὤφθη, by individuals on earth (vv. 5-7) but not a lot was known about this body, beyond it having a connection to his earthly body while also being very different from it. Couple this with the adamant assertion that the believer's resurrection body is both similar to yet distinct from that of Christ and one can see the logic of Paul's argument very easily.<sup>64</sup>

**Summing up in application, vv. 42-49.**

42 Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ· 43 σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ· σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει· 44 σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν.

<sup>64</sup>This is the natural sense of Paul's analogy in contrast to some futile attempt to link the celestial entities here to certain Greek philosophical views of the sun etc. representing the immortal souls in eternity after death separates the soul from the body at death.

We remain unconvinced, however, by Dale Martin's proposal that Paul alludes to heavenly bodies in the sense found in certain traditions of Greek philosophy from the pre-Socratics to Origen, namely, that of immortal souls clothed in a substance of glory akin to that of the sun or the stars.<sup>49</sup> In the Timaeus Plato speculates about a rearrangement of the elements of earth, water, air, and fire in such a way that fire now dominates.<sup>50</sup> A first-century inscription does indeed read, "Do not weep for me.... For I have become an evening star among the gods."<sup>51</sup> Martin compares this with the "shining" of the righteous in Dan 12:3. Nevertheless, two objections among others are substantial. (1) As we commented in relation to Héring, the issue moves from substance in v. 39 to form in vv. 40-41.<sup>52</sup> (2) In vv. 42-57 it becomes clear that spiritual does not mean "composed of spirit" (in the sense of substance) but transformation in accordance with the moral and theological character of the Holy Spirit within the context of sin, salvation, and the splendor of holiness. Martin's analysis leaves no room for the decisive turn of Paul's argument in v. 44 (see below) and misconstrues the nature of glory or splendor for Paul.

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1269.

Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν. 45 οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται· ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν. 46 ἀλλ' οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικόν ἀλλὰ τὸ ψυχικόν, ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν. 47 ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. 48 οἶος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἶος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι· 49 καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ. 42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Now Paul moves to a summing up of his figurative based arguments for resurrection with specific application to the resurrection body itself. Here the details move beyond the comparisons to the surrounding

699 15.42 Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν.

700 σπείρεται  
ἐν φθορᾷ,

701 ἐγείρεται  
ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ·

702 15.43 σπείρεται  
ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ,

703 ἐγείρεται  
ἐν δόξῃ·

704 σπείρεται  
ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ,

705 ἐγείρεται  
ἐν δυνάμει·

706 15.44 σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν,

707 ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν.

708 Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν,  
ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν.

709 15.45 οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται·  
ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ  
εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν,  
εἰς πνεῦμα  
ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ...ζωοποιοῦν.

15.46 ἀλλ'

710 οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικόν (ἔστιν)

711 ἄλλα  
τὸ ψυχικόν (ἐστὶν),  
ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν (ἐστὶν).

712 <sup>15.47</sup> ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος (ἐστὶν) χοϊκός  
ἐκ γῆς,

713 ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος (ἐστὶν)  
ἐξ οὐρανοῦ.

714 <sup>15.48</sup> οἶος ὁ χοϊκός,

715 τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί,  
καὶ

716 οἶος ὁ ἐπουράνιος,

717 τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι·

<sup>15.49</sup> καὶ  
καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ,  
718 φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ.

physical world in order to center on the moral and spiritual aspects of this awaited body for eternity. In this summary he picks up some the language of the previous comparisons, e.g., σπείρεται, *sowing*, ἐπουράνιος, *celestial* et als. Statement 699 as an elliptical statement without a verb functions as a header for this unit of text.

The internal thought flow is clear with just a glance at the diagram. First in statements 700-704 the contrast between the earthly body and the heavenly body is drawn via the contrastive verbs in the seed / plant analogy (vv. 36-37): σπείρεται / ἐγείρεται contrast. The core term on continuity is σῶμα for both sides of the contrast. One should remember that **σῶμα** as referencing the body denotes the idea of outward form and shape.

The distinctions are made through opposing adjective modifiers as is charted out below:

<b>σπείρεται</b> ==>	<b>σῶμα</b> ==>	<b>ἐγείρεται:</b>
ἐν φθορᾷ,		ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ
ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ,		ἐν δόξῃ
ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ		ἐν δυνάμει
ψυχικόν,		πνευματικόν

Verse 44b comes back to reinforce these distinctions with a first class conditional statement: Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν. *Since there is a physical body, there also is a spiritual body.*

This transitional sentence then sets up the second part of this unit (statements #s 709-718) in vv. 45-49. Here the background foundation for comparisons of these two existences is the earlier Adam and Christ in vv. 21-22. The physical existence with its negatives comes from Adam, but spiritual existence with its positives comes through Christ.

*Sowing and raising up, vv. 42-44.* 42 Οὕτως καὶ ἡ

ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ· 43 σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ· σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει· 44 σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν. Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν. 42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

The self-contained unit is very well defined with a header (v. 42a) and a conclusion oriented affirmation (v. 44b). Between is a series of contrasts

built off the σπείρεται, *sowing* / ἐγείρεται, *being raised*, contrasts of the σῶμα, *body*. The contrasts move toward the climatic difference of ψυχικόν / πνευματικόν in v. 44.

The header in v. 42a defines this unit as an application of the previous discussion reaching back to v. 1, but especially vv. 37-41: Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. *So also the resurrection of the dead.* Interestingly instead of using the noun ἔγερσις from the verb ἐγείρεται repeated in this unit, he instead uses ἀνάστασις. Both nouns mean to come up, either ἔγερσις as raised up or ἀνάστασις as stood up. But ἔγερσις is only used once in the entire NT (Mt. 27:53) and there with the meaning of resurrection. But ἀνάστασις is used 42 times in the NT with all but one designating resurrection. It is Paul's noun for resurrection with the four uses in First Corinthians here in chapter fifteen: vv. 12, 13, 21, 42. Thus no special significance can be attached to the use of this particular noun since it is the commonly used noun for resurrection throughout the NT.

On the negative side, the σῶμα as physical body has several characteristics:

σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, *is sown in perishability*  
σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, *in sown in dishonor*  
σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, *is sown in weakness*  
σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, *is sown a sensual body*

The image of σπείρεται, *is sown*, plays off the seed analogy in vv. 36-37 and refers to the physical death of the body. At death, the physical body carries these traits. The prepositional phrase ἐν φθορᾷ denotes decay and eventual destruction.<sup>65</sup> Thus the body over time decays

<sup>65</sup>“The first major contrast or component of *discontinuity* is marked by ἐν φθορᾷ ... ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ. It is customary for exegetes to understand this simply as a contrast of duration: *perishable* ... *imperishable* (NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB); *in corruption* ... *in incor-*  
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and moves toward extinction.

Second the physical is sown ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, **in dishonor**.<sup>66</sup> Context plays an important role in understanding the

*ruption* (AV/KJV): *in mortality ... in immortality* (Collins). This entirely reflects the meaning of ἀφθαρσία in lexicography, where most instances denote *incorruptibility, immortality*, e.g., in Philo, Plutarch, Ignatius, and LXX (Wisdom, 4 Maccabees).<sup>58</sup> However, since 1964 I have consistently held that φθορά is the term within the semantic opposition that carries the decisive content, in relation to which the contrast is signaled by the alpha privative. φθορά denotes ‘decreasing capacities and increasing weaknesses, issuing in exhaustion and stagnation,’ i.e., in a state of **decay**.<sup>59</sup> In the LXX φθορά regularly translates either of two Hebrew words: שָׁחַת (*shachat*) and כָּבַל (*chebel*). The force of שָׁחַת and its cognate forms conveys not only destruction or termination but also mutilation. In the Niph’al it may denote to be marred, spoiled, while the Hiph’il form means to pervert or to corrupt (in a moral sense).<sup>60</sup> The semantic contrast to such decay would not be permanence or everlasting duration, but ethical, aesthetic, and psychosocial flourishing and abundance, even perhaps perfection, and certainly fullness of life. The second Hebrew word, כָּבַל, denotes a semantic range beginning with vapor or breath and extending through to vanity, emptiness, fruitlessness. The full force of the word finds expression in Isa 49:4: ‘I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity’ (NRSV).<sup>61</sup> The semantic contrast now lies with the purposive progression of dynamic life-processes, in which satisfaction or delight is based on what is substantial and solid.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1271–1272.]

<sup>66</sup>“The semantic opposition of the first half of v. 43 does not merely negate and affirm precisely the same quality or disposition, and the contrast between ἀτιμία and δόξη can be misunderstood in more than one way. While the Greek negative noun often means *dishonor, disgrace, shame* (BAGD) and is usually translated *dishonor* (NRSV, NIV, AV/KJV), many German commentators associate the word more specifically with **humiliation** or a *lowly position* (Lange, Niedrigkeit), with *misery, pitifulness* (Wolff and Langee, *Jämmerlichkeit*), or with *troublesomeness, lamentation, and complaint* (Wolff, Kläglichkeit).<sup>65</sup> However, Fee and REB rightly recognize that **humiliation** includes either or both of the two distinct senses that may stand in contrast to glory or to splendor: (a) that which corresponds to Paul’s use of τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν, *the body of our humiliation*, i.e., *of our lowly state*, in Phil 3:21 (the same context of pre-resurrection and post-resurrection modes of existence); and (b) the shame-honor contrast which we might expect in opposition to δόξα, *splendor*.<sup>66</sup> The former understanding includes the sense of *mourning, sorrow, frailty, and grief* which finds a paradigm in sudden death and bereavement in the midst of life. The latter calls attention to association with sinful desires and habituated actions which were performed in the ‘old’ body, but from which the raised body will be entirely free. NJB’s *contemptible* too readily permits a dualist devaluation of the body, or else commits us exclusively to (b). However, it is likely that broader nuances are at issue, for which **humiliation** offers the most appropriate understanding, and Liddell-Scott-Jones provide instances of this wider meaning of the Greek outside the New Testament.<sup>67</sup>” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1273–1274.]

thrust of this trait. It stands as the opposite of ἐν δόξῃ, in glory. This imposes some limits on the meaning of ἀτιμία which itself is lexically the opposite of τιμή with the meaning of honor or respect. The noun ἀτιμία is a Pauline term inside the NT with six uses: Rom 1:26; 9:21; 1 Cor. 11:14; 15:43; 2 Cor. 6:8; 11:21; 2 Tim. 2:20. A wide range of translation words is used by the NRSV for these six instances: *degrading, ordinary, dishonor, shame*. Most likely here the sense of **humiliation**, especially from sin, is at the heart of the intended meaning. In the background stands the honor / shame principle of Paul’s world in which sin compounds into dishonor for the physical life.

Third, this body is sown ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, **in weakness**. In a world where disease and sickness are typically life threatening experiences, the weakness or vulnerability of the physical body is quite obvious.<sup>67</sup> This continues to develop the picture of decay and humiliation from the first two traits.

The fourth trait, σῶμα ψυχικόν, plays off the adjective ψυχικός, -ή, -όν, with 6 NT uses and referring to that which relates to the physical and sensory world. In 2:14, Paul uses ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος in reference to an individual focused on this world in contrast to the spiritual realities from God. The use of the English ‘physical’ to translate ψυχικόν is inadequate. Especially since it stands as the opposite of σῶμα πνευματικόν, **a body produced by the Holy Spirit**. The use in Jude 19 is helpful: Οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ ἀποδιορίζοντες, ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες. **These are the divisive people, worldly and not possessing the Spirit**, Paul’s point in 15:44 is to emphasize that at death the body still is essentially a depraved body which has no place in God’s eternal plan.

<sup>67</sup>“The second semantic opposition of this verse (which is the third of the four in vv. 42–44) raises less difficulty. The contrast between ἀσθένεια and δύναμις is equivalent to Eng. **weakness-power**. **Weakness** explicates further the theme of decay (v. 42) and humiliation (v. 43a). Decreasing capacities in psychophysical life begin from the moment brain cells die and habituated conduct blocks capacities to re-create and to move in novel directions. The insight of existentialist philosophers that human persons experience limitations through their own past decisions coheres entirely with Paul’s understanding of created personhood. Just as **power** in this epistle repeatedly denotes the capacity to carry through purposes or actions with operative effectiveness, so **weakness** denotes an incapacity to achieve such competency and the spiral of consequent frustration and deenergization through maximal unsuccessful effort and distraction.<sup>69</sup> In Paul’s analysis of the human condition in this epistle, aspirations toward self-affirmation become self-defeating unless they stand within the sphere which is transformatively energized by the power of the cross. In the pre-resurrection mode of existence, however, the new creation always remains tarnished and weakened by imperfections in realizing this goal with finality.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1274.]

The collective picture of the physical body in this life is dark and negative, especially when viewed from the spiritual angle. It stands as a part of this corrupted, sin filled world and thus is completely unqualified for eternity. The elitists at Corinth would most likely have agreed with most, if not all, of this assessment of the physical body. But what they took issue with is the other side of this contrastive equation that Paul sets forth.

On the positive side of each of these four sets of traits is an affirmation of the resurrection body that emerges from death by the miracle of God.

Whereas the σῶμα in its physical condition is ἐν φθορᾷ, the resurrection body emerging from it after death is ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ.<sup>68</sup> What is subject to decay and destruction now will be turned into just the opposite in eternity. That is, a body that never decays and that lasts for all eternity.

Also as the body in this life exists ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, in the life to come our bodies as believers will exist ἐν δόξῃ. Against the shame/honor traditions of Paul's world, the humiliation of this life will be transformed into the radiance of God's very presence in Heaven. Sin takes its toll on our bodies now, but they will be brought to their full capacity as a product of God's work in eternity.

Thirdly, we all know the weakness of our physical bodies in this life with the ravages of sin, sickness, and disease. But in the resurrection all this will be banished forever and we will be fully able to honor God the way He deserves ἐν δυνάμει.

Finally, our physical life now is bound to this world and limited by it as a σῶμα ψυχικόν. But in the resurrection God, working through the Holy Spirit, will create a brand new body fully suited to eternal life with the Heavenly Father.<sup>69</sup> One must remember here that the

<sup>68</sup>One side note here that is important. the threefold repetition of ἐγείρεται, is raised, does inherently assume a timeline of whether this happens soon after death or at the second coming of Christ. Here Paul is contrasting characteristic traits between physical existence and eternal existence. But elsewhere in this chapter he does make it clear that resurrection is connected to the second coming of Christ, just as he already has affirmed in 1 Thess. 4.

<sup>69</sup>“The key issue hinges on the respective understandings (and respective translations) of the major contrastive Greek words σῶμα ψυχικόν and σῶμα πνευματικόν. I have no doubt whatever that Paul uses the adjective πνευματικός in its regular Pauline sense to denote that which pertains to the Holy Spirit of God. However, a number of VSS and writers suggest different conclusions. One of several relevant factors concerns the relation between this verse and v. 50. Traditionally it was often assumed that the acknowledgment that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (v. 50) presupposed the problem of how ‘physical’ bodies could enter the sphere of heaven. Jeremias convincingly disposed of this mistaken understanding in his well-known study of this verse when he argued that flesh and blood here refers not to a corrupted human corpse, but to human nature as such in its frailty and in its sinfulness.<sup>72</sup> The Hebrew phrase often refers to human nature in

eternal existence is defined as σῶμα, a body based existence rather than some nebulous ethereal existence like a ghost. But it is in no way the apocalyptic Jewish reorganized particles of the physical body. Instead, it is the basis of existence in eternity as recognized individuals who enjoy a life that lasts forever and is completely free of the destructive presence of sin and death.<sup>70</sup>

its frailty, whether alive or dead, in rabbinic sources.<sup>73</sup> Neither the living nor the dead can take part in the reign of God as they are, i.e., without salvific transformation. In this light it can be seen that NRSV's rendering (also REB's, surprisingly) of the semantic contrast as *sown a physical body ... raised a spiritual body* prejudices and probably distorts our interpretation of spiritual (i.e., spiritual versus physical) as against NIV and NJB's infinitely preferable *natural body ... spiritual body* (i.e., spiritual [beyond nature] versus natural).” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1275.]

<sup>70</sup>“Three possible views of σῶμα πνευματικόν now emerge, of which the first two do not stand up to close scrutiny.

(a) The late nineteenth-century view of πνεῦμα as “a transcendent physical essence, a supersensuous kind of matter” was promoted in 1877 by Otto Pfeleiderer, and developed by Johannes Weiss in terms of a ‘heavenly light substance.’<sup>77</sup> Recently it has found a new advocate in Dale Martin in connection with different worldviews held by the ‘strong’ and the ‘weak’ in Corinth. Philosophers of the time, he argues, would speak of the soul as some kind of ‘stuff,’ and astral ‘bodies’ were those in which the element of fire predominated over air, earth, and water.<sup>78</sup> In the four canonical Gospels, Martin continues, the nature of the resurrection body of Jesus Christ was not at all clear, whereas for Paul the resurrection mode of existence is to be identified with ‘the heavenly bodies’ which, in the light of vv. 44–49, recall ‘popular beliefs about the composition and hierarchy of heavenly bodies.’<sup>79</sup> At all events, his adjectives describe ‘their substance and composition’ which prove to be ‘similar’ to notions of the actual soul in popular philosophy. Pneuma is an ‘entity held in common by human beings and the stars ... a pneumatic body ... not ... composed of the heavier matter of the earth ... the substance of stars.’<sup>80</sup>

“One major difficulty which besets this view is that, as Jeremias argues concerning v. 50, Paul is not primarily addressing the question of the composition of the ‘body.’ (i) Apart from the broader hermeneutical issue, the parallel three contrasts, especially the negatives decay (v. 42), humiliation, and weakness (v. 43), do not denote ‘substances’ but modes of existence or of life. This is confirmed by (ii) the generally accepted modal use of ἐν in the sets of contrasts, as well as (iii) the widely accepted (although not decisive) lexicographical distinction between -νός endings, which often, perhaps regularly, denote composition, in distinction from -ικός endings, which regularly denote modes of being or characteristics. Kennedy, Robertson and Plummer, and more recent writers provide decisive arguments against ‘composition.’<sup>81</sup> (iv) Further, Louw and Nida distinguish no fewer than eleven semantic domains for πνεῦμα (including πνευματικός), of which in Pauline material πνευματικός most frequently and characteristically means ‘pertaining to being derived from, or being about, the Spirit.’<sup>82</sup> Thus πνεῦμα refers to both spiritual gifts and gifts from the Holy Spirit (12:1; cf. 2:13; Rom 1:11; cf. Eph 1:3; 5:19—hymns inspired by the Holy Spirit, not produced by celestial or actual wavelengths).

On rare (always non-Pauline) occasions in the New Testament, πνεῦμα may denote a ghost or spirit being (almost exclusively Mark 14:26; Luke 24:37; Acts 23:8), but such a use is generally avoided because of its association with evil spirits (Mark 9:25; cf. Mark 1:34, δαίμων).<sup>83</sup> Paul is speaking in v. 44 of a mode and pattern of intersubjective life directed by the Holy Spirit.

“(b) Even less convincing is the theory that σῶμα πνευματικόν means simply a nonphysical ‘body.’ This would offer a concession (as would [a]) to hellenistic thought, but misses Paul’s point entirely. (i) Again, as Fee observed, ‘the transformed body is not composed of ‘spirit’; it is a body adapted to the eschatological existence that is under the ultimate domination of the Spirit.’<sup>84</sup> All of the objections to (a) apply here. (ii) Further, as M. E. Dahl consistently argues, ‘σῶμα ψυχικόν = *the totality of man as created and capable of eternal life* ... σῶμα πνευματικόν = *the totality of man redeemed by the new dispensation of the Spirit and actually endowed with eternal life* (v. 44)’ (his italics) on the grounds of the difficulties of alternative views and the understanding of human persons as totalities, shared by the Old Testament and Paul.<sup>85</sup> Neither a purely ‘nonphysical’ nor merely ‘bodily’ (in any quasi-physical sense) explanation offers an adequate account of 15:44. To express it in crude terms, the totality of the mode of life of the resurrection existence in the Holy Spirit is more than physical but not less, i.e., the equivalent capacities to aesthetic and empirical satisfaction (including, with Käsemann, communicative recognition and differentiation in an intersubjective, public domain) cannot be less than those of earthly physical life if this mode of existence embraces the ‘more’ of the agency of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Creator God. Heaven is not Sheol, where earthly existence is perceived to be ‘thinned down.’

“Startlingly, since all the exegetical, theological, and lexicographical evidence is against it, Louw and Nida astonish us by placing 15:44 almost alone in a short sub-category under the heading ‘pertaining to not being physical.’<sup>86</sup> Perhaps they are unduly influenced by other foreign-language cultures, for some of which they propose ‘a body which will not have flesh and bones,’ since even a ‘body’ under the direction of the Spirit is perceived to be physical unless the nuances of Greek and Paul are explained. Elsewhere, however, they rightly note on the basis of 1 Cor 3:1 that πνευματικός denotes ‘a pattern of life controlled and directed by God’s Spirit.’<sup>87</sup>

“(c) The allusion to 1 Cor 3:1 provides an admirable starting point for confirmation of the third understanding which we have been urging. We translated the contrast between πνευματικός and σάρκινος ... σαρκικός in 3:1, 3 as ‘people of **the Spirit** ... people moved by entirely *human drives* ... *unspiritual*...’ Thus Barrett understands v. 44 to refer to ‘the new body animated by the Spirit of God.’<sup>88</sup> Bruce hints at the dimension of Christology and character by alluding here to the life-giving Spirit of v. 45.<sup>89</sup> The natural body derives its character from the Adam of creation; the body which is raised derives its character from the last Adam, Christ, who is both Lord of the Spirit and himself raised by God through the Spirit (Rom 8:11). Wolff declares, ‘The spiritual body of the resurrection (der pneumatische Auferstehungsleib) is through and through a body under the control of the divine Spirit, according to v. 45 a creation of Christ (cf. also vv. 21–22) who is ‘the life-giving Spirit.’<sup>90</sup>

“This provides a constructive connection between the salvific and ethical character of the body directed by the Holy Spirit and the character of Christ’s own raised body in later traditions of the canonical Gospels as ‘more’ but not ‘less’ than an earthly physical

body. In these resurrection traditions Jesus Christ was not always immediately ‘recognized’ (John 20:14, 15; 21:12; Luke 24:13–20) but his personal identity was recognized in terms of sociophysical gestures and characteristics (Luke 24:31; John 20:16, 20, 27–28; action, voice, hands, side). In the tradition of Luke-Acts Jesus ‘ascended’ above the clouds (Acts 1:9, 10), but in the Johannine tradition Jesus appears to have shared in the meal of fish (John 21:12, 13).<sup>91</sup> Paul’s analogies concerning the created order are the corresponding match between bodily form and purposive function (birds, fish, sun, moon, stars), which strongly, indeed surely conclusively, suggests that what counts as a body (sōma, *form*, in relation to a public context) depends precisely upon its immediate environment and purpose. When Jesus Christ appeared within the environment of our world’s space-time for the purpose of providing visible and tangible (John 20:27) evidence of his identity to witnesses as Jesus of Nazareth both raised and transformed, this ‘bodily’ mode verged on, but also transcended, the physical. In the event of the ascension (whether we regard this as a genuine event or as an event within a projected narrative world) the ‘body’ would transcend physical limitations. However, we must not become re-seduced into construing Paul’s purpose in these verses as describing the composition of the sōma. The point is, rather, that a resurrection mode of existence characterized by the reversal of decay, splendor, power, and being constituted by (the direction, control, and character of) the (Holy) Spirit would be expected not to be reduced in potential from the physical capacities which biblical traditions value, but enhanced above and beyond them in ways that both assimilate and transcend them.

“Body, therefore, affirms the biblical tradition of a positive attitude toward physicality as a condition for experiencing life in its fullness, but also assimilates, subsumes, and transcends the role of the physical in the public domain of earthly life. Hence it would be appropriate to conceive of the raised body as a form or mode of existence of the whole person including every level of intersubjective communicative experience that guarantees both the continuity of personal identity and an enhanced experience of community which facilitates intimate union with God in Christ and with differentiated ‘others’ who also share this union. If the marriage bond, e.g., ceases at death, this is also not because the resurrection body offers any ‘less,’ but because interpersonal union is assimilated and subsumed into a ‘more’ that absorbs exclusivity but ‘adds’ a hitherto unimagined depth. Such mutuality of union and respect for difference, however, presupposes a ‘pattern of existence controlled and directed by the [Holy] Spirit’ (BAGD, above), and a mode of existence designed by God for the new environment of the eschatological new creation. This may imply philosophical issues about how the raised community will freely choose such holiness of disposition, but these would take us too far beyond the text.

“On the other hand, the three pairs of contrasts—decay and its absence or reversal, humiliation and splendor, and an ordinary human body and a body constituted by the Spirit—give solid ground for conceiving of the postresurrection mode of life as a purposive and dynamic crescendo of life, since the living God who acts purposively decrees this fitting mode, rather than envisaging some static ending in which the raised body is forever trapped, as if in the last ‘frozen’ frame of a film or movie. In the biblical writings the Spirit is closely associated with ongoing vitality, which Paul takes up in v. 45b.

“Many begin a new paragraph with v. 44b.<sup>92</sup> However, the second half of v. 44 merely signals the reader, if any doubt should still remain, to reflect back upon what has been said already about the

created order and the infinite resourcefulness of God as Creator. If God can create an ordinary human body (v. 44a) among a myriad of other forms and species, is it not logical to suppose that just as there is a body for the human realm (v. 44b, σῶμα ψυχικόν, the same Greek term as v. 44a, even if translated differently into English) there is also a body for the realm of the Spirit (ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν, same Greek as v. 44a)? The one necessary exegetical caveat is to note that realm of the Spirit (i.e., πνευματικόν) does not mean primarily the nonphysical realm (although it certainly includes this), but what befits the transformation of character or pattern of existence effected by the Holy Spirit. Here the biological analogies of transforming a bare seed or grain into fruit, flower, or harvest may take on an aesthetic dimension for illustrative purposes to underline (a) contrast; (b) continuity of identity; and (c) full and radical transformation of form and character.

“Theissen notes that in contrast to the Corinthian tradition that Paul corrects in vv. 44–45 ‘the pneumatic is to be understood as goal, not as origin.... The conferral of Pneuma signifies an expansion of consciousness beyond the familiar ‘psychic’ limits.... Paul presupposes the existence of a new world.’<sup>93</sup> The dynamic, ongoing, purposive nature of this ‘new world’ is underlined by Paul’s insistence that it is characterized by love as the one disposition that survives the eschaton (13:8–13), which he already defined as purposive dynamic habituated action (13:4–7; see above on these verses). The raised body provides conditions for the meaningful experience of receiving and giving this creative love. As J. Cambier reminds us, v. 44 sums up the transformation which is introduced in vv. 37–38 —‘what you sow is not the body which shall be ... God gives ...’— and turns neither on two ‘compositions’ nor on two ‘states,’ but on ‘two tendencies, two forces....’<sup>94</sup> Paul is concerned with how the new, raised ‘body’ is ‘oriented’; and ‘the principal enemy’ which he targets is the reduced existence of the soul-shade in the ‘Sheol-Hades’ of both Jews and Greeks.<sup>95</sup> Hence he leads on to the triumph of v. 55: ‘Where, O death, is your victory?’

“By way of contrast, gnostic texts read Paul as using spiritual here in the hermeneutical sense of a ‘spiritual’ or ‘allegorical’ (i.e., metaphorical) reading of the resurrection of the ‘body.’<sup>96</sup> Irenaeus attacks such a view decisively. After quoting 1 Cor 15:36, 41–44, he alludes to the Valentinian view as understanding something different from Paul: Paul does not refer to ‘immortal spirits’ but to those in Christ who, just as Christ was raised bodily, will be made alive in ‘bodies’ different from bodies that decompose.<sup>97</sup> Tertullian distances himself from Marcion’s devaluation of the body, and Marcion’s related reading of 1 Cor 15:42–44, in the same way.<sup>98</sup> Thomas Aquinas understands the raised body to function with a multiplicity of organs or ‘parts.’<sup>99</sup> However, Luther captures Paul’s perspective well: ‘It is really the work of God.... it will not be a body that eats, sleeps, and digests, but ... has life in Him ... lives solely of and by the Spirit.’<sup>100</sup> Christ, Luther adds (on vv. 48–49), is our prototype, who devours the poison of the sin that corrupts (vv. 54–55), and the raised body therefore will be ‘endowed with a more beautiful and better form than the present one.’<sup>101</sup> ‘Be content to hear what God will do. Then leave it to Him’; ‘it will be strong and vigorous, healthy and happy ... more beautiful than the sun and moon.... We shall all have spiritual gifts.’<sup>102</sup> This is entirely in conflict with a countertradition that can be traced back to Justin: ‘we expect to receive again our own bodies, though they be dead and cast into the earth.’<sup>103</sup> In Irenaeus and in Tertullian there is ambivalence in this direction, and it conflicts with Paul’s argument explicitly in 15:36–38, 42–44, 50–54.<sup>104\*</sup>

Paul’s concluding declaration for this unit comes in v. 44b as Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν, *Since there is an earth bound body, there also is a body created by the Spirit of God.* The listing stressed discontinuity but this concluding statement is a reminder that the discontinuity exists within the framework of continuity.

*Adam and Christ, vv. 45-49.* 45 οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται· ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν. 46 ἀλλ’ οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικόν ἀλλὰ τὸ ψυχικόν, ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν. 47 ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεῦτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. 48 οἷος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι. 49 καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ. 45 Thus it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

In this second half of the larger unit of vv. 42-49 that sums up Paul’s discussion thus far, he returns to the Adam / Christ typology brought up earlier in vv. 21-22, but now with much greater detail, somewhat similar to Rom. 5:12-19 but with a different emphasis.

The internal arrangement of vv. 45-49 flows first in v. 45a out of a reference to Gen. 2:7 that provides the basis for the Adam typology which is then balanced by the Christ typology in v. 45b. This is followed by contrastive details under the two headers of Adam and Christ in vv. 46-49. The literary strategy is similar to the first section of providing contrastive details between the earth bound body and the Spirit produced body coming out of it (vv. 42-44).

First, οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται· ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, *Thus also it stands written: the first man Adam became a living being.* The introductory modifiers οὕτως καὶ, *thus also*, repeats the same phrase in v. 42 as a part of the header in this verse. It signals the opening of a new emphasis seen as application what was previously said for both units of vv. 42-44 and 45-49.

The reference to Gen. 2:7 is slightly modified for Paul’s use of it: ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν in Paul but καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν in the LXX.<sup>71</sup> The adjective πρῶτος is add-

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1276–1281.

<sup>71</sup>LXX Gen. 2:7. καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον χοῦν ἀπὸ  
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ed by Paul to amplify ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ, the last Adam, on the Christ side of the contrast. Both Paul and the LXX translate over into Greek as εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν the Hebrew idiom הַיָּהוָה שָׁנָה.<sup>72</sup> Thus the breath of God turns Adam into a living being: καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς, and God breathed into his face the breath of life. But the Hebrew says וַיִּפְחַת בְּאַפָּיִם, God breathed into his nostrils.<sup>73</sup>

Use of the combination ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ, the man Adam, underscores Adam's identity with humanity.<sup>74</sup>

τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.

**BHS Gen. 2:7**

וַיִּצְרָן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עֹפָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה  
וַיִּפְחַת בְּאַפָּיִם נְשִׁמַת תַּיִם וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ  
חַיָּה:

**NRSV Gen. 2:7.** then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground,<sup>a</sup> and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.

<sup>72</sup>“The citation is from Gen 2:7: καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν (LXX), but Paul has inserted the word πρῶτος.<sup>105</sup> Some regard the introductory οὕτως as marking an acknowledgment that Paul does not cite the LXX verbatim.<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, there is much to be said for REB's it is in this sense that scripture says.... The Septuagintal (and Pauline) use of εἰς in εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν simply reflects the Hebrew use of the equivalent ל (le). The whole of the Hebrew original, however, includes the word Adam, which LXX translates ἄνθρωπος: וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה (wayehi ha'adam lenephesh chayyah; and man/Adam became [for] a living nephesh/ψυχή/person). C. D. Stanley rightly sees this as fruitful for comparing Paul's usual citations of the LXX with his possible use of the Hebrew: ‘Nothing in either Greek or Hebrew textual traditions offers any reason to think that Paul might have the word πρῶτος in his Vorlage of Gen 2:7.’<sup>107</sup> However, the addition formalizes ‘the fundamental contrast between Adam and Christ as the πρῶτος and ἔσχατος Adam (v. 46b) that forms the backbone of the ensuing argument.’<sup>108</sup> The insertion of Ἀδὰμ, however, may not be due entirely to the shape of Paul's argument. Theodotion and Symmachus read ὁ Ἀδὰμ ἄνθρωπος in their own LXX texts. As Stanley observes, since Heb. אָדָם (Adam) serves either as a generic term for humankind or as a proper name for a male person, a dual word order in Paul and in Theodotion/Symmachus would be entirely possible and understandable: ‘Paul may not have added the proper name Ἀδὰμ to his text of Gen 2:7.’<sup>109</sup> (This also underlines that the correct MS reading in v. 45 is not that followed by B and K; see above under Textual Note).” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1281.]

<sup>73</sup>This sort of translation methodology is normative in the LXX, and did not create any problems for the writers of the NT. .

<sup>74</sup>“The corporate and representative role of Adam, however, is not exclusive to Paul or even apocalyptic, but emerges in hellenistic Wisdom texts and Philo.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, ‘the main difference between Paul and Philo arises in relation to the eschatological role of the firstborn heavenly man which also underlies Paul's phrase ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ (v. 45).’<sup>114</sup> As Goppelt observes, late Judaism had already established ‘the destructive power of Adam’ which provides the apocalyptic and soteriological backdrop for Paul ‘to demonstrate the saving power of Christ.’<sup>115</sup> ‘Paul rejects the kind of

This picks up on the parallel statements ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, for since through a man death came (v. 21) and ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, for since in Adam all die (v. 22). It is this connection that forms the basis of the old life characterization that Paul lists on the Adam column that follows. Even more precise is the later statement of Paul in Rom. 5:15b, εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς παραπτώματι οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον, for since by the trespass of the one the many died. Humanity's sinful and depraved condition comes out of Adam and envelops all people over all of human history.

Then (v. 45b), Paul adds the balancing Christ side of the characterization: ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν. the last Adam become a giver of life for the spirit.<sup>75</sup> This builds off the earlier statement in v. 22b: οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. Thus also in Christ all can be made alive. Thus the believer's resurrection experience comes out of Jesus as the risen Christ.<sup>76</sup> Only from the risen Christ can come spirit ex-

speculation about an ideal original man that is found in Philo with a remark that he inserts into ... his argument (1 Cor 15:46). He accepts the order revealed by scripture and redemptive history.... According to Gen 2:7, the first man is from the earth, whereas the second man is from heaven' (my italics).<sup>116</sup> Each ‘imprints his likeness on those under his headship (1 Cor 15:48).’<sup>117</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1282–1283.]

<sup>75</sup>“The Adam-Christ typology has already been introduced in 15:21–22, where it closely anticipates the better-known typology of Rom 5:12–19. Morna Hooker points out that in spite of difficulties of syntax, ‘the parallels and contrasts between Adam and Christ [in Rom 5:12–19] are clear: five times over, first negatively and then positively, everything which happened ‘in Adam’ is more than counterbalanced by what happens ‘in Christ.’”<sup>110</sup>

“The contrast plays a fundamental part not only in this chapter (15:20–22, 45–49) but in the whole of Paul's theology. James Dunn discusses several passages where the first and last Adam lie at the heart of Paul's thought and argument, naming especially Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:20–22, and 15:45: ‘Paul deliberately sets Jesus alongside Adam.... Adam is clearly understood in some sort of representative capacity. Adam is humankind, an individual who embodies or represents a whole race of people ... so also does Christ. Adam is ‘the type of the One to come’ (Rom 5:14) ... the eschatological counterpart of the primeval Adam.... Each begins an epoch, and the character of each epoch is established by their action.’<sup>111</sup>”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1281–1282.]

<sup>76</sup>In the Roman 5:14-19 analogy, the Christ column stresses divine grace and justification before a holy God. Note v. 19: ὥσπερ γὰρ διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοί, οὕτως καὶ διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί. For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

istence in resurrection.<sup>77</sup>

Also note the sequential importance of ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ, *the first man Adam*, and ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ, *the last Adam*. This one / two sequence will play an important role in the amplification in vv. 46-48.<sup>78</sup> The label

<sup>77</sup>“It seems probable, then, that Paul’s explication of the eschatological ‘order’ (cf. on vv. 23–28 above) and purposive sequence serves a dual purpose. (a) It underlines the need to look ahead: believers will be transformed fully into that mode of existence which characterizes Christ as Spirit (i.e., both beyond earthly horizons of imagination and beyond the destructive effects of weakness and sin). (b) It also serves as a probable polemic against any Christology which draws on the Archetypal Man theme (found perhaps among some of the more sophisticated ‘strong’) based on scraps of religious philosophy originating from hellenistic or hellenistic-Jewish ‘wisdom’ traditions or perhaps Philo’s world of thought.<sup>123</sup> Adam is no archetypal model who represents Ideal Humanity; he stands for all that is fallen and destructive. This is the very background that makes an understanding of the proclamation of the cross (1:18–25) utterly central and the ground of all hope. The cross brings reversal (cf. 1:26–31), not simply degrees of ‘advance.’ Hence v. 46 underlines the contrast between the two orders of being represented respectively by the first Adam and the last Adam, but the resurrection carries with it no ‘myth of eternal return’ but the promise of new creation. Paul does not devalue the physical, which is God’s gift, but the natural is bound up with human sin and bondage, and there is no hope of full salvation without transformation by an act of the sovereign God which entails the mediate agency also of Christ and the Spirit.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1284.]

<sup>78</sup>“Predictably, Schmithals regards the supposed interruption of v. 46 as further evidence of gnostic influence at Corinth.<sup>124</sup> We have already noted the problems which beset this view. Although we concede that it is possible to overstress the problem of ‘Realized Eschatology at Corinth,’ nevertheless this verse links gospel-grounded transformation with eschatological horizons grounded in Christ.<sup>125</sup> A surprising number of late-nineteenth-century commentaries allude here to ‘a law of progress,’ perhaps reflecting a relatively ‘new’ theological acceptance of evolutionary angles of understanding.<sup>126</sup> However, an eschatology which focuses on new creation is precisely not based on ‘a low view of progress.’ All the same, an allusion to ‘law’ remains acceptable if by this we mean the ‘order’ of the divine purpose which Paul underlines in vv. 23–28: everything in its proper order.<sup>127</sup> Eschatological discontinuity implies that the Corinthians cannot yet live as if the triumph is complete: first, the natural, everyday order of life with all its constraints and contingencies, i.e., the purely human, continues; only after that does ‘Christlikeness,’ i.e., bearing the imprint of the last Adam, become wholly transposed into following Christ in the realm of the Spirit without constraint or qualification.

“Because this very fine point relates so closely to the Corinthian view of salvation, it is scarcely surprising that the allusion to Spirit caused considerable perplexity in patristic exegesis. Ambrosiaster (followed by Grotius, Estius, and Heinrici) sees this as referring to the empowering of Christ at his resurrection by the Spirit.<sup>128</sup> Theophylact regards this as denoting the messianic anointing by the Spirit, and the use of τὸ ζῶοποιόν may have influenced the formulation of the article on the Holy Spirit as ‘the Lord, the Giver of Life’ in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. The explanation

ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ, *the last Adam*, with its clear eschatological thrust, becomes ὁ δεῦτερος ἄνθρωπος, *the second man* (v. 47) with the sequential order emphasized. Both as ἄνθρωπος stand as sources for all humanity: Adam that of a sinful body; Christ of resurrection life for eternity.

**V. 46: ἀλλ’ οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ψυχικόν, ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν. *But not first is the Spirit produced item, instead the sensual then the Spirit produced item.***

What may well stand behind this emphasis is a rejection of some form of Corinthian elitist thinking influenced from Plato where the idealized eternal order comes first and the inferior mirrored material copy comes second.<sup>79</sup> Clearly the Jewish philosopher of the first century BCE took this idea and twisted the two creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 into an eternal Adam (Gen. 1) and a human Adam (Gen. 2). Some traces of his false thinking seem to be present behind Paul denial in v. 46.<sup>80</sup> In this twisted perspective salvation be offered above, however, takes full account of Paul’s context of situation and the force of his argument at this specific point. Robertson and Plummer better convey Paul’s thought: ‘There is nothing final in the universe except God.’<sup>129</sup>”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1284–1285.]

<sup>79</sup>Walther Schmithals (Schmithals, *Gnosticism*, 169–70; cf. Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 352–56) is completely mistaken to find here a Gnostic polemic being destroyed. No developed system of Gnostic thinking existed in the mid-first century Christian communities.

Predictably, Schmithals regards the supposed interruption of v. 46 as further evidence of gnostic influence at Corinth.<sup>124</sup> We have already noted the problems which beset this view. Although we concede that it is possible to overstress the problem of “Realized Eschatology at Corinth,” nevertheless this verse links gospel-grounded transformation with eschatological horizons grounded in Christ.<sup>125</sup> A surprising number of late-nineteenth-century commentaries allude here to “a law of progress,” perhaps reflecting a relatively “new” theological acceptance of evolutionary angles of understanding.<sup>126</sup> However, an eschatology which focuses on new creation is precisely not based on “a low view of progress.” All the same, an allusion to “law” remains acceptable if by this we mean the “order” of the divine purpose which Paul underlines in vv. 23–28: everything in its proper order.<sup>127</sup> Eschatological discontinuity implies that the Corinthians cannot yet live as if the triumph is complete: first, the natural, everyday order of life with all its constraints and contingencies, i.e., the purely human, continues; only after that does “Christlikeness,” i.e., bearing the imprint of the last Adam, become wholly transposed into following Christ in the realm of the Spirit without constraint or qualification.

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1284–1285.]

<sup>80</sup>“First-century speculative interpretations of Adam and Genesis 1 agree with Paul in describing Adam as the parent of humankind, as the first man (Philo, *De Abrahamo* <sup>56</sup>; 1 Cor 15:47). However, Philo is sufficiently influenced by Plato’s theory of Forms



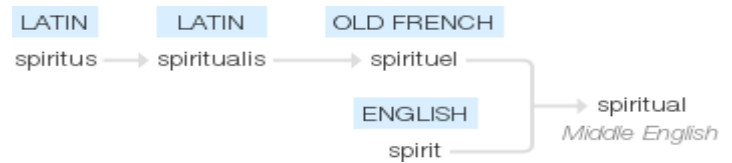
or Ideas to associate the two creation accounts in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 with two concepts of Adam. That which bears the stamp of God's image (1:26) is πνεῦμα: spiritual and heavenly. The prototype of Ideal Adam is οὐράνιος ἄνθρωπος ... κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ γεγονώς... However this 'heavenly man' who bears 'God's image' is different from the Adam who is 'earthly' (γήινος) and was 'made out of bits of matter' (ἐκ σποράδος ὕλης), which Moses calls 'clay' or 'soil' (ἦν χοῦν κέκληκεν) in Legum Allegoriae 1:31–32. As in Plato's philosophy, first comes the eternal heavenly Idea or Form; second comes the empirical, contingent, earthly copy which seeks to approximate the Form or Pattern from which it was derived. For Philo, humankind or 'man' in Gen 2:7 is an admixture of the contingent, an object of sense data (αἰσθητός ... ἐκ σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς συνεστώς), and a reaching up to the incorporeal (ἀσώματος) and incorruptible (ἄφθαρτος). On this basis, 'spirituality' could be perceived as the opposite of how Paul views it. For Paul new creation and transformation came from beyond and were constituted by the agency of the Holy Spirit, not an immanent human spirit.

"It is important to note that 'whether Paul read Philo' has little bearing on the issues. Philo, in spite of all his own idiosyncrasies as no 'representative' thinker, nevertheless was in touch with, and often reflects, religious philosophies of the day which, especially in Jewish or Christian circles, become attractive when they appear to combine sophisticated concepts with possible readings of scripture.<sup>120</sup> Recently Elaine Pagels has looked again at 'the cluster of logia that interpret Genesis 1' in the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of John. What is presupposed, she urges, is not some single 'gnostic myth' but a 'widely known and varied ... exegesis [which] connects the eikon of Gen 1:26–27 with the primordial light ... to show ... the way back to ... primordial creation' (Gen 1:3).<sup>121</sup> Pagels perceives the Fourth Gospel as directing 'polemics against a type of Genesis exegesis used by a wide range of readers, both Jewish and Christian,' and it is not farfetched to detect such a concern in Paul.<sup>122</sup>

"It seems probable, then, that Paul's explication of the eschatological 'order' (cf. on vv. 23–28 above) and purposive sequence serves a dual purpose. (a) It underlines the need to look ahead: believers will be transformed fully into that mode of existence which characterizes Christ as Spirit (i.e., both beyond earthly horizons of imagination and beyond the destructive effects of weakness and sin). (b) It also serves as a probable polemic against any Christology which draws on the Archetypal Man theme (found perhaps among some of the more sophisticated 'strong') based on scraps of religious philosophy originating from hellenistic or hellenistic-Jewish 'wisdom' traditions or perhaps Philo's world of thought.<sup>123</sup> Adam is no archetypal model who represents Ideal Humanity; he stands for all that is fallen and destructive. This is the very background that makes an understanding of the proclamation of the cross (1:18–25) utterly central and the ground of all hope. The cross brings reversal (cf. 1:26–31), not simply degrees of 'advance.' Hence v. 46 underlines the contrast between the two orders of being represented respectively by the first Adam and the last Adam, but the resurrection carries with it no 'myth of eternal return' but the promise of new creation. Paul does not devalue the physical, which is God's gift, but the natural is bound up with human sin and bondage, and there is no hope of full salvation without transformation by an act of the sovereign God which entails the mediate agency also of Christ and the Spirit."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000),

comes merely an advancement from the moral Adam to the spiritual Adam in the realization of the idealized Adam of Genesis one. This Paul totally rejects for Adam both in action and symbol stands for all that is sinful and fallen, while Christ alone represents that produced by the Spirit of God both in His person and as representative of those redeemed through the cross.



Thus it is not surprising that from patristic times to the present Paul's use of πνεῦμα, Spirit (v. 45) as equal to τὸ πνευματικόν, that produced by the Spirit (v. 46) which then is equated with both ὁ ἐπουράνιος, the one of heaven and οἱ ἐπουράνιοι, those of heaven (v. 48), has presented interpretive challenges. The creation of the word 'spiritual' completely detached from Christ and the Holy Spirit from the ancient Latin reflects the intrusion of the Greek philosophical world with its own definitions of πνεῦμα and πνευματικόν<sup>81</sup> into Christian thought<sup>82</sup> during the patristic era.<sup>83</sup> The focus shifts to

1283–1284.]

<sup>81</sup>Derived from πνέω, the verbal noun πνεῦμα means the elemental natural and vital force which, matter and process in one, acts as a stream of air in the blowing of the wind and the inhaling and exhaling of breath, and hence transf. as the breath of the spirit which, in a way which may be detected both outwardly and inwardly, fills with inspiration and grips with enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup> Whether visibly or not there resides in the word an effective and directed power which it owes, not so much to the -μα, but rather to the basic idea of energy contained in the root πνεφ—. This finds cosmologically representative expression in Plat. Phaed., 112b when in the myth about the constitution of the earth the movement of the wind and the process of breathing are compared: ὥσπερ τῶν ἀναπνεόντων αἰεὶ ἐκπνεῖ τε καὶ ἀναπνεῖ ῥέον τὸ πνεῦμα, οὕτω καὶ ἐκεῖ ξυναιωρούμενον τῷ ὑγρῷ τὸ πνεῦμα δεινούς τινας ἀνέμους καὶ ἀμυχάνους παρέχεται καὶ εἰσιὸν καὶ ἐξιόν.<sup>2</sup> From this there are logically developed and expanded the various occasional uses and nuances, both lit. and fig., acc. to the sphere or context of reality. Within these the force of πνεῦμα may be seen in its varied nature and strength." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:334–335.]

<sup>82</sup> Of the 26 NT uses of πνευματικός, -ή, -όν only two instances in 1 Pet. 2:5 are not Pauline used instances. And via Silas as the writer of First Peter the Pauline language is quite noticeable all through First Peter. The term is never used in the NT as the opposite of σωματικόν as denoting the inner life of a human being.

<sup>83</sup>Because this very fine point relates so closely to the Corinthian view of salvation, it is scarcely surprising that the allusion to Spirit caused considerable perplexity in patristic exegesis. Ambrosiaster (followed by Grotius, Estius, and Heinrici) sees this as referring to the empowering of Christ at his resurrection by the Spirit.<sup>128</sup> Theophylact regards this as denoting the messianic anointing by the Spirit, and the use of τὸ ζωοποιόν may have influenced the formulation of the article on the Holy Spirit as 'the Lord, the Giver

the achievement of the individual through disciplined effort that produces a certain status religiously that is labeled 'spiritual.' But such is radically opposite of Paul's teaching that everything about our existence as believers is the product of the working of the Holy Spirit in our life. We personally achieve nothing of lasting quality through our own efforts.

But by creating a different, non-Pauline definition of πνευματικός, -ή, -όν, the basis of salvation shifts however subtly from total dependence on Christ to our individual efforts. Often the shift is in the sense of 'supplementing' or 'adding to' the work of Christ. But apostolic teaching will not under any circumstance permit the slightest shift away from total dependence on Christ and His work as the exclusive foundation of Christian existence and hope for eternity.

**V. 47, ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ.**<sup>84</sup> *The first man is from the dust of the earth; the second man is from Heaven.* Here origins for both Adam and Christ are asserted, again in contradiction of any of the 'sophisticated' thinking of the Corinthian elitists. The preposition ἐκ denotes source or origin of something or someone. From Adam comes our connection to the earth, but from Christ comes connections to Heaven for believers.<sup>85</sup>

of Life' in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. The explanation offered above, however, takes full account of Paul's context of situation and the force of his argument at this specific point. Robertson and Plummer better convey Paul's thought: 'There is nothing final in the universe except God.'<sup>129</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1285.]

<sup>84</sup>The original wording of this verse was bothersome to copyists and others over the first several centuries. Consequently several modifications surface in the manuscripts.

Three variants are at issue. (1) Marcion changed the second man to Lord (κύριος), for reasons of theology. Tertullian explicitly attacks Marcion's changing of the text for his own purposes: "If the first was a man, can there be a second unless he were a man also? Or if the second is 'Lord,' was the first also 'Lord'?"<sup>130</sup> Here is an early witness to textual issues. (2) The AV/KJV phrase the Lord from heaven is based on the reading of א<sup>3</sup>, A, D2, K, L, and Syriac VSS. Against this, however, is ranged a decisive plurality of early text-types: א\*, B, C, D, Coptic, Bohairic (Sahidic often follows A and various Latin MSS); all rightly omit κύριος. (3) P<sup>46</sup> reads ἄνθρωπος πνευματικός, but is virtually unsupported. The common assumption is that an early scribe was influenced by having just copied this phrase in v. 46. The UBS 4th ed. text is therefore not to be doubled.<sup>131</sup>

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1285–1286.]

<sup>85</sup>Several themes are interwoven in these succinct, syntactically abbreviated verses. (1) One major strand, the fundamental one, continues to expound the theme of somatic forms: humanity as such finds its model in **the first Adam**, who was created from **earth's soil** (Gen 2:7, Hebrew and LXX) and shares the mortality

**Vv. 48-49, 48 οἷος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι. 49 καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ. 48 As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.**

In this subsequent sentence after v. 47, Paul centers on the implications for believers of the Adam / Christ comparison of origins in v. 47.<sup>86</sup> Interestingly, in and fragility of what belongs to those whose σῶμα is made from that which disintegrates into **dust** in the grave (on the Greek and Hebrew, see below). The *raised Christ*, however, belongs to, indeed provides the model for, a different order of existence. Raised by God through the agency of the Holy Spirit, **the second man** exhibits those qualities that come from heaven and shape the character and nature of the form in which those 'in' Christ (see above) will be raised. (2) A second, less central strand takes up the background of thought which we discussed under v. 46 about the potential for misunderstanding invited by non-Christian speculation about two Adams of a different kind in the type of thought on which Philo draws (whether Paul knew his writings or not). Above all, spiritual levels of existence do not mean those which draw their character from *the human spirit within, but from the Spirit of God* who is both within and beyond: *the Beyond* who is within. (3) Although Barrett, among others, warns us not to interpret these verses as a matter of moral likeness to Christ, the pronouns οἷος ... τοιοῦτοι, twice repeated, are 'correlative pronouns of character or quality' which enhance more than mere somatic form.<sup>132</sup> On this basis we use Eng. **model/models** (cf. REB, *is the pattern ... is the pattern* [v. 48]; NJB, *is the pattern*; NRSV, NIV, Collins, *as ... so ...*). The resurrection mode of existence, for Paul, is decisively shaped and directed by the Holy Spirit in accordance with transformation into the image of Christ as well as a new 'form' (15:44, 45, 49, 50–57). (4) Paul appeals to the first half of Gen 2:7 (cf. the second half in v. 45).<sup>87</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1286.]

<sup>86</sup>Hence a background is inherited in the first-century world of those familiar with scripture which projects subtle and multivalent nuances on which Paul plays. (a) **Earthly** stands implicitly in contrast to being of the **Holy Spirit** in 15:47. (b) The allusion to the material **dust** describes the σῶμα which is laid in the grave in weakness and sorrow, to disintegrate into bones and powder. (c) The whole string of nouns and adjectives with ἐκ + genitive of source or efficient cause provides a contrast in the clearest terms between the characteristics of two modes of existence represented respectively by ὁ χοϊκός and ὁ ἐπουράνιος. The latter can best be translated by **what pertains to heaven**. For heaven is not a locality as such, but the realm characterized by the immediate presence and purity of the living God in and through Christ and the Spirit.<sup>138</sup> Further, *the spiritual Man* or *the heavenly Man* smacks of the dubious 'heavenly man' speculation.<sup>139</sup> Even the allusion suggested by Barrett to the Son of Man as a heavenly figure in Dan 7:13 and 1 Enoch 46:1–3 is so fraught with complexity in contemporary debate as to be at best an uncertain background.<sup>140</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary

playing off the LXX translation of Gen. 2:7, χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, *dust from the earth*, Paul from all indications creates a new Greek adjective χοϊκός, -ή, -όν not found in the Greek literature prior to First Corinthians.<sup>87</sup>

First Paul links material humanity to Adam: οἷος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, *As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust*. The continuity of fallen humanity with Adam cannot be denied or explained away. But for the children of God another connection is critical and central: καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι, *and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven*. One should note carefully the qualitative nature of both sets of pronouns used by Paul: οἷος and τοιοῦτοι. Everything here is set up in parallels:

οἷος ὁ χοϊκός,  
τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί,  
καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος,  
τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι

The connection to Adam is more than mere materiality; it has moral tones. Similarly, the believers' connection to Christ has morality tones in reference to a similar quality of life lived by the followers of Christ.

The second half of this sentence in v. 49 then applies these connections to those who are in Christ, i.e., the 'we' in the first person plural verbs ἐφορέσαμεν and φορέσομεν.<sup>88</sup> One should note also the distinct dif-

(Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1287.]

<sup>87</sup>Such was common for ancient writers of Greek. Among the more educated writers, the ability to create a maximum number of new words while still being understood was a mark of superior knowledge and writing skills. [If you read much modern technical writing, this same trait remains in place today.] Thus Paul's creating χοϊκός, -ή, -όν from the more common noun χοῦς, *dust*, with the clear meaning 'made of dust' signaled to his Corinthian elitists that he was no dummy and unskilled in the language. Interestingly, the adjective begins surfacing in some later Greek Christian writings due to the four instances of it here in chapter 15. The more common distinction for *earthly* from οὐράνιος is γήινος ἄνθρωπος, *man of clay*, used by Philo.

<sup>88</sup>“Whether we read the future indicative φορέσομεν, **we shall wear**, or the aorist subjunctive, *let us wear*, reflects a long-standing crux. The subjunctive is supported by a wide range of early texts: P<sup>46</sup>, κ, C, D, F, G. Latin VSS, Coptic, Bohairic, Clement, the Latin of Irenaeus, Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa. The UBS 4th ed. text has the future indicative, supported only by B and a few minuscules, with the Coptic, Sahidic, Gregory Nazianzus, and a few other minor sources. NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB, RV, AV/KJV, and Barrett all follow the indicative reading, but some VSS (NRSV, NIV, RVmg, and Barrett) with a note recording the variant reading of the subjunctive. It is symptomatic of the intensity of the debate that while Conzelmann observes, ‘the context demands the indicative,’ Fee reads the subjunctive, declaring, ‘The UBS committee abandoned its better text-critical sense,’ on the ground that if the B reading makes such better sense, it is difficult to see why such a large range of texts, including the Alexandrian, should have changed it.<sup>147</sup> Metzger supports the UBS Committee's categorization of the indicative as ‘almost certain, ‘B,’ ’ on ex-

ference between the verb used here φορέω from the much more common φέρω. φορέω has the sense of ‘wearing’ beyond just the carrying idea of φέρω. This is highlighted by the two direct objects: τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, *the image/form of the ‘made of dust’* / καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου, *also the image/form of the heavenly*. In eloquent expression Paul reminds the Corinthians of still being ‘earth bound’ but also in salvation of also being ‘heaven bound.’<sup>89</sup>

Thus in this second refutatio in vv.35-49,<sup>90</sup> Paul has dramatically denied all of the twisting of the idea of resurrection set forth by the Corinthian elitists. In the pro-

egetical grounds: the text is didactic.<sup>148</sup> The debate began in the early centuries. Tertullian argues against Marcion: “He says, ‘let us wear [or bear]’ as a precept; not ‘we shall wear [or bear] in the sense of promise.’”<sup>149</sup> Chrysostom, Cyprian, and Basil appear to read the subjunctive.<sup>150</sup> Yet Theodoret decisively and probably Theodore favor the indicative, and Cyril of Alexandria appears to oscillate.<sup>151</sup> Although he follows the Latin subjunctive reading *portemus*, Thomas Aquinas cites Rom 8:29 for the promissory nature of we shall.... *Quos praescivit et praedestinavit conformes. Sic ergo debemus conformari*, i.e., we ought to be because we shall be....<sup>152</sup> The key point recognized in modern scholarship, however, is identified by Barrett: the ‘short’ *o* of the indicative and the *omega* of the subjunctive varied little, if at all, in Greek pronunciation (e.g., in dictation, or in public reading), hence ‘only exegesis can determine the original sense and reading’ (my italics).<sup>153</sup> Thus the majority of modern commentators stand with Barrett and Conzelmann.<sup>154</sup> However, the issue cannot be closed when Heinrich, Allo, Sider, Collins, and Wolff stand with Fee.<sup>155</sup> In our view, the indicative has the probability of the textual issue, which is closely parallel to Rom 5:1, *we have peace with God...*” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1288–1289.]

<sup>89</sup>“Meanwhile, the Corinthians are to remember the two sets of forces which operate. They are still *human*; indeed, they are *vulnerable, fallible, and fragile* as **wearing the image of him who was formed from earth's dust** (on the Greek vocabulary, see above). They are not yet purely ‘people of the Spirit’ but share the constraints and limitations of *being human* (cf. 1 Corinthians 8–10 and 12–14). Nevertheless, they are en route to a mode of existence wholly like that of the raised Christ in glory. Then, as Luther writes, believers ‘become completely spiritual ... live[s] solely of and by the Spirit... We shall divest ourselves of that image ... and receive another's, namely the celestial Christ's. Then we shall have the same form and essence which He now has since His resurrection.’<sup>157</sup>” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1290.]

<sup>90</sup>The use of Greek deliberative rhetorical structures by Paul follows the pattern of:

- Narratio, vv. 1-11
- Refutatio one, vv. 12-19
- Conformatio one, vv. 20-34
- Refutation two, vv. 35-49
- Conformatio two, vv. 50-57
- Peroratio, v. 58

cess, we pick up bits and pieces of this perversion of the apostolic teaching, but not enough to identify it as a unitary alternative viewpoint. Most likely different versions floated around among the house church groups oriented toward the elitist mentality opposing Paul.

**CONFORMATIO 2, vv. 50-57.** Here the emphasis shifts to the positive affirmation of the apostolic view with a tone of celebration permeating the unit of text.

**Second response by Paul, vv. 50-57.**

50 Τοῦτο δέ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσαι οὐ δύναται οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ.

λέγω· πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα, 52 ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι·

σαλπίζει γὰρ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα. 53 Δεῖ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν.

54 ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν, τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος·

κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος.

55 ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νίκος;

ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον;

56 τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἡ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος. 57 τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

50 What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I will tell you

a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

55 “Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

719 Τοῦτο φημι,  
| ἀδελφοί,  
ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσαι οὐ δύναται  
οὐδὲ  
ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ.

15.51 ἰδοὺ  
720 μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω·

721 πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα,  
δὲ  
722 πάντες ἀλλαγησόμεθα,  
15.52 ἐν ἀτόμῳ,  
ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ,  
ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι·

γὰρ  
723 σαλπίζει  
καὶ  
724 οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι  
καὶ  
725 ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα.

15.53 γὰρ  
726 Δεῖ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν  
καὶ  
727 τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν.

15.54 δὲ  
ὅταν τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν  
καὶ  
τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν,  
728 τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος  
ὁ γεγραμμένος·

15.55 κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος.  
ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νίκος;  
ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον;

15.56 δὲ  
729 τὸ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἡ ἁμαρτία,  
δὲ  
730 ἡ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος·  
15.57 δὲ  
731 τῷ θεῷ χάρις  
τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος  
διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This unit in vv. 50-57 follows the rhetorical pattern of a *conformatio* in a manner similar to vv. 20-34. Paul moves from rejecting the twisted view of the Corinthian elitists in vv. 35-49 to celebrating the correctness and implications of the apostolic view in vv. 50-57. This grows out of the objector's questions posed in v. 35.<sup>91</sup>

The internal arrangement of ideas, as displayed in the block diagram above, follow the sequence of a basic declaration in the ὅτι clause of v. 50 reaching back to the objector's questions in v. 35. Verses 51-53 elaborate this thesis declaration about resurrection. Finally vv. 54-57 celebrate the victory over death in resurrection

**Affirmation of foundation, v. 50.** Τοῦτο δέ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομησαὶ οὐ δύναται οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ. **What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.**

A small number of manuscript copies substitute γὰρ for δέ: D F G b; Mcion<sup>T</sup> Ir<sup>lat</sup> Ambst. The causal conjunction γὰρ links v. 50 back to v. 49 as a justifying statement. But the evidence overwhelmingly supports δέ which sets up vv. 50-57 as parallel to vv. 36-49. This becomes important because it impacts how Τοῦτο φημι should be understood and then translated. The NRSV "What I am saying," is inadequate both lexicographically and contextually because it favors the understanding of the γὰρ reading of the text.

The better expression of Τοῦτο φημι is "This I declare:..." The more formal nature of φημι rather than λέγω is adequately addressed. The contextual role of vv. 50-57 is more clearly affirmed.

What Paul affirms is a fundamental spiritual principle: ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομησαὶ οὐ δύναται οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ. Note the synonymous parallelism set up here which make the one point stated in the first strophe emphatically:

σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομησαὶ οὐ δύναται

οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ.

**flesh and blood the Kingdom of God cannot inherit  
neither does the perishable inherit the imperishable**

The depiction of humanity as σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα, flesh and blood, is more than labeling humanity as weak and

<sup>91</sup>It is too simplistic to assume that vv. 36-49 answer the first question, πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; while vv. 50-57 answer the second question ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται; The two questions are much more inter connected than this assumption would allow, as the above exegesis on v. 35 demonstrated. The *refutatio* in vv. 35-49 disprove a denial of the resurrection and the *conformatio* in vv. 50-57 celebrate it for believers at the second coming of Christ..

helpless, although the LXX frequently implies weakness in its rendering of the Hebrew text. As Paul has made repeatedly in chapter fifteen, humanity in its fallen, depraved condition is completely unfit for eternity. Just 'cleaning up' by overcoming the forces of evil is totally inadequate for eternity. We must be completely transformed if we are to stand before an utterly pure and holy God in eternity. Justification at conversion begins that process of getting us ready for eternity and resurrection at the parousia of Christ completes the transformation.<sup>92</sup>

This is the point underscored by the second strophe οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ, **neither can the perishable inherit the imperishable.** In the *refutatio* part 2 of vv. 42-49 the image of sowing a seed to produce a plant as a symbol of physical death, and our dual linkage to Adam and to Christ as believers underscored the continuity of our connection both to this world and the world to come. But now Paul stresses the discontinuity between life in the material world and life in eternity before a holy God. Only via transformation of our existence can we move out of this world and into the world of Heaven. The receiving of a resurrection 'body' or life / existence is the critical requirement for this life to come.

Thus the two strophes affirm the critical necessity of resurrection. "Whereas the first half of the parallelism is concerned with the need for new creation, the second explicates this further in terms of the impossibility of decay somehow achieving its own reversal (see above on v. 42), or even negation by its own capacities without divine transformation."<sup>93</sup>

<sup>92</sup>"The LXX regularly uses **flesh and blood** to denote humankind in its weakness and vulnerability, and in this sense Paul declares elsewhere that his revelation of gospel truth comes not from "flesh and blood" but from God.<sup>164</sup> However, Jeremias's study sheds light on a critical issue. Although this term frequently calls attention to human weakness, far more is at stake than the view of many older modern commentators that 'Man ... is too weak to wield the sceptre over the vast and mighty forces of the other world.'<sup>165</sup> It is not simply that 'our present bodies, whether living or dead, are absolutely unfitted for the Kingdom.'<sup>166</sup> Collins rightly underlines the apocalyptic framework of thought here, even though he dissents from Jeremias over the nature of the parallelism between the two halves of this present verse.<sup>167</sup> Apocalyptic emphasizes 'a radical incompatibility between the present condition of human existence and the resurrected condition.... Transformation is necessary.'<sup>168</sup> Indeed so, but this entails not only transformation from weakness to power (vv. 43-44) but also new creation in terms of full deliverance from sin to a disposition of holiness. It is an axiom of Jewish-Christian theology that only the pure and holy can rest in the immediate presence of God." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1291.]

<sup>93</sup>Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Tes-

Note how similar Paul's declaration here is to his much later affirmation in Phil. 3:21, ὅς μετασχηματίσει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα. **He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.** About a decade later Paul in writing to the Philippians reflects on his declarations to the Corinthians and gives a good succinct summation of it to the church at Philippi. His views did not change over this period of time, contrary to the claim of some interpreters. The resurrection of believers remains linked to the parousia of Christ.

**Role of mystery, vv. 51-53.** But this spiritual reality of resurrection can't be concluded by mere human reasoning, and the dependence of the Corinthian elitists on Greek reasoning left them clueless as to the both the nature and need for resurrection. Only through divine revelation can this be grasped. Thus (v. 51) Paul's thesis is affirmed as mystery: ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῶν λέγω. **Indeed I speak a mystery to you.** Paul likes this word μυστήριον and uses it several times (5x in 1 Cor; 21x of the 27 NT uses).<sup>94</sup> The Gospel is hidden

tament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1292.  
<sup>94</sup>“The Pauline lit. has μ. in 21 places. A secret or mystery, too profound for human ingenuity, is God's reason for the partial hardening of Israel's heart **Ro 11:25** or the transformation of the surviving Christians at the Parousia **1 Cor 15:51**. Even Christ, who was understood by so few, is God's secret or mystery **Col 2:2**, hidden ages ago **1:26** (cp. Herm. Wr. 1, 16 τοῦτο ἐστὶ τὸ κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον μέχρι τῆσδε τῆς ἡμέρας), but now gloriously revealed among the gentiles **vs. 27**, to whom the secret of Christ, i.e. his relevance for them, is proclaimed, **4:3** (CMitton, ET 60, '48/49, 320f). Cp. **Ro 16:25; 1 Cor 2:1** (cp. Just., D. 91, 1; 131, 2 al. μ. τοῦ σταυροῦ; 74, 3 τὸ σωτήριον τοῦτο μ., τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ πάθος τοῦ χριστοῦ). The pl. is used to denote Christian preaching by the apostles and teachers in the expr. οἰκονόμοι μυστηρίων θεοῦ **1 Cor 4:1** (Iambl., Vi. Pyth. 23, 104 calls the teachings of Pyth. θεῖα μυστήρια). Not all Christians are capable of understanding all the mysteries. The one who speaks in tongues πνεύματι λαλεῖ μυστήρια utters secret truths in the Spirit which the person alone shares w. God, and which others, even Christians, do not understand **1 Cor 14:2**. Therefore the possession of all mysteries is a great joy **13:2** (Just., D. 44, 2). And the spirit-filled apostle can say of the highest stage of Christian knowledge, revealed only to the τέλειοι: λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ we impart the wisdom of God in the form of a mystery (ἐν μυστηρίῳ=in a mysterious manner [Laud. Therap. 11] or =secretly, so that no unauthorized person would learn of it [cp. Cyr. of Scyth. p. 90, 14 ἐν μυστηρίῳ λέγει]) **2:7** (AKlöpffer, ZWT 47, 1905, 525-45).—Eph, for which (as well as for Col) μ. is a predominant concept, sees the μ. τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ (sc. θεοῦ) **1:9** or μ. τ. Χριστοῦ **3:4** or μ. τ. εὐαγγελίου **6:19** in acceptance of the gentiles as Christians **3:3ff, 9ff**. A unique great mystery is revealed **5:32**, where the relation betw. Christ and the Christian community or church is spoken of on the basis of Gen 2:24 (cp. the interpre-

from human reasoning and becomes known only through divine revelation, given to the apostles and shared with the Christian community by them. The outside non-Christian world largely remains ignorant of this message of salvation by their spiritual blindness and rebellion against God. Contained in this Gospel is the mystery of the resurrection at the coming of Christ.<sup>95</sup>

Here again is a cut at the Corinthian elitists who depended upon their corrupt Greek reasoning to grasp spiritual reality. Thus, as the objector in v. 35 pictures, they were largely ignorant of the meaning of resurrection. But to those committed unconditionally to the risen Christ comes basic understanding, and more importantly, dramatic affirmation of what is ahead for them in the coming of Christ.

The heart of the μυστήριον given to the Corinthian readers by Paul is laid out in vv. 51b-53. Note from the diagram below how Paul describes this experience. Statements #s 721-722 set forth the essence of res-

721	πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα,
	δὲ
722	πάντες ἀλλαγησόμεθα,
15.52	ἐν ὀνόματι,
	ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ,
	ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι·
	γὰρ
723	σαλπύσει
	καὶ
724	οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι
	καὶ
725	ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα.
15.53	γὰρ
726	δεῖ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν
	καὶ
727	τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν.

tation of the sun as symbol of God, Theoph. Ant. 2, 15 [p. 138, 8], and s. WKnox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, '39, 183f; 227f; WBieder, TZ 11, '55, 329-43.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 662.]

<sup>95</sup>“There may be two distinct nuances to Paul's use of μυστήριον in v. 51a. It would accord with his use of the term elsewhere to denote what was once hidden but has now been disclosed by divine revelation. On the other hand, many interpreters explain it in a way which is closer to its modern meaning in English. Paul cannot and does not say more about the precise nature of the change. He knows that Christ's own resurrection mode of existence provides the model (cf. also Phil 3:20-21), but much more than this we cannot know. It may be that Paul uses this word consciously to convey both senses of the term. Alternatively the latter nuance may sufficiently account for its use.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1295.]

urrection: ἀλλαγησόμεθα, we will be changed. How and why this takes place is then given in two sets of justifying statements that follow: #s 723-725 and 726-727.

*The heart of the coming experience* is set forth in v. 51b in a doublet expression: πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα, *not all of us will fall asleep (in death), but we all will be changed*. Amazingly this statement has occasioned considerable misunderstanding and manuscript alterations by copyists prior to the middle ages.<sup>96</sup> In the rather clearly defined original reading the sense is clear and consistent with Paul's idea of the imminence of the second coming of Christ. That Paul and all of his original Corinthian readers died before the return of Christ is largely irrelevant. His point is that some believers will be living and some will have already died when the return of Christ takes place.

The apostle Paul's view of his own situation did undergo development. From 1 Thess. 4:13-18 (late 40s) when Paul expected to still be alive at this final moment to still thinking this in First Corinthians (ca 53 AD) to beginning to reassess it by Second Corinthians (ca 55 AD)<sup>97</sup> to the realization by Philipians (61 AD) that

<sup>96</sup>“The textual variants reflect complex concerns of theology, and Conzelmann and Fee have detailed notes on them.<sup>174</sup> The text followed by the UBS 4th ed. is doubtless correct and evaluated as ‘certain’ (“A”).<sup>175</sup> The UBS text follows B, Dc, K, Syriac, and Coptic. The problem faced by scribes was that since Paul and his generation had died, the reading πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα *we shall not all sleep* (i.e., in death) seems false as it stands, and therefore to invite suspicion and correction. In fact, Paul almost certainly alludes to humankind inclusive of ‘we’ as believers, and their anxiety was misplaced (see exegesis below). As it was perceived, however, the problem gave rise to a series of corrections, as follows: (1) κ, C, and 33 transfer the negative to the following clause, πάντες (μὲν) κοιμηθησόμεθα, οὐ πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα; (2) The early date of the first alteration can be seen, as Metzger observes, from the fact that the early P<sup>46</sup>, followed by A<sup>c</sup> and Origen, conflates both readings to arrive at: *we shall not all sleep, and we shall not all be changed*; (3) A\* follows κ, C, and 33 in removing the first negative, but replaces the οὐ with οἱ, to read οἱ πάντες μὲν κοιμηθησόμεθα. Finally (4), the Western D\*, Vulgate, and Tertullian and Marcion substitute ἀναστησόμεθα, *we shall all be raised*, for the first clause, and *but we shall not all be changed* for the second.<sup>176</sup> It is generally agreed (Metzger, Conzelmann, et al.) that this is a polemical affirmation of the resurrection of all, in the context of the times. κ and C (accepted by Augustine) also reflect the ‘average view’ that all must die, i.e., they actually preclude the possibility that the parousia will arrive during the lifetime of the readers. Paul, in our view, leaves this issue open (see below), but clearly the early copyists understood the verse as implying an eschatology of imminence that needed correction, on the assumption that Paul could not have been wrong. Prior to the UBS 4th ed. and recent commentators, Westcott-Hort, Meyer, and Heinrici accept the correct reading.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1293.]

<sup>97</sup>Cf. chapters one and five of Second Corinthians. My doctor-

most likely he would pass away before Christ returns. Yet even in Philipians, he still retains the imminence of Christ's return expectation in Philipians not too many years prior to his execution at the hands of Nero. Far too much chronology gets mixed into the interpretive understanding of Paul's eschatological thinking. Modern preoccupation with chronological time was unknown in the ancient world.<sup>98</sup>

Paul's main point has little or nothing to do with whether he or the Corinthian readers will still be living at Christ's return. What it is about is that all will be changed at that moment in time: πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα.<sup>99</sup> Both the living and the dead will undergo the same change.

The quickness of this change is stressed by ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι, *in a moment, at the blink of an eye, at the final trumpet blowing*.<sup>100</sup>

al dissertation was on this topic in chapter five in the middle 1970s. It took much effort to wade through the mountains of ultimately worthless comments that had no clue to the changes happening in Paul's thinking.

<sup>98</sup>For a helpful analysis of this see Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, 383–85, and in “The Logical Role . . .,” *Biblical Interpretation 2* (1994): 207–23 (on first-person utterances).

<sup>99</sup>Although not made explicit, the πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα, *but we all will be changed*, most likely includes the non-believing world who will be outfitted with an existence not subject to death for their eternal damnation (cf. Rev. 20:10-15). But this is not Paul's point here; instead, the resurrection of believers is his concern. Although 5 of the 6 NT uses of the verb ἀλλάσσω are in Paul's writings, the two uses here in vv. 51-52 are the only places with a resurrection change surfaces.

<sup>100</sup>“The change or transformation will be instantaneous, ἐν ἀτόμῳ (τέμνω, *I cut*, with alpha privative), denoting that which is indivisible, i.e., **in an instant**, the smallest conceivable moment of time. ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ indicates very rapid eye movement. Most frequently it denotes a rapid, darting glance out of the corner of one's eye, but since ῥίπτω simply means to throw, it may have a wider meaning as well. With different nouns, outside the New Testament it can denote the rapid wing movement which causes the buzz of a gnat or the twinkling (cf. AV/KJV) of a star. This is the only occurrence of the word in the New Testament, and although NRSV, NJB, REB, and NIV follow AV/KJV's *twinkling of an eye*, this translation depends on modern recognition of the phrase as itself a metaphor for instantaneousness. Strictly the sparkle or change of light of an eye is a process, and rests on transferring the metaphor of a twinkling star. Collins translates **in the blinking of an eye**, which preserves the creative metaphor but avoids dependence on a tradition of understanding.<sup>188</sup>

“**The last trumpet** intensifies the metaphor of suddenness, adding the dimension of divine decree and ordered signal. In both Testaments (Exod 19:16; Zech 9:14; 1 Thess 4:16) manifestations of God are associated with the sound of the trumpet. Additionally, however, **the trumpet** awakens a sleeping army to be urgently roused to activity, including possible battle when the alert is sounded. In view of its military background, with which readers would be entirely familiar, sound would be universally interpreted less as the sound of a musical note than as a **loud signal** for all to hear. The trumpet announces the moment of change, in accor-

The trumpet blowing stresses the divine ordering of the end of time as Paul underscores in 1 Thess. 4:16-17.

**Justifying statement 1, v. 52.** σαλπίζει γὰρ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγώμεθα. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. Note that at this divine signal of the end, all the dead will be raised imperishable. Then believers will be changed over into their eternal existence.<sup>101</sup> The addition of ἄφθαρτοι, imperishable, to the first strophe οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι underscores the change into an existence no longer subject to death and decay. For believers this is marvelous news; for non-believers this is their worst nightmare come true since the torments of eternal damnation will never cease for them. Death is no longer an option!

The second strophe ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγώμεθα, we will be changed, reaches the climatic point where a brand new existence is given which is no longer subject to death as Paul celebrates in vv. 54-57.

**Justifying statement 2, v. 53.** Δεῖ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

This second justifying statement injects the will and action of God into this end time experience with the use of Δεῖ γὰρ, for it is divinely mandated that.... The impersonal infinitive δεῖ is used some 116 times inside the NT with heavenly dependence upon the LXX for its core meaning of a divinely mandated necessity.<sup>102</sup> The Greeks

dance with the timing of God's royal decree. The form of the future σαλπίζει is late Greek (σαλπίζεται is not used). In apocalyptic literature the trumpet is a standard image for announcing a new beginning decreed by God (cf. Rev 11:15). As Collins (closely with Wolff) writes, " 'Last' may not suggest so much last in a series (cf. Rev 8:2; 11:15), as the source of the final, eschatological trumpet sound ... the passing of the present order of reality."<sup>189</sup> Ambrosiaster understands the trumpet sound as a sound of triumph when the battle is over.<sup>190</sup> Bruce cites similarly the 'great trumpet' for the return of the exiles in Isa 27:13 (cf. Matt 24:31) and that of the year of Jubilee (Lev 25:9), as well as the apocalyptic trumpet for the Lord's descent from heaven in 1 Thess 4:16-17.<sup>191</sup> Augustine also alludes to 1 Thess 4:16: it denotes 'a clear signal' which Paul elsewhere calls 'the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God' (1 Thess 4:16).<sup>192</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1295-1296.]

<sup>101</sup>Assuming that Paul follows an understanding similar to John's in Rev. 19:21, all non-believers on earth will suffer death on the defeat of Satan and his forces at the final battle which will signal the beginning of the eternal order starting with final judgment, 20:9-15, this would stand behind his distinction between the raising of the dead and the transformation of believers. Otherwise, Paul's words here apply only to believers.

<sup>102</sup>This brief review shows us that the term is at home in Gk. and Hellenistic usage. The case is different in the OT and the Rabbinic. There is a reason for this. Behind the term stands the thought

saw this as impersonal fate, controlled by disinterested deity. But Jews and Christians understood that the will and plan of God the Creator controls and orders what is required of humanity.<sup>103</sup> Thus the transformation at the

of a neutral deity, of an (→) ἀνάγκη deity, which determines the course of the world and thus brings it under the δεῖ. This necessity expressed by the δεῖ affects the thought, volition and action of individuals, so that the word constantly recurs. Even in the weaker everyday usage the underlying thought may still be discerned. The biblical view of God, however, does not express a neutral necessity. It thinks of God in terms of the will which personally summons man and which fashions history according to its plan. This means that the OT uses a personal address where the Gk. world would have δεῖ. In the LXX, Josephus, other Jewish Hellenists and even the NT, however, the Gk. and Hellenistic usage is adopted. Tension is thus introduced by reason of the inadequate concept of God which underlies this usage. A plain example is to be found in Lv. 5:17: where the LXX has ὧν οὐ δεῖ ποιεῖν for the Mas. אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁפָּט. On the other hand, when the LXX, the Hellenistic Jews and even more so the NT adopt the word, they speak a language understood by those whom they are attempting to reach. And by linking it with, and referring it to, the biblical view of God, they make it plain that it no longer expresses the neutral necessity of fate. Instead, it indicates the will of God declared in the message. This is the standpoint from which it is applied in many different ways." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:22.]

<sup>103</sup>The word δεῖ expresses the necessity of the eschatological event, and is thus an eschatological term in the NT. It is well adapted for this role, since the eschatological event is one which is hidden from man, which can be known only by special revelation, and which sets man before an inconceivable necessity of historical occurrence grounded in the divine will. The tension which results when δεῖ is linked with the biblical doctrine of God applies also to this δεῖ which stands over the great eschatological drama. It is the δεῖ of the mysterious God who pursues His plans for the world in the eschatological event. Not a blind belief in destiny, but faith in God's eternal plans formulates this δεῖ. The δεῖ denotes that God is in Himself committed to these plans. It thus expresses a necessity which lies in the very nature of God and which issues in the execution of His plans in the eschatological event.

"The concept is formulated by Daniel as follows: ἔστι θεὸς ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀνακαλύπτων μυστήρια, ὃς ἐδήλωσε τῷ βασιλεῖ Ναβουχοδοноσορ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν (Da. LXX 2:28;2 cf. 2:29, 45). It is taken up by the Apocalypticist, who begins his work with the words: ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός, δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει (Rev. 1:1; cf. 4:1; 22:6). The same formulation is found in the Syn. apocalypse. After recounting the events which will come to pass, Jesus says: δεῖ γὰρ <πάντα> γενέσθαι, ἀλλ' οὐπω τὸ τέλος (Mt. 24:6 and par.).<sup>3</sup> It is emphasised as quite essential to the close of the eschatological period and the beginning of the end: εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη πρῶτον δεῖ κηρυχθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (Mk. 13:10; cf. Jn. 10:16). The imperative of eschatology is both to judgment and salvation. All the detailed acts of this eschatological occurrence stand under it. To it belongs the Messianic time which opens with the return of Elias, whom Jesus finds in John the Baptist: ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ λέγοντες: τί οὖν οἱ γραμματεῖς λέγουσιν ὅτι Ἥλιος δεῖ ἔλθειν πρῶτον; ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· Ἥλιος μὲν ἔρχεται καὶ ἀποκαταστήσει πάντα· λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι Ἥλιος ἤδη ἦλθεν (Mt. Page 48



second coming is a divinely mandated action according to God's plan.

Paul repeats the core idea of resurrection in the second justifying statements in a parallel declaration:

τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν  
καὶ

τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν.

This perishable (body) must be clothed with imperishability  
and

this mortal (body) must be clothed with immortality

The fourfold use of the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο as an neuter gender adjective modifying in vv. 53-54

17:10 ff.; Mk. 9:11). The coming of Elias, which the disciples see under this imperative, has already been fulfilled according to these sayings. The eschatological, Messianic age has come. This throws a clear ray of light on the use of δεῖ in Christ's prophecies of His suffering and resurrection. It has a secure place in these according to the Synoptists: δεῖ αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀπελθεῖν καὶ πολλὰ παθεῖν ἀπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἀρχιερέων καὶ γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθῆναι (Mt. 16:21 and par.; cf. also Lk. 17:25; 24:7, 26; Ac. 3:21; 17:3). The suffering, death and resurrection of Christ are parts of the eschatological drama. Christ is not just the Preacher of eschatology; His history is eschatology. This δεῖ, under which His suffering, death and resurrection, and according to Lk. His ascension, stand, belongs to the mysterious divine work of judgment and salvation in the last time. What Paul and other NT figures say of the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ is the theoretical development of this mysterious δεῖ and therefore the interpretation of the eschatological action of God in His Christ. This is confirmed by the fact that in the NT *kerygma* this history of Christ is declared to be the fulfilment of Scripture: πῶς οὖν πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ ὅτι οὕτως δεῖ γενέσθαι (Mt. 26:54; cf. Lk. 22:37; 24:25 f.). John shares this view with the Synoptists when he interprets the crucifixion as follows: ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον (3:14; cf. 12:34), or when he refers to Scripture in relation to the resurrection: οὐδέπω γὰρ ἤδεισαν τὴν γραφήν, ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι (20:9). In Paul's use of the term we are confronted by such eschatological necessities as the reign of Christ in the eschatological age up to the end (1 C. 15:25), the judgment (2 C. 5:10) and the resurrection change (1 C. 15:53), which has its basis in the present separation from God in virtue of the divine invisibility (1 C. 8:2).

"4. In connexion with the δεῖ which shapes the history of Christ, δεῖ has also a place in the description of God's saving action towards men. This action is in John regeneration, the new birth of man without which he can have no part in the kingdom of God: δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν (Jn. 3:7). In the apostolic *kerygma* we read: καὶ οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐδενὶ ἢ σωτηρία· οὕτε γὰρ ὄνομά ἐστιν ἕτερον ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν τὸ δεδομένον ἐν ἀνθρώποις, ἐν ᾧ δεῖ σωθῆναι ἡμᾶς (Ac. 4:12). The saving action of God towards men reaches its goal in faith in the name of Jesus. When the shaken jailor at Philippi asks what is necessary for salvation: τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σωθῶ, he is given the answer: πιστεύσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν, καὶ σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου (Ac. 16:30 f.; cf. Hb. 11:6).<sup>477</sup>

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:23–24.]

points clearly back to the neuter noun σῶμα, *body*, in vv. 35-44. The first set of terms φθαρτὸν / ἀφθαρσίαν, *perishable / imperishability* is followed by the even stronger terms θνητὸν / ἀθανασίαν, *liable to death / not subject to death* in the second strophe.<sup>104</sup> The new use of the image of *being clothed*, ἐνδύσασθαι, stresses the continuity factor while the two pairs of opposites the discontinuity aspect. Thus in beautiful expression the apostle affirms resurrection at the coming of Christ as a divinely mandated action to take place according to His plan.

**Celebration of this resurrection, vv. 54-57.**

54 ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν,<sup>105</sup> τότε γενήσεται ὁ

<sup>104</sup>"In our own era after the turn of the millennium, when medicine has prolonged life beyond all earlier imagination, it is important not to lose sight of Paul's emphasis on release from degenerating capacities which the more philosophical, abstract *incorruption* (AV/KJV), or even the more static, metaphysical *imperishable* (REB, NIV, NJB), or *imperishability* (NRSV), may perhaps convey less forcefully and less explicitly as the semantic opposite of τὸ φθαρτὸν. Similarly, *immortality* (REB, NIV, NRSV, NJB, AV/KJV) is correct but misses part of the added force provided by the use of the two terms *liable to death* and **incapable of dying** in deliberate semantic opposition. Of all the Church Fathers, it is Ambrose who best captures and conveys the dynamic and positive content of ἀφθαρσία and ἀθανασία in concrete terms: 'The blossom of the resurrection' is these; 'What is richer ...? Here is the manifold fruit, the harvest, whereby man's nature grows more vigorous and productive after death.'<sup>1947</sup>

"Augustine also captures the logical basis to which Paul's 'of God' constantly calls attention: 'People are amazed that God, who made all things from nothing, makes a heavenly body from human flesh... Is he who was able to make you when you did not exist not able to make over what you once were?'<sup>1957</sup>

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1297.]

<sup>105</sup>"The UBS 4th ed., which is generally more optimistic than the 3d ed., categorizes the longer reading of v. 54 (above) as 'almost certain' ('B'). The 3d ed. (1966) had classified this reading less convincingly as having 'a considerable degree of doubt' ('C,' in 3d ed. terms). A shorter reading begins with the second clause, ὅταν δὲ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται τὴν ἀθανασίαν, and has the support of the early P<sup>46</sup>, 8\*, and probably C\*, MSS of Old Latin, Vulgate, Coptic (Sah and Boh), and Latin VSS of Irenaeus, Origen, Ambrosiaster, and Hilary. The longer reading (above and UBS 4th ed.) is supported by B and D, with possible deciphering of an unclear C, in part K, Syriac, and Byzantine readings, and the Greek of Origen, Athanasius, and Chrysostom. Two clear canons of textual criticism conflict: (1) Very often the shorter reading is more probable (since copyists are more likely to add than to subtract): (2) the phenomenon of homoioteleuton readily explains an omission of a clause or a phrase when the eye of the copyist readily moves from one occurrence of a similar word or phrase to another. In this case, the second axiom carries far more weight in this verse in spite of early support for the shorter reading. Conzelmann simply states, 'P<sup>46</sup> ... is a result of homoioteleuton.'<sup>196</sup> As a result of the early divergence of readings, other, later variants also occur, but these need not detain us.<sup>197</sup> (2) P<sup>46</sup>, B, D\*, and Tertullian, read νεῖκος, Page 49

λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος·

κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος·

55 ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νίκος;

ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον;

56 τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἢ ἁμαρτία, ἢ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος· 57 τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

54 When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

55 “Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

15.54

δὲ

ὅταν τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν  
καὶ

τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν,

728 τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος

ὁ γεγραμμένος·

15.55

κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος·  
ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νίκος;  
ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον;

15.56

δὲ

729 τὸ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἢ ἁμαρτία,

δὲ

730 ἢ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος·

15.57

δὲ

731 τῷ θεῷ χάρις

τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος

διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

The indefinite temporal dependent clause ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν, both links the sentence it introduces back to the previous statements and sets up another important point connection to resurrection at the parousia of Christ. The use of ὅταν rather than ὅτε appropriately defines this future moment indefinitely in terms of when it will happen. This doesn't diminish the certainty of it happening at all; only avoids date setting. The repetition of the two parallel strophes in v. 53 is done for standard scribal Jewish linking purposes.

What this moment of resurrection occurrence at the parousia of Jesus also means is τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος, then taking place will be the saying that is written.... Interestingly, this is the only OT prophetic reference to Christ used by Paul that was not realized

*strife*, in place of νίκος, *victory*, but this is generally ascribed to aural error in misunderstanding dictation.: [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1297–1298.]

in His first coming.<sup>106</sup> Paul does not cite or quote from a single passage of OT text here. Instead, he gives something of a short summation of a couple of passages:<sup>107</sup>

**Isa. 25:8.** Ἐκατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος ἰσχύσας, καὶ πάλιν ἀφεῖλεν ὁ θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον ἀπὸ παντὸς προσώπου· τὸ ὄνειδος τοῦ λαοῦ ἀφεῖλεν ἀπὸ πάσης τῆς γῆς, τὸ γὰρ στόμα κυρίου ἐλάλησεν. he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

**Hos. 13:14.** ἐκ χειρὸς ἄδου ρύσομαι αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐκ θανάτου λυτρώσομαι αὐτούς· ποῦ ἡ δίκη σου, θάνατε; ποῦ τὸ κέντρον σου, ἄδη; παράκλησις κέκρυπται ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν μου.† Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death? O Death, where

are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your destruction? Compassion is hidden from my eyes.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>106</sup>Chrysostom understands γενήσεται ὁ λόγος to mean ‘the word shall be fulfilled’ (cf. γίνεσθαι in the sense of to be fulfilled in Matt 6:10; Mark 11:23). This is probably the only loose citation (if citation rather than paraphrase it is) in which fulfillments of scripture to which Paul alludes have not already taken place in Christ. His point, however, remains true to the christological principle: by

virtue of the cross and Christ's resurrection the fulfillment is guaranteed, but a later time. Hence γενήσεται bears some such sense as ‘shall become operative,’ or ‘shall come into force.’” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1298.]

<sup>107</sup>“Most commentators agree that Paul cites, or alludes to, Isa 25:8, probably in conjunction with Hos 13:14.199 C. D. Stanley gives detailed attention to how Paul uses and molds this combined quotation.<sup>200</sup> First, Stanley notes, Paul combines parts of Isa 25:8 and Hos 13:14 in such a way as to give ‘no indication that vv. 54b–55 might represent anything other than a continuous quotation from a single biblical passage.’<sup>201</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that these had been combined prior to Paul's use of them together. Stanley urges that the combined use is the fruit of thought and care, not the by-product of careless citation.<sup>202</sup>” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1298–1299.]

<sup>108</sup>“Isa 25:8 takes a different form in both the Hebrew and the LXX from Paul's own wording, however. The Hebrew text reads בלע המות לנצח (billa' hamaweth lanetsach), he will swallow up death forever. The LXX reads κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος ἰσχύσας, death has drunk up in it strength, but the Greek VSS of Aquila and The-

Paul's use of γενήσεται, rather than πληρωθῆ, stresses that the principle of death's defeat will become relevant at the parousia of Christ. The apostle does not label this a Messianic prophecy to be fulfilled.

Paul's summation points to the work of Christ that has removed the sting of death because the triumph of Christ over evil includes death as well. John's depiction is even more graphic (Rev. 20:14a): καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ᾅδης ἐβλήθησαν εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. **And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.** Never again will the people of God taste the awfulness of dying.<sup>109</sup>

Verses 56-57 comprise Paul's midrashic commentary on the OT texts alluded to: 56 τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἢ ἁμαρτία, ἢ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος; 57 τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. **56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

In his elaboration we see a concise summation of Rom. 4-7 and Gal. 3.<sup>110</sup> What enables death to 'sting' odotion read εἰς νίκος, *in victory* (although Symmachus reads εἰς τέλος). The LXX thus turns death (תּוּמָה, *hammaweth*, object in Hebrew) into a nominative (which does not fit the surrounding verses; 25:6a, 8b) and interprets תּוּמָה as if it were nearer to the cognate Aramaic verb *to overcome* than to the Hebrew idiom *forever*. This explains why Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus all have differing variants: all three revisers were trying to correct a faulty LXX rendering of the Hebrew.<sup>203</sup> Paul's version takes up elements from all three, but especially the text of Theodotion: κατεπόθη, *Death has been swallowed up*; with εἰς νίκος, *in victory*.<sup>204</sup> As Stanley suggests, doubtless there was a common tradition behind these Greek translations and revisions which Paul knew and used.<sup>205</sup>

"Paul's citation of, or allusion to, Hos 13:14 also differs both from the LXX and from the Hebrew. The Hebrew of v. 14 reads אֵיךְ דְּבַרְיֶךָ מוֹת אֵיךְ קַטְבְּךָ שְׂאוֹל (*'ehiy debareyka meweth 'eh qattabeka she'ol*) *Where, O Death, are your plagues? Where, O She'ol, is your destruction?* The LXX reads ποῦ ἡ δίκη σου θάνατε; ποῦ τὸ κέντρον σου ᾅδη, *Where, O Death, is your judgment (or penalty)? Where, O Hades, is your sting?* Paul's citation, therefore, changes the LXX's *judgment* or *penalty* to *victory*; and *Hades*, to *Death*. There is also a change in word order for rhetorical purposes."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1299.]

<sup>109</sup>In **Rev. 20:14-15**, such is not the experience of the non-believing world: 14 καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ᾅδης ἐβλήθησαν εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. οὗτος ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερός ἐστιν, ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός. 15 καὶ εἴ τις οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. **14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; 15 and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.**

<sup>110</sup>Findlay offers the delightfully succinct comment that this verse 'throws into an epigram the doctrine of Rom 4-7 and Gal 3 respecting the interrelations of Sin, Law and Death.'<sup>212</sup> Bengel, as might be expected, is no less succinct: *Si peccatum non esset, mors nil posset ... sine lege peccatum non sentitur; sub lege, peccatum dominatur* (Rom 6:14).<sup>213</sup> Cullmann, as we noted above, explains

us is sin, ἡ ἁμαρτία, that which we inherited from Adam and made worse by our own rebellion against God. And what enables sin to possess such a sting is the divine Law of God that sets the standards of a holy God's expectations upon sinful humanity.

This means that God has given to His believing people victory over all this through both the death and resurrection of Christ as affirmed at the beginning of the chapter in vv. 1-3.<sup>111</sup>

The Corinthian elitists have settled for rotten meat in comparison to the prime steak that Paul puts on the table before them. Their culture and dependency upon it and its ways of thinking have spoiled a beautifully rich Gospel meal that Paul put before them in his evangelizing of Corinth on the second missionary journey. Now they have another opportunity to abandon that phony way of thinking and return to the apostolic Gospel. Here they can feast in the celebration of victory over death and in the marvelous transformation that awaits the true believers at the second coming of Christ. May we never allow the world around us to corrupt our understanding of this marvelous good news of victory through Christ Jesus!

**PERORATIO, v. 58.** This was always the final element in a deliberative speech or writing and usually included admonitions to the audience to adopt the view of the presenter along with possible implications

the terror of death in terms of the loss of good, including the loss of the divine presence in God-forsakenness and even the experience of divine wrath. But it is sin, the human turning away from God to become centered upon the self, that has turned death into such deadly poison, so that it hurts and kills like a sting." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1301.]

<sup>111</sup>"Paul can therefore urge Christian believers who have been placed in a right relationship with God through the work of Christ to consider themselves (i.e., to be determined by the eschatological projected world in which they are) 'dead to sin' and 'alive to God' (Rom 6:11), as those freed from death (6:13). A reversal of the process of 'wasting,' 'degenerating,' being 'on the way to ruin' (τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, 1 Cor 1:18) has been taken in hand with the work of Christ, and reaches its ultimate goal in the final transformation of the resurrection. This addresses Paul's question concerning corporate humanity: 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom 7:24).<sup>218</sup> Beker writes, 'Death is the primal power: it is 'the last enemy' (1 Cor 15:26) within the field of interlocking forces. The antithesis between the two ages can be summed up as 'the reign of death' as opposed to the 'reign of life' (Rom 5:17, 21). And death remains in some way the signature of the world, even after its allies—the law, the flesh, and sin—have been defeated in the death and resurrection of Christ.'<sup>219</sup> "The alliance of sin and death is intimate indeed."<sup>220</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1302.]

of such adoption.

**Concluding praise and admonition, v. 58.**

Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί, ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε, ἀμετακίνητοι, περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου πάντοτε, εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς ἐν κυρίῳ.

So then, my beloved brothers, become steadfast, immovable, abounding in the Lord's work always, since you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

15.58 Ὡστε,  
ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί,  
732 ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε,  
ἀμετακίνητοι,  
περισσεύοντες  
ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου  
πάντοτε,  
εἰδότες  
ὅτι ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς  
ἐν κυρίῳ.

With this final admonition with an application tone the apostle concludes this discussion of resurrection, in ancient Greek rhetoric known as a *Peroratio*. The core admonition is simply ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε, ἀμετακίνητοι, become steadfast, immovable.

Paul's application of this lengthy discussion on resurrection is for the Corinthians to remain committed to the apostolic Gospel and its teaching about resurrection. It stands as an appeal to the Corinthian elitists to abandon their phony understandings in favor of the apostolic Gospel. The predicate adjective ἐδραῖοι by being placed in front of the verb receives primary emphasis. The central idea of ἐδραῖος is for the Corinthians to firmly plant themselves on the firm footing of the apostolic Gospel. The second adjective, ἀμετακίνητοι, from ἀμετακίνητος, stresses the importance of not moving away from this first footing of the apostolic Gospel.

How does one do this best? περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου πάντοτε, by abounding in the Lord's work always. Thus it's not just correct thinking that keeps a believer on the right track. Critically important is that we stay where we are supposed to be both in our thinking and in our actions by being thoroughly, actively involved in doing the Lord's work in this world. This also must be a consistent, not a spasmodic, pattern as πάντοτε, always, makes very clear, especially by being placed at the end of the clause as an adverb. There's no place in God's Kingdom either now or in eternity for 'part time Christians!'

The incentive for this kind of commitment comes in the causal participle phrase εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς ἐν κυρίῳ, because you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. Paul sets the tone here by using ὁ

κόπος, rather than τὸ ἔργον, with the intensified meaning of 'hard work,' rather than just action or activity. This re-enforces the participle phrase περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου πάντοτε above by underscoring that service is not an issue of high volume so much as it concerns itself with serious, consistent service. This kind of committed service always produces results that please and glorify the Lord. The phrase ἐν κυρίῳ, placed at the end for emphasis,<sup>112</sup> limits the framework of such service as coming out of commitment to Christ, not from mere self-effort.

**Summary Conclusions about Chapter Fifteen**

This discussion of Paul stands as the most detailed articulation of the idea of resurrection found anywhere in the entire Christian Bible.<sup>113</sup> Over the centuries it has received various kinds of attention, depend-

ing on the current issues regarding the resurrection at each century. The issues have centered on the nature of Christ's resurrection, the resurrection body of believers, the time of the resurrection of believers, among other connected issues.

Typically Paul's teaching has suffered distortion more often than being correctly understood. Why? Largely because current issues in each century defined how Paul's discussion in the mid-first century was interpreted. Not until the last half century have interpreters began to give proper weight and attention to the issue among the Corinthian elitists that prompted Paul's rebuttal. And this against the social dynamics of the city of Corinth at this particular point in time. First Clement written at the end of the first century to this same church makes its clear that different issues dominated the life of the Christian community some fifty years later. Also commentators, especially in the UK and Europe, are recognizing the unique nature of the issue at Corinth that did not exist in any of the other churches that Paul wrote letters to in his ministry. All of this leads to the clear conclusion that if we are to correctly understand First Corinthians 15 it MUST be understood solely against the backdrop of the issue Paul is addressing in the mid-first century Corinthian church. Applications and understandings of the text have legitimacy ONLY

<sup>112</sup>Note how the NRSV captures well this emphatic point by placing "in the Lord" at the beginning of the that clause.

<sup>113</sup>For an exceedingly helpful summation of the role of chapter fifteen among the patristic fathers, see "THE POSTHISTORY, IMPACT, AND ACTUALIZATION OF CHAPTER 15" in Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1306-1312. .

within the framework of this perspective.<sup>114</sup>

At the heart of the socio dynamics going on at Corinth among the elitist members of the church was a huge cultural failure. Paul put it on the table at the outset in chapter one as their continuing to depend on Greek ways of thinking out of their heritage and social surroundings rather than to shift over to God's ways of thinking. The limitations and false trails in pagan Greek thinking mixed in with some pagan religious ideas brought a huge fist full of problems and false thinking into their Christian perspectives. Repeatedly the apostle rebuts and condemns such in the addressing of the long list of problems morally, socially, and thinking wise that were surfacing inside the church.

Although the issue addressed in chapter fifteen centers on the resurrection first of Christ and then of believers, Paul introduces it in vv. 1-2 as a problem with the apostolic Gospel. In following the classical structure of deliberative debate he lays out the issue fully in the *narratio* (vv. 1-11) and two *refutatio* (vv. 12-19 & 35-49) and two *confirmatio* (vv. 20-34 & 50-57) with the *peroratio* in v. 58 concluding the discussion. Inside these, especially the second set of *refutatio* and *confirmatio* (vv. 35-57) Paul mixes standard Jewish scribal arguments into his presentation. Unquestionably, this is not the way a post-enlightenment theologian would argue this issue. Thus understanding Paul's strategy of dealing with the unique twisting of the idea of resurrection (cf. v. 12) is essential for grasping what he is trying to accomplish.

Central to this thesis on resurrection is the connection of the believer's resurrection to that of Jesus'. Also critical is the dual continuity and discontinuity of our physical body to the coming resurrection body. He completely rejects the Greek philosophical depreciation of the material body, but affirms that through Adam's sin our material bodies have suffered depravity and ruin, so that they are completely unsuited for an eternal existence in the presence of a holy God. Thus resurrection means a complete revamping and transformation of our existence so that we can enjoy eternity with God.

Analogous language is essential since Paul here describes something no one outside of Christ has yet experienced and been alive on earth to demonstrate it. So resurrection means life following death in terms of the planting of a seed that produces a plant with fruit. It means that our human link to Adam that produced

the depravity that disqualifies us is overcome through being linked to the risen Christ.

Over and over the apostle rejects the twisted Greek thinking of the Corinthian elitists who resorted to ethereal phantasy ideas out of some of the pagan religions to explain away the resurrection. The apostle rejects their condemnation of the apostolic teaching as nothing more than the Jewish apocalyptic view that resurrection is nothing more than the rearrangement of the material content of the individual. Paul carefully weaves his way through the extremes of the Greek rejection of the idea of resurrection on one side, and the apocalyptic Jewish extreme on the other side. Neither are correct because in part they both fail to hold in proper balance the continuity and, at the same time, the discontinuity of the resurrection body to the depraved material body.

Only within this framework of understanding can chapter fifteen provide a legitimate source of divine revelation to address contemporary issues of resurrection that arise in our day and time. Otherwise the inevitability of repeating the same centuries old mistakes of contemporary cultural domination of the issue will plague our conclusions as well.

<sup>114</sup>Unfortunately, this is what makes the majority of commentaries, especially those over twenty to thirty years old, not worth the cost of the paper for the print version. The same mistakes that have plagued the history of interpretation of this text since the second century onward continue to be made in our day by way too many commentators.