

In the history of scholarship regarding the Adam-Christ typology found in 1 Corinthians 15, almost all exegetes have focused upon Paul's use of Pharisaic apocalyptic thought in combating the anti-resurrection, Hellenistic influences at work within the Corinthian church. Such scholarship is indeed of utmost significance given the historical-contextual location of Paul and the Corinthians. However, what has received little to no attention is the way in which Paul interprets *Genesis itself* within this chapter.¹ Given the relative lack of attention to this blatant phenomenon, this paper will focus upon Paul's interpretation of the opening chapters of Genesis in 1 Corinthians 15, with an emphasis upon Paul's method of scriptural interpretation within an epistle, as demonstrated by these verses, and the implications of his method for his theology of Scripture in general.

First Corinthians 15 contains two major sections, each addressing a particular yet related question. In verses 1-34, Paul addresses the question of whether or not there is a future bodily resurrection at all. He first and foremost grounds his answer ("yes") in the proleptic nature of the Christ-event. Christ has been raised from the dead, and thus bodily resurrection must be possible. Moreover, if there is no resurrection of the dead, then your faith in Christ is futile, because you are still in your sins, and all work done and suffering experience in the name of Christ is nothing but pity-able. He includes a brief allusion to Adam-Christ typology in verse 21-22:

¹ One exception to this virtual silence is N.T. Wright's recent work *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), in which he argues, "Genesis 1-3 forms a subtext for the whole chapter, and even when Paul appears to be merely offering illustrations of his point these, too, are drawn from the creation stories" (313). Yet even in the forty-eight pages devoted to this subject, he misses several significant aspects of Paul's use of Genesis. His point is ultimately different from my own, as well, remaining within the standard scholarly arguments rather than focusing upon Paul's use of Scripture.

For because death is through a human, so also the resurrection from the dead is through a human.
 For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all be made alive.²

This constitutes the only allusion to Genesis in 1 Corinthians 15:1-34, and its *exegetical* meaning is relatively ambiguous. Most scholars take the phrase “all die in Adam” to refer to the strand of Jewish apocalyptic interpretation that locates the origin of death and suffering in Adam’s transgression in Genesis 3.³ Thus, “all die in Adam” because of Adam’s sin. Such is tantalizingly consistent with Romans 5:12-14. However, the text does not actually include the explanation, “because of Adam’s sin.” In fact, it will be demonstrated below that when Paul returns to the Adam-Christ typology in verse 45, he seems to assert that God *creates* Adam as mortal, locating the entrance of death into the world in Genesis 2:7 rather than Genesis 3. Verses 45’s use of the Adam-Christ typology, somewhat shocking in light of Paul’s apocalyptic heritage and emphases, and

² All translations are my own.

³ For a concise and thoughtful discussion of Jewish apocalyptic interpretation of Adam and Eve, see John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism From Sirach to 2 Baruch*, JSP Sup. Ser. 1 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988) 113-155. Levison has helpfully noted that there is not one Jewish interpretation of Adam and Eve from around the time of Paul, and that it is particularly the apocalyptic strand that locates the origin of death in Adam’s transgression. He also makes the interesting move of distinguishing “The Life of Adam and Eve” from the “Moses Apocryphon.” See *Portraits*, 163-189. For other helpful resources on “The Life of Adam and Eve,” see Gary A. Anderson and Michael Stone, ed., *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, second edition, SBL Early Judaism and its Literature 17, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999; Gary A. Anderson, Michael Stone, and Johannes Trimp, ed., *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays*, Leiden, Boston, Koeln: Brill, 2000; Michael Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*, SBL Early Judaism and its Literature 3, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992; Marinus de Jonge and Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997; M.D. Johnson, “Life of Adam and Eve,” *The Old Testament Pseudopigrapha*, edited by James H. Charlesworth, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985. For essays that deal more generally with the Jewish traditions of Adam and Eve, see Gerard P. Luttikhuisen, ed., *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian traditions*, Themes in Biblical Narrative: Jewish and Christian Traditions 3, Leiden: Brill, 2000. For works that deal specifically with the Jewish interpretive background to Paul’s thought, the literature is virtually endless. A few of the most significant works in this area include W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 4th edition, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980; C.K. Barrett, *From First Adam to Last: A Study in Pauline Theology*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1962; Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology*, Blackwell, 1966; Martinus C. De Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988. Levison critiques several of these works (and others) in *Portraits*, 13-31. See also J.C. Becker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 135-181.

yet found only a few verses later within this same chapter, highlights the actual *exegetical* ambiguity left unaddressed by Paul within verse 22. He is simply not interested in spelling out exactly how or why or when it is that “all die in Adam.”

At the same time, the *rhetorical* significance of Paul’s Adam-Christ typology in verse 22 could not be more explicit. Paul is using the idea that death entered the world through one man, and thus “all die in Adam” (however that may be) to persuade the Corinthian church of an entirely different point: that it is possible for them to experience a future bodily resurrection on the basis of one man, Christ. Indeed, it is the follow rhetorical point that frames verses 21-22:

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.
Because death is through a human, so also the resurrection from the dead is through a human.
For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all be made alive.
 But each in its own order: Christ the first fruits, then those who are in Christ at his coming. Finally the end. . .

Thus, one sees in Paul’s use of the Adam in 1 Corinthians 15:22 an utter lack of interest in explaining *how* and *when* death entered the world through Adam, which he could easily have addressed through a simple appeal to Genesis itself or to stories from his Jewish apocalyptic heritage. Rather, in this verse one sees Paul *using* the Scriptural text for the sake of rhetorically bring the church at Corinth into line with his bifocal Christologically-modified apocalyptic eschatology.⁴

As stated, verses 21-22 contain the only allusions to Genesis in 1 Corinthians 15:1-34. The latter half of the chapter, however, is permeated with allusions to Genesis.

⁴ I am borrowing the term “bifocal” from J.C. Becker, who notes that Paul’s understanding of the Christ-event has modified Jewish apocalyptic thought such that, rather than there being one focal point in the future at which point the eschaton will come, there are now two focal points: (1) the Christ-event and (2) the future general resurrection of the dead, judgement, etc. See *Paul the Apostle*, 159f.

The question that Paul addresses in this latter half of the chapter is found in verse 35:

“But some will say, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”⁵

He opens his discussion by pointing to the obvious continuity and discontinuity between the body of a seed and that which the seed will become. He then continues his argument with by invoking language from both Genesis 1 and Hellenistic philosophical thought, both subjected to modification for the sake of his own rhetorical purpose:

Not all flesh (sa.rx) is the same:

There is one flesh of humans (avnqrw,pwn),
 Another flesh of beasts of burden (kthnw/n),
 Another flesh of winged creatures (pthnw/n),
 Another of fish (ivcqu,wn).

There are both heavenly (evpoura,nia) bodies
 and terrestiral (evpi,geia) bodies.

The glory (do,xa) of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the
 earthly is another.

There is one glory of the sun (h`li,ou),
 Another glory of the moon (selh,nhj),
 Another glory of stars (avste,rwn).

Indeed, star differs from star in glory. (1 Cor 15:39-41)⁶

⁵ Commentators have long noted the Hellenistic philosophical behind this question. By virtue of their cultural surroundings, the Corinthians would have experienced much exposure to philosophical traditions that would have found the notion of a *bodily* resurrection to be silly. Bodies do not rise. Rather, souls finally *escape* their bodily prisons at death. For a good discussion of the image of the body in Hellenistic philosophy, see Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. On the basis of this verse in light of the dominant Greek philosophical thought, most scholars over the span of the last century have understood Paul to be responding to the Corinthians’ over-realized eschatology. More recently, however, several prominent scholars, including Richard Hays and Dale Martin, have suggested that the problem in Corinth was not so much that the Corinthians were overly-eschatological due to their immersion in Hellenistic culture, but rather that because of the influence of that culture they were not eschatological enough. See Dale Martin, *Corinthian Body* 106; Richard Hays, “The Conversion of the Imagination: Scripture and Eschatology in 1 Corinthians,” *NTS* 45 (1999) 391-412; Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997) 252f. See also Joël Delobel, “Fate of the Dead According to 1 Thes 4 and 1 Cor 15,” *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, edited by Raymond F. Collins, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990) 340-347; B. P. Pearson, *Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians: A Study in the Theology of the Corinthian Opponents of Paul and its Relation to Gnosticism* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1973) 15; Richard A. Horsley, “ ‘How Can Some of You Say ‘ There is No Resurrection of the Dead?’ Spiritual Elitism in Corinth” *NT* 20 (1978) 203-231; Gergard Sellin, *Der Streit um die Auferstebung der Toten*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1986) 23-30; Mark Allen Plunkett, *Sexual Ethics and the Christian Life: A Study of 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:7*, Ph.D. diss. (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1988) 122-123. In either case, it is clear that at least some of the Corinthians were struggling with the notion of a bodily resurrection, and one specific question Paul addresses in these verses in his attempt to settle the issue is the question of what kind of body would a resurrected person have?

Note that in these verses, Paul is generally following the order of creation *in reverse*.⁷ In 1 Cor 15:29, in which Paul lists the terrestrial creatures, he begins with humans

(~d''²a', a,nqrwpon, Genesis 1:26), continues with beasts of burden (hm'heB.h;

kth,nh, Genesis 1:25), birds and fish – consistently mentioned in reversed order (@A[,

peteina. and hY''+x; vp,n<â #r<v,Þ ~yIM;êh; Wcâr>v.yI,

evxagage,tw ta. u[data e`rpetâ. yucw/n zwsu/n, 1:20-23).

He then interrupts the flow of Genesis with a significant nod to the Hellenistic background of the Corinthians: there is a distinction, he acknowledges, between the nature of heavenly bodies versus terrestrial bodies. Note that he refers to the differences among the terrestrial bodies with the term sa.rx, whereas in this interlude he switches his language to do,xa for his discussion of the heavenly bodies. Both, however, are “bodies” (sw/ma). In this we see a careful utilization of Hellenistic language used in *refutation* of Hellenistic claims. Whereas the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly is common, the language of “heavenly body” is exceedingly uncommon, even weird, to Greek philosophical thought. Moreover, seen within the context of the first part of the chapter, in which Paul is clearly arguing for the reality of a future *resurrection of sleeping bodies*, it is clear that Paul’s point will ultimately be something distinct from

⁶ This analysis of the structure of the passage is taken from Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 783.

⁷ V.P. Furnish (*The Theology of the First Letter to the Corinthians*, NTT, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 113) and N.T. Wright (*Resurrection*, 343) both note that the bodies mentioned in these chapters are also found in Genesis 1, but neither note the careful arrangement of the order nor its implications regarding Paul’s theology and use of Scripture.

what one would expect out of Hellenistic philosophy.⁸ Thus, here one finds Paul maintaining the Hellenistic distinction regarding the profound difference between the terrestrial and the heavenly (to be used for his own very un-Hellenistic point later), while at the same time subtly redefining “heavenly” in such a way as it becomes a location of certain glorious sw,mata. What exactly those sw,mata will look like remains open for the moment, but here Paul lays the groundwork that there are, even in the eyes of the Corinthians, various types of bodies differing nature and in degree of glory.

Following this Hellenistic interlude, Paul resumes his listing of the types of (now heavenly) bodies created by God in Genesis 1. In contrast to his list of terrestrial bodies, the heavenly bodies are not listed in reverse. He begins with the sun, then moves to the moon, and concludes with the stars (see Genesis 1:16). Nonetheless, he places the discussion of the sun, moon, and stars *after* the creation of the terrestrial bodies, which clearly reverses both the order of creation in Genesis 1 (not to mention the order of priority in Hellenistic philosophy).

Thus, to summarize Paul’s use of Genesis 1 in 1 Cor 15:39-41, Paul clearly utilizes the language of the scripture, yet not without modification with a rhetorical end in mind. He generally reverses the order of creation, which subtly contributes to his rhetorical point regarding the future resurrection. In Jewish apocalyptic understanding, it was thought that the eschaton would be a return to way things were originally at the beginning of creation (*Urzeit wird Endzeit*). By drawing upon the language of Genesis 1, Paul is invoking original creation language at the end of his letter in his discussion of the

⁸ See also N.T. Wright, *Resurrection*, 345f. Wright persuasively asserts that by drawing upon so much language from Genesis 1-2 in this chapter, Paul is clearly attributing to the phrase “heavenly body,” something more than “spiritual being clothed with light” (346). He is rather grounding this discussion within explicitly Jewish thought.

eschaton.⁹ However, one senses a subtle shift away from traditional Jewish apocalyptic understanding, as well. It is not *just* a return to the state of things at the beginning. Rather, the types of bodies that humans will have at the end will be *even more glorious* than the beginning. This will become clearer later in the chapter, but for now he begins to lay the groundwork by reversing the order of creation such that there is a movement from the terrestrial bodies of humans to the glorious bodies of the stars. Thus, again in this chapter one does not find Paul exegeting Genesis 1 for its own sake. Rather, the significance of Genesis 1 for his audience lies in its usefulness for his Christologically-modified apocalyptic point.

This is further highlighted when one considers what Paul does *not* mention from the language and imagery of Genesis 1. He does not discuss the creation of the heavens and the earth themselves. Such would be irrelevant to his discussion of resurrection *bodies*. He also fails to mention the creation of plants. In Genesis 1, plants are created on day three, before the creation of the heavenly bodies. This does not work with Paul's rhetoric in these verses. Paul pointedly orders the terrestrial bodies before the heavenly ones, noting a backward movement from one to the other. For Paul to mention the plants *after* the creation of the heavenly bodies would mess up this pattern of movement. At the same time, to place the plants with the discussion of the creation of the animals would ruin his pattern of generally reversing the order of creation in Genesis 1. Thus, he leaves the plants out of the chapter altogether, with the possible exception of his metaphor of plant-yielding seeds in verses 36-38.¹⁰ Paul also fails to mention notable points from Genesis 1 that modern commentators and preachers often consider exceedingly

⁹ For the significance of the ordering of the letter as a whole, see Becker, *Paul the Apostle*, 163f.

¹⁰ V.P. Furnish, *Theology of the First Letter to the Corinthians*, 113. However, Genesis 1 does not specifically reference "wheat," which is Paul's only example.

significant: that God speaks creation into existence, that order is brought to chaos, or, depending upon one's theological bent, *creatio ex nihilo*. Paul does not refute any of those ideas, but they are simply beside his point. In his use of Genesis in this chapter, as in his use of Hellenistic thought and in his rhetoric throughout all of his letters, Paul is wholly focused upon making sure the Corinthians understand and remain within the theological framework of a bifocal Christologically-modified apocalyptic eschatology.

Following this section, Paul explicitly links this discussion about the different types of bodies in creation with his resurrection-body rhetoric:

Thus it is also with the resurrection from the dead:
 It is sown corruptible, it is raised incorruptible.
 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.
 It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.
 It is sown a yuciko,n body, it is raised a pneumatiko,n body.
 If there is a yuciko,n body, there is also one that is pneumatiko,n.
 (1 Cor 15:42-44)

Most English translations render yuciko,n as “physical” and pneumatiko,n as “spiritual,” but the connotations of these English words confuse the matter by invoking an anachronistic interpretation of Paul's speech. Typically, yuciko,n is translated as “of the soul” or “concerned with this life only.” In Aristotle's Anthology, it is even used to connote “spiritual” in contrast with “corporeal” (sw/matiko,j)!¹¹ In particularly Platonic and Stoic philosophical thought, when a person dies, the yu/ch, (“soul” or “life force”) departs/escapes from the body and “goes off to join the stars.”¹² Thus, a sw/ma yuciko,n is a body that is animated by its yu/ch. This does not exhaust Paul's particular use of the word in this context, however.

¹¹ Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon, seventh edition.

¹² See N.T. Wright, *Resurrection*, 349.

To grasp the full implications of this terminology, it is necessary to consider how he uses these words elsewhere in the letter. In 1 Cor 2:11-16, Paul draws a sharp distinction between those who are pneumatikoi/j (typically translated “spiritual”) and those who are yuciko.j (typically translated “unspiritual”). The former are able to discern the things of God’s Spirit, because they have the mind of Christ. The latter are those who do not have God’s Spirit, but merely the human spirit that is within. Such persons are not able to discern the things of God’s Spirit. Likewise, in 3:16 Paul makes the point that the Corinthians already have the Spirit of God. It is through God’s Spirit, working in and through Paul, that Paul, by nature weak (avsqenei,a), was able to proclaim the gospel with power (duna,mewj, 2:3-4). Thus, Paul has already modified the meaning of pneumatiko,n within the letter as a whole. That word now carries with it a sense of the “already” of human transformation in Christ, and at this point in the letter Paul indicates the “not yet” of that word: not yet has the Spirit of God “given life to your mortal bodies” (Rom 8:11) such that *they* are transformed from their natural state into their destined state of Spirit-filled glory.

It is interesting that in 15:41 Paul has just concluded his list of the bodies of creation with the stars, and now in his rhetoric of transformation to a glorious body, one can hardly help noticing Paul’s nod to the Platonic idea of the yu/ch returning to the stars. At the same time, however, though Paul invokes this Platonic imagery, he also modifies it. The future resurrection, of which Christ is the first-fruits, is not the same thing as the yu/ch departing from the body after death. Rather, just as there is a sw/ma yuciko,n, an admittedly corruptible, dishonorable, and weak natural body animated by the yu/ch, there is also an incorruptible, glorious, and powerful sw/ma pneumatiko,n, animated by the

pneuma, that will be *raised from the dead*. Thus, contrary to Greek philosophical thought, it is not the *yu/ch* that remains constant in a modified form after death, but rather the *sw/ma!* Here again one finds the use of Hellenistic ideas modified to fit Paul's rhetorical apocalyptic purpose.

The grounding for this claim, as well as its explanation, is, for Paul, the nature of *Christ's* resurrected body ("the first fruits," vs. 20, 23). It is to this that Paul now turns:

Thus it is written: The first man, Adam, became a living being (*yuch.n zw/san*);
the last Adam became a life-giving spirit (*pneu/ma zw|opoiou/n*). But it is not the *pneumatiko.n* that is first,
but rather the *yuciko,n*.
The first man is from the dust of the earth (*evk gh/j coi?ko,j*),
the last man is from heaven (*evx ouvranou/*).
Like the one of dust (*o` coi?ko,j*) are those who are of dust,
Like the one of heaven (*o` evpoura,nioj*) are those who are of heaven.
Just as we wore the image (*th.n eivko,na*) of the one of dust,
So we will also wear the image of the one of heaven. (1 Cor 15:45-49)

In verse 45 Paul quotes Genesis 2:7:

BHS:

*xP;îYIw: hm'êd"a]h'ä-!mi 'rp'[' ~d"ªa'h'(-ta,
~yhiø{a/ hw""hy> •rc,yYIw:
`hY")x; vp,n<il. ~d"Pa'h'(yhiÿ>w:) ~yYI+x; tm;äv.nI
wyP'Pa;B.*

LXX:

*kai. e;plasen o` qeo.j to.n a;nqrwpon cou/n avpo. th/j gh/j kai. evnefu,shsen
eivj to. pro,swpon avvtou/ pnoh.n zwh/j kai. evge,neto o` a;nqrwpoj eivj
yuch.n zw/san*

Paul's 1 Cor 15:45:

*ou[twj kai. ge,graptai\ evge,neto o` prw/toj a;nqrwpoj VAda.m eivj yuch.n
zw/san(o` e;scatoj VAda.m eivj pneu/ma zw|opoiou/nA*

Again, one sees Paul not interpreting Genesis on its own terms for its own sake but rather re-working it for the sake of making a rhetorical point to the Corinthian church regarding

Christological apocalyptic eschatology. Genesis 2:7 states that God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a living being (hY")x; vp,n<il., yuch.n zw/san).

Note the LXX's use of the word yuch.n in this context, as well as the implications of this verse, following vs. 42-44, for the origin of mortality. It is *God* who, at the creation of the world, "sowed" Adam from the terrestrial dust of the earth as a yuch.n zw/san, by nature corruptible, dishonorable, and weak. Some scholars, such as J.C. Becker, find the theological implications of this to be disturbing.¹³

However, this is mere background mentioned only for the purpose of Paul's particular rhetorical point: Christ is the hinge between the "sowing" and the "raising." Just as God created life in the first man, Adam, by breathing (xP;îYIw:, evnefu,shsen) into his nostrils the *breathe of life* (~yYI+x; tm;äv.nI, pnoh.n zwh/j) in Genesis 2:7, so God is now re-creating humanity through the last man, Christ, who has become (eivj) a *life-giving spirit* (pneu/ma zw|opoioiu/n).¹⁴ Note the significance of the fact that the term pneu/ma zw|opoioiu/n is here invoked rather than pnoh.n zwh/j. While there is something of an overlap in the semantic range of pneu/ma and pnoh.n, one would expect Paul to use pnoh.n, familiar with the LXX as most scholars agree that he is, and making his point through quoting Genesis 2:7 as most scholars agree that he is. However, recall that Paul has already made pneu/ma a loaded word within the letter. By replacing pnoh.n with

¹³ J.C. Becker, "The Relationship Between Sin and Death in Romans," *The Conversation Continues: Studies in honor of J. Louis Martyn*, (Nashville: Abington, 1990) 61.

¹⁴ The term pneu/ma is in some instances used interchangeably with pnoh.n in the LXX, although the semantic range is slightly different. Both terms are used to translate xêWr and tm;äv.nI. See especially 2 Sam 22:16/Ps 17:16 and Gen 7:22. The term zw|opoioiu/n recalls not only language from the Adam-Christ typology in verse 22, but also verse 36, where Paul says, "That which is sown is not given life (zw|opoiei/tai) unless it dies."

pneu/ma, Paul is keeping his language consistent with his assertions elsewhere.

Moreover, by altering the terms Paul is making a rather astounding claim. More than being a mere pnoh.n zwh/j that could only give make Adam a yuch.n zw/san (recall the use of earlier in this letter and in this chapter), Christ is a pneu/ma zw|opoioiu/n, capable of creating life that is incorruptible, glorious, and powerful! Just as the Corinthians have worn the image of the first type of body formed from the dust (yuciko,n), so through the pneu/ma zw|opoioiu/n they will wear the glorious image of the man from heaven (pneumatiko.n), whose resurrected body ascended back to heaven in glory. In other words, this body will be qualitatively new! Thus, Paul deviates somewhat from the exact language of Genesis, utilizing his own particular theological language throughout the letter (including 15:42-44), to make his bifocal Christologically-modified apocalyptic point.

It is worth noting that Paul uses in the word eivko,na in 1 Cor 15:49. It is difficult to imagine that Paul was unaware that such is the term found in Genesis 1:26, where it is written that God formed humanity in God's own image. However, he does not elaborate upon the point, nor does he use the idea of "image" in the same way. In Jewish apocalyptic tradition, after the fall of Adam, Adam still maintains the image of God. Thus, one could not argue that Paul is here returning to the Jewish apocalyptic notion of Adam's fall as the location of the origin of death. Paul may be breaking with the Jewish tradition at this point, asserting that Adam did lose his image of God at some point. This is unlikely, however, because, as was demonstrated above, Paul's use of all the rest of the Genesis allusions above have indicated that just as the Corinthians bear the image of Adam *as he was created*, so one day will they bear the image of Christ. More likely,

Paul is invoking the language of Genesis 1:26 to maintain the language of creation (*Urzeit wird Endzeit*), but, as we have seen throughout this essay, putting it to new use for the new creation: just as we have had corruptible, dishonorable, weak bodies like Adam, so we will one day have incorruptible, glorious, powerful bodies like Christ.

In the next portion of his argument, Paul finally focuses on the future moment of the sudden transformation (1Cor 15:50-53). In these verses, Paul turns his entire attention to the future, “not yet” apocalyptic moment. There are no allusions to Scripture nor to Hellenistic philosophy beyond what carries over from his discussions earlier.

In his conclusion (15:54-58), he ties the moment of our mortal flesh putting on incorruptibility with the moment of Christ’s final defeat of death, forecasted in 15:25-28. Here he briefly alludes to two other passages of Scripture: Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14. One sees him utilizing these Scriptural passages much in the same way as he has used Genesis. He introduces slight modifications (changing Isaiah’s *kate,pien o` qa,natoj ivscu,saj* to *katepo,qh o` qa,natoj eivj ni/koj*) and then lumps them together for the sake of making his rhetorical point. In this case, his point sounds much more like Romans. Sin is the “sting” (Hosea 13:14), interpreted as “victory” (by his modified Isaiah 25:8 paralleled with the Hosea verse) of death. The law holds the power of sin, but Christ is our victory over it all. Such an ending hinders one from asserting, as does Becker, that Paul might have had a total theological transformation between his first letter to the Corinthians and his letter to the Romans.¹⁵ Sin *is* related to death in this letter – it is death’s “victory,” just as Christ is our victory. Such is simply not Paul’s rhetorical point

¹⁵ This is indeed highly unlikely, given that Galatians, which is thought to be before 1 Corinthians (which is thought to be earlier than Romans) sounds a lot like Romans in this regard. For Becker’s argument, see “The Relationship between Sin and Death in Romans.”

in this section.¹⁶ Seeing as Paul does not appear to have altered his position on the relationship between sin and death, it is possible that Paul has not actually altered his position on when sin and death entered the world, either. Though this could not be proven, it would be consistent with Paul's use of Scripture throughout this chapter for Paul to ignore the theological implications of his words regarding *Genesis*, using the language *only* for the sake of his theological point regarding the *eschaton*.

In sum, Paul clearly draws upon the language of Scripture in 1 Corinthians 15, particularly the language of Genesis. However, he modifies the language, bringing it into contact with the Hellenistic language with which the church would have been familiar, all for the expressed purpose of making a particular theological point about the eschaton. This being the case, he ultimately he subjects both the Scripture and Hellenistic thought to the categories of his bifocal Christological apocalyptic eschatology, which is, for him, all-important. What does this say about Paul's view of Scripture? Does he use Scriptural language any differently than he uses Hellenistic language?

The answer to the latter question is "yes." Paul uses Hellenistic language because the Corinthians were already familiar with it, encountering it daily in their culture. The Jewish Scriptures, in contrast, were not likely to have been familiar to the predominantly-Gentile Corinthian congregation prior to their conversion. That Paul uses it at all, explicitly noting "it is written" without indicating what "it" is, indicates that Paul views (and had taught them to view) it as important for even Gentile Christians to *learn* and *grow in familiarity* with the Scriptures.¹⁷ This, seen in connection with Paul's sudden

¹⁶ So argue most scholars.

¹⁷ Richard Hays goes so far as to say that in this letter as a whole, "Paul was trying to teach the Corinthian church to reshape its identity in light of Israel's Scripture" ("Conversion of the Imagination," 396). Broad-

invoking of Isaiah and Hosea in verse 55, suggests that, for Paul, the rhetorical point that he is proclaiming is in some sense the fulfillment of the Scriptures themselves.

At the same time, it is surely significant that Paul views the Scriptures as so malleable. He continually subjects them to alteration, reversing the order of things, leaving parts out, and even changing the wording for the sake of his bifocal Christologically-modified apocalyptic point. Unlike the Hellenistic language, Paul never clearly *refutes* the Scripture, but he certainly does not expound upon it on its own terms – at least not if “on its own terms” in the way that modern biblical scholars would be inclined to view that phrase. It is possible that Paul, in viewing his bifocal Christologically-modified apocalyptic eschatology as the fulfillment of Scripture, would have understood his own use of Scripture to be fully in line with the language of Genesis. That said, Paul certainly does not expound upon Genesis for its own sake. If Scripture is so significant to the Gentile church, even fulfilled therein, it is so only through the lens of (and for the sake of) Paul’s bifocal Christologically-modified apocalypticism. At first glance, this does not appear to be terribly different from distinctively non-Christian Jewish apocalyptic use of Scripture from around the time of Paul. The examination of that question, however, is beyond the scope of this study.

To conclude, this paper has examined Paul’s use of Scripture in 1 Corinthians 15, particularly the opening chapters of Genesis, focusing upon his method and noting some implications of this method for Paul’s view of Scripture more generally.

Methodologically, Paul subjects the language of Genesis to some modification (e.g., reversing the order of the created bodies, changing the wording, using *eivko,na* in a

sweeping conclusions such as this are beyond the reach of this narrowly-focused paper. However, it would be interesting to bring the conclusions of this study into conversation with Hay’s claim.

different way, etc) for the sake of making a point regarding his bifocal Christologically-modified apocalyptic eschatology. In the process, he leaves unanswered questions that others might ask of Genesis, and he presents an entrance of death into the world that flies in the face of his Jewish apocalyptic heritage. This is indicative of the level to which he is wholly taken up in his own point and the degree to which he is utilizing Genesis for that single purpose. That he uses Genesis at all in his argument directed at a Gentile-born congregation is also indicative, nonetheless, that Paul continues to view the Genesis text as important, even within this eschaton-inaugurated world. The way in which Paul's use of Scripture compares/contrasts 1 Corinthians 15 with his use of Scripture elsewhere and, more broadly, with *others'* use of Scripture remains a topic for another study.

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