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**AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15:42-49:
THEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS**

by
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**Submitted to Concordia Seminary Graduate School
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the
Master of Sacred Theology Degree
Spring 2002**

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1 Corinthians 15.42-49

Part One: Translation and Grammatical Notes

(42) So also,¹ [is]² the resurrection of the³ dead ones. It⁴ is sown in perishability⁵, it is raised in imperishability⁶. (43) It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.⁷ It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. (44) It is sown a physical⁸ body,⁹ It is raised a spiritual¹⁰

¹ The adverb οὕτως connects verse 42 with the previous literary unit (vv. 37-41), translated *in this manner, thus, so*, see F. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd edition (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 741; A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing Co/Paternoster Press, 2000), 1271. This clause is a response to the question of v. 35 “how...” Paul often employs οὕτως και to connect a metaphor with an application (e.g., 2.11; 12.12; 14.9, 12; Gal 4.3; Rom. 6.11).

² First clause lacks a verb. Timeless gnomic Present characterizes the following series and Present is thereby preferred in the initial clause; see G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle To The Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1987), 784. Thiselton suggests a future tense translation, 1271.

³ Insertion of a generic article placed prior to the adjectival noun τῶν νεκρῶν denoting a class or family, see Turner, *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek: Syntax*, Volume 3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 180.

⁴ Subject is lacking in the series of clauses, see Turner, *Syntax*, 3:291. In the fourth contrastive clauses, σῶμα is the expressed subject or predicate apposition suggesting that “body” is the unexpressed subject of the prior clauses (see, e.g., NIV).

⁵ These verses constitute the lengthiest contrastive parallelism cola in the Pauline corpus, identified as “a model example of parallelism”, see Blass, Debrunner, Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 490; also Turner, *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek: Style*, Volume 4 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1976), 97. Turner identifies the structure as a “synonymous parallelism”, which emphatically highlights the unexpressed subject “body” of each clause. The verbs σπείρω and ἐγείρω remain constant, emphasizing the component of discontinuity of the present and future bodily form.

⁶ φθορά generally means the dissolution or deterioration of matter; many translate as “perishable” (see e.g., NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB) or “in corruption” (see e.g., AV/KJV) referencing that which is in “the state of being perishable,” Danker, 1054. Thiselton suggest the more graphic “decay” and suggests the contrastive clause is best read as “decay’s reversal,” Thiselton, 1272; cf. 15.50-53 and discussion by Fee, 785; Thiselton, 1271.

⁷ The contrastive pair of “dishonor” and “glory” picks up immediately preceding themes; cf. 15.40-41; Thiselton suggests translation as “humiliation,” 1273. Δόξα is commonly used by Paul to describe the radiance of the resurrected Christ (see e.g., 2 Cor. 3.7-4.6) and here probably means more than “honor.”

⁸ Here the adjective ψυχικός could be rendered “physical” or “natural,” Danker, 1100; or more descriptively as “a person who lives on an entirely human level,” Thiselton, 1275. For a succinct summary of the history of interpretation of this phrase see Thiselton, 1276-1281.

⁹ Lexically and contextually σῶμα means “physical body,” Danker, 983-84. See also the more extensive theological discussion in R. H. Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology* (SNTSMS 29; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976; reprint ed.; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1987), 3-8, 159-183; also see Schweizer, “σῶμα,” *TDNT* 7:1060-80. Grammatically, “body” is either subject or predicate apposition. Due to the passive verbal form and the slight change in literary parallelism, subject is possible. Here translated as apposition in keeping with most English translations and to continue the continuity of the former literary pattern.

¹⁰ See “πνεῦμα πνευματικός,” *TDNT* 6:420f.

body.¹¹ If¹² there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual [body]. (45) Thus, also it is written,¹³ “The first human, Adam,¹⁴ became¹⁵ a living¹⁶ being”; the last Adam [became] a life-giving¹⁷ spirit.¹⁸ (46) But the spiritual [is] not first, but the physical [is first], then the spiritual.¹⁹ (47) The first human [was] from²⁰ the earth, dusty²¹; the second human²²

¹¹ In this contrastive clause, Paul defines more specifically the contrast between the “sown” and “raised” body by the use of the adjectives ψυχικός, πνευματικός. This terminology recalls earlier themes of the letter; cf. 2.10-16, see Fee, 786. ψυχικός occurs 6 times in the New Testament (4t. in 1 Cor.; Jas 3.13; Jude 19). πνευματικός occurs 26 times in the New Testament (24t in the Pauline corpus [15t in 1 Cor]; 2t in 1 Peter.). The high frequency of these terms in 1 Corinthians indicates that these were common terms used within the Church at Corinth; see e.g., Fee, 785; R. Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (AGJU 10; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 265-267; R. A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians* (Abingdon Commentary Series; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 210.

¹² Example of a 1st Class Conditional assumption of truth, which according to Wallace functions semantically here as an evidence/inference relationship; D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 683. The analogy likely has the hermeneutical force of a typology; see e.g., A. T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimensions in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to his Eschatology* (SNTSMS 43; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 43; also see L. Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation Of The Old Testament In The New* (trans. D. H. Madvig; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 129-36.

¹³ This citation of Gen 2.7 departs from Rahlfs LXX version. Outlined succinctly by Stanley as an omission of initial καί insertion of ὁ πρῶτος; and addition of Ἀδάμ in keeping with the MT; C. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (SNTMS 69; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 207-209; also Thiselton, 1281; H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (trans. J. W. Leitch; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 284; trans of *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (1st ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969).

¹⁴ ἄνθρωπος Ἀδάμ is redundant, ἄνθρωπος is omitted from some MSS traditions (e.g., B K 326 365 pc Iren) and is omitted by the NIV translation.

¹⁵ The transitive preposition εἰς combined with intransitive verb loses transitive sense of movement “into” being negated by the stative verb; see Wallace, 359. εἰς + accusative ψυχὴν ζῶσαν replaces expected predicate nominative due to the Hellenistic linguistic preference for expressiveness, assisted by Semitic εἰς equated with Hebrew בְּ in the LXX translation; see Turner 3:253; also Thiselton, 1281.

¹⁶ Syntactically, ζῶσαν and ζωποιοῦ function as attributive adjectives modifying the accusative predicate nouns (see e.g., RSV).

¹⁷ ζωποιοῦν derives from ζωποιεῖω echoing the resurrection language already introduced by Paul, (e.g., ἐγείρω). It occurs 11 times in the NT, 7 times in Paul. See Bultmann, “ζωποιεῖω,” *TDNT* 2:874-75.

¹⁸ One important linguistic connection with verse 44 is the use of cognate noun forms of former adjectives; ψυχὴν and πνεῦμά here used as descriptors for πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος and ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος.

¹⁹ The neuter case usage of τὸ πνευματικὸν and τὸ ψυχικὸν likely connects these verse with the neuter case in v. 44 (cf. also in 15.53-54) and not immediately to v. 45 where the masculine case is used.

²⁰ ἐκ + genitive indicates source out of which each body draws its specific quality; see BDF, 253 (3); Wallace, 371-372.

²¹ ὁ χοϊκός as an adjective “dusty” is not found in prior Hellenistic literature. Schweizer suspects that Paul coined the term; Schweizer, “χοϊκός,” *TDNT* 9:472-79.

²² Textual variants include the apparent gloss of ὁ κύριος for ἄνθρωπος by Marcion, (cf. X² A D¹ K P Ψ, 81 104 614 1739mg *Byz Lect syr*, h.al goth arm al). Influenced by v. 46, p46 reads ἄνθρωπος πνευματικός see discussion in B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary On The Greek New Testament* (United Bible

[was] from heaven.²³ (48) As²⁴ [was] the one of the dust, also [are] those²⁵ [who are] of the dust; and as [was] the one of heaven, also [are] those [who are] of heaven.²⁶ (49)

Also, just as we have worn²⁷ the image of²⁸ the one of dust, we will also wear²⁹ the image of the one of heaven.

Societies, 1975), 568; Fee, 787; Thiselton, 1285-86; R. F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (SacPag 7; Collegeville, Minn: Glaxier/Liturgical Press, 1999), 571.

²³ γῆ and οὐρανός are often anarthrous after prepositions; see Moulton 3: 174-75.

²⁴ Both phrases in v. 47 are elliptical, lacking a verb.

²⁵ οἷος preceding τοιοῦτο probably functions here as a qualitative correlative relative pronoun; S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (JSOT; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 134. This sentence also reflects a four clause parallelism; BDF, 490. Thematically, τοιοῦτοι expands the former analogy, now connecting the “human of dust” with human beings in general and connects the “human of heaven” more specifically with only those who are “of heaven.”

²⁶ The adjective ἐπουράνιος is used to describe the heavenly one (see also, 1 Cor 15.40 (2t), 48 (2t)), in contrast to the former prepositional phrase ἐξ οὐρανοῦ v. 47.

²⁷ φορέω here, not to be confused with φέρω; Danker, 1064. To retain the metaphorical nuance, the translation “to wear” is preferred. See e.g., Conzelmann, 287-88; R. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Interpretation; Louisville: Knox, 1997), 273; G. J. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians* (Concordia Commentary Series; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 591; and Thiselton, 1288-90.

²⁸ The genitive could possibly function as objective genitive (ἕτοιμα), although probably here functions simply as possessive (cf. Matt 22.20).

²⁹ Strong witness for aorist subjunctive textual variant. Some scholars support the variant reading because of the theological consistency with other Pauline texts which emphasize the “already” element of eschatology (e.g., Rom 12.2, 2 Cor. 4.16; Col 3.10); See e.g., Collins, 572; Fee, 794-795; Hays, 273. Manuscript support for Future tense includes B I 38 88 206 218 242 630 915 919 999 1149 1518 1872 1881 syr ‘ cop sa eth *al.* Metzger and translation committee prefer future tense based on the didactic nature of these verses; Metzger, 569. For summary to discussion see Thiselton, 1288-1290.

Part Two: Introduction to 1 Corinthians 15 and its Occasion

1 Corinthians 15 consists of the longest discourse on resurrection within the Pauline corpus of the New Testament. 1 Corinthians fits within the ancient *genre* of letter and was written by the Apostle Paul to the Church at Corinth in the middle of the first century. Broadly speaking, the literary structure of the chapter can be subdivided into four sections with *caesura* after vv. 11, 34 and 49.³⁰ Each respective unit addresses related themes specific to the Corinthian misunderstanding of the early Church's teaching on the resurrection (vv. 3-5).

Its placement toward the completion of one of Paul's most lengthy letters has led many scholars to conclude that eschatological teaching on the Resurrection should be considered the "crown" or "capstone" of the entire Letter.³¹ Various reasons are articulated to support this proposition. For example, the reoccurring theme of eschatology throughout the letter affirms the prominence of chapter 15 (e.g., 1 Cor 1.7-8, 2.7-9, 3.13-17, 4.5, 5.5, 13, 6.2-3, 9-10, 14, 9.25, 11.26, 32, 13.8-12). In addition, A. Thiselton suggests that the prominence of the teaching of the cross in the former sections of the letter provides the theological grounding necessary for a correct understanding of the resurrection.

Paul could not introduce a theology of the resurrection before the notion of the cross as the "ground and criterion" of Christian identity and life-style had been fully reappropriated. A context of religious triumphalism and complacency leaves no conceptual space for the "transformative reversal" of death and resurrection. Resurrection epitomizes 1:31, "let the person who glories, glory in the Lord."³²

³⁰ There exist some scholarly differences as to the proper literary division of this chapter. Thiselton and Hays suggest divisions at v. 11 and 34, see Thiselton, 1257f; Hays, 269-277. Conzelmann suggests divisions at v. 11, 34 and 49, see Conzelmann, 279f. All identify the literary whole of this unit.

Others identify the rhetorical and logical features of Chapter 15 as an indication of its central importance to the whole. These features include a series of conditional propositions, extensive parallelisms, harsh rebukes, and carefully selected vocabulary that echo earlier themes from the letter. These features merge together creating a rhetorically convincing and logically sound unit.

Major Movements in Chapter 15

Paul's initial strategy unfolds as he reaffirms the traditional teaching of the resurrection of Christ (15.1-11). This foundational thesis becomes the primary warrant and reference point for Paul's teaching of the future bodily resurrection (vv. 13-23; cf. vv. 51f). The thesis for the resurrection of Christ lacks an apologetic motif and is instead presented in the form of a traditional creedal exposition (esp. vv. 3b-5).³³ In what could perhaps be interpreted as a literary *hyperbole*, Paul presents the traditional material by supplementing it with a substantial list of those to whom the risen Christ had also *appeared*, ". . . Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me" (vv. 6-8

³¹ See e.g., K. Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead* (trans. H. J. Stenning; New York: Revell, 1933), 11. Barth considers chapter 15 as the "goal" of the entire letter. See also Fee, 713-717; Thiselton, 1169-1172 and Hays, 252-254.

³² Thiselton, 1171.

³³ The non-Pauline vocabulary of vv. 3b-5 (e.g., "for our sins," "buried," "the third day," "the twelve," "in accordance with the Scriptures") combined with the added emphasis of "(and) that" prior to each of the four part formula suggests that these verse may include a Pre-Pauline traditional creed. Modified expressions of such an early creed may be present elsewhere (e.g., Acts 17.3; 2 Cor 5.15b; 1 Thess 4.14; Rev 2.8). See e.g., Fee, 718; R. Gundry "The Essential Physicality of Jesus' Resurrection According to the New Testament," in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord & Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology: Festschrift for I. H. Marshall* (ed. J. B. Green and M. Turner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 208; Horsley, 198.

NRSV). With a winsome confidence, Paul concludes by affirming that such a confession was mutually shared among the Corinthians (v. 11).

Therefore, it can be inferred that the Corinthians did not deny the concept of resurrection *per se* or the resurrection of Christ *in particular*. Rather, after affirming their common theological ground, Paul introduces the specifics of their misunderstanding through a pointed question, “*How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead ones?*” (v. 12). Precisely what the Corinthians intended by this claim has been variously interpreted.³⁴ What does seem certain is that Paul’s view was being opposed by “some” in the Corinthian congregation. This question provides an important beginning point for reconstructing what was at stake in Corinth and ascertaining Paul’s counter argument in the remainder of the chapter.

Paul’s response develops with a three-fold approach (vv. 12-34; 35-49; 50-57). The logic of the first proof is distinctively Christological in nature (vv. 12-34). Literarily the verses form a lengthy combination of “if-then” constructions linked together to confirm that Christ’s resurrection is the *basis* for the believers’ hope in a future resurrection of the dead (vv. 13-19).³⁵ Of note is the rhetorical twist of verses 15, 16 and 17 which places the discussion within a *backwards* logic, “For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either“ (v. 16).³⁶ Continuing the Christological motif, the future resurrection of believers is further grounded by the resurrection of Christ as the “first fruits” (vv.20-28).³⁷ Paul’s approach changes at this point with a cryptic reference

³⁴ The possible views will be incorporated into the “occasion” section below.

³⁵ For an outline of the literary structure, see Lockwood, 562.

³⁶ Ibid, 562; see also, J. C. Becker, *Paul The Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 166-67.

³⁷ For further development of this theme, see M. C.de Boer, *The Defeat of Death. Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (JSNTSup 22; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 105-109.

to the practice of Baptism of the Dead (v. 29). Paul does not directly criticize the practice of vicarious baptism (evidently practiced by some at Corinth); rather he curiously makes use of it to support his main thesis that there will be a future resurrection.³⁸ Paul concludes this unit by claiming that his own life of peril and hardship would be all but pointless if a future resurrection were not a reality (vv. 30-34). Therefore, the first large section contains Christological and apologetic arguments for the final resurrection of the dead.

Paul presents the second major sub-unit (vv. 35-49)³⁹ by incorporating the standard ancient genre of a teaching diatribe. Employing a rhetorical device, he introduces an imaginary interlocutor to pointedly confront the skepticism of some at Corinth. These questions unveil the root of the problem; “*But one may ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?*” (Ἀλλὰ ἐρεῖ τις· πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται). Thus, the focus shifts to the *modality* (πῶς) of resurrection and more specifically to the *corporeal dimension* of the resurrection (ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται).

Paul’s immediate rebuke to such questions reveals his utter disdain for the thinking of some at Corinth, “Fool!” In a surprising twist of strategy, Paul then shifts from a primarily Christological focus (vv. 1-34) to analogies drawn from nature. The first is the example of a bare grain of wheat that is sown and rises in a new form (vv. 36-38).

³⁸ This verse has been a notoriously difficult passage in the history of interpretation. A. Thiselton presents a succinct summary of the scholarly interpretive options; see Thiselton, 1240-1251; also, Conzelmann, 275-77; C. L. Thompson, “1 Corinthians 15, 29, and Baptism for the Dead,” *Studia Evangelica* (2 vols; ed. F. L. Cross; Berlin: Akademie, 1964), I: 647-59. The practice was noted in the ancient Greek world; e.g., Plato, *Resp.* 363E-365A and in Second Temple Jewish Literature (see e.g., 2 Macc 12.39-45). Beginning in the second century of the Christian Church several references to such practice among the Marcionites are recorded; see responses e.g., Chrysostom, *Hom. In epist. 1 ad Cor.* 40.1; Epiphanius, *Haer.* 28.6.4; Tertullian, *Adv Marc.* 5.10.

³⁹ Some scholars carry the third division from verse 35-58; see e.g., Fee, 714-717.

R. Hays nicely summarizes how this analogy enables Paul to paradoxically affirm “both the radical *transformation* of the body in its resurrected state and yet its organic *continuity* with the mortal body that preceded it.”⁴⁰ This paradoxical conceptualization is further elaborated by Paul’s second analogy. He draws from the elements of material creation to illustrate that there is indeed a variety of physical embodiments (humans, animals, birds and fish; v. 39) and a variety of celestial and terrestrial glories (sun, moon, and stars; vv. 40-41).⁴¹

Paul then uses these analogies (vv. 36-41) to establish a comparison that introduces Paul’s pivotal point concerning the modality of the future resurrection, “So also, is the resurrection of the dead ones. . .” (οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν v. 42). Connecting the immediate preceding discussion by the comparative connector “so also” (οὕτως καὶ) Paul embarks into the difficult discussion of *what form* believers “will wear” the resurrected body (v. 35).

By use of an antithetical clause structure (vv. 42b-44a), Paul establishes a foundational premise guiding this subunit, “If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body” (v. 44b). The spiritual/raised body, in keeping with the former analogies, will be dissimilar from and in continuity with the present form of the human body. Further elaborated through an Adam/Christ comparison (vv. 45-48), Paul establishes that both a “physical” and “spiritual” body exist and human persons through their connections to “Adam” and “Christ” will wear both forms (v. 49) simultaneously.⁴²

⁴⁰ Hays, *Corinthians*, 270.

⁴¹ Gundry, “Physicality,” 209, shows that the analogies do not reflect a difference between “materiality versus immateriality. . . .”

⁴² In this particular text the future reality of this eschatological reality is emphasized. Elsewhere Paul emphasizes the present reality of this eschatological transformation not yet complete (e.g., Rom 12.2; 2 Cor 4.16; Col 3.10).

The third and final movement of this chapter (vv. 50-58) introduces a new thought “This I say” (Τοῦτο δέ φημι). Although appearing abruptly, the final thesis rhetorically functions to guarantee the former Adam-Christ antithesis articulated through familiar Pauline eschatological imagery (cf. 1 Thess 4.13-18).⁴³ By way of a circuitous route, Paul concludes this unit by harkening back to the Christological theme that introduced his initial discussion (vv.1-11), now drawing special attention to the proper eschatological ordering of events. The *present* and *future* bodily reality is juxtaposed in this unit emphasizing the “not yet” element of transformation. Paul brings this section to a hortatory climax reflecting his pastoral and ethical intent for the whole section;

“Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (v. 58 NRSV).

The Intellectual/Historical Occasion for 1 Corinthians 15.42-49

At the onset of a more careful exegetical analysis of 15.42-29, a brief discussion of the possible intellectual and historical occasion underlying this text is necessary. Although the general movement and understandability of Paul’s teaching on resurrection is not dependent on such a reconstruction (since the essence of Paul’s exposition is reasonably clear), its prominent placement within the genre of an *ad hoc* letter invites such an inquiry.

As noted in the larger movements of chapter 15, the primary rhetorical devices shaping this chapter are a set of questions, “*How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead ones?*” (v. 12) and “*But one may ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?*” (v. 35). Although Paul does not explicitly state

⁴³ See e.g., discussion in Conzelmann, 289-293; Thiselton, 1290-1313.

the misunderstandings/opposing views, elements inherent to the letter suggest at least two probable scenarios.⁴⁴

One possibility is that there were some in the community who adopted an *over-realized* eschatological perspective leading to the conclusion that they were already experiencing the final eschaton in their present form. *In other words, the eschatological “not yet” had become eclipsed within the eschatological “already.”* This misunderstanding could have been fueled by an over-sacramentalized attitude toward the early Church teaching on the rejuvenating role of the Spirit in baptism (see e.g., 1 Cor 10.1-12, 12.12-13, cf. 6.11; Gal 3.26-29; Eph 2.11-22) and/or through the experience of the supernatural pneumatic gifts in the community (1 Cor 12-14). Both confirmed to early believers that the eschatological end had “already” begun. Yet, taken to an extreme, this position would inevitably lead to the denial of a *future* resurrection, promoting a triumphant (e.g., “spiritual enthusiasts”) and/or complacent moral/ethical attitude in the community. These tendencies are certainly characteristic of some of the Corinthian behaviors and attitudes (e.g., 4.8, 5.1-2, 6.12, 8.1-3, 11.21-22; cf. also 2 Tim 2.18 where it explicitly states that Hymenaeus and Philetus have “swerved from the truth by claiming that the resurrection has already taken place” confirming that this specific teaching error existed elsewhere in another Pauline congregation).

The second possible intellectual/historical setting has received considerable scholarly attention in recent years.⁴⁵ The suggestion is that there were some in the

⁴⁴ More than two occasions have been suggested, although the two presented here are the most likely. See e.g., de Boer, 96-97 who outlines four possibilities.

⁴⁵ See e.g., M. Black, “The Pauline Doctrine Of The Second Adam,” *Scottish Theological Journal* 7 (1954): 170-79; R. Horsley, “Pneumatikos Vs. Psychikos Distinctions Of Spiritual Status Among The Corinthians,” *Harvard Theological Review* 69 (1976): 269-288; G. E. Sterling, “‘Wisdom Among The Perfect:’ Creation Traditions In Alexandrian Judaism And Corinthian Christianity,” *Novum Testamentum* 37:4 (1995): 355-384; For a succinct summary of the discussion, see Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 1282-1285.

community who had incorporated commonly held Greek philosophical understandings of a “disembodied” future existence into the Corinthian teaching of resurrection. This philosophy was characterized by a radical dualism between “body” and “soul” which affirms the immortality of the “soul” or “spirit”.⁴⁶ Such a view did not deny the *concept* of resurrection or an afterlife (15.1-11).⁴⁷ Yet for those who advocated such a view, the Pauline concept of a bodily (i.e., fleshly/material) resurrection would have been viewed as offensive or non-sensible (cf. 6.12-20; Acts 17.32). One must admit that the possibility of this sort of eschatological view was possible at Corinth since the church was located in a thoroughly cosmopolitan Greco-Roman city and was predominantly Gentile in background.

Of special importance is that this Greek philosophical teaching had been incorporated into Hellenistic Jewish writings by this time, especially those with roots in Alexandria. Of particular interest for reconstructing the background to 1 Cor 15.44-48 is the work of Philo Judaeus of Alexandria (20 B.C. to about A.D. 50).⁴⁸ His literary corpus was extensive and profoundly influenced Hellenistic Jewish thought. His hermeneutical readings of Scripture (LXX) demonstrate a weaving together of Middle-Platonist, Neo-Pythagorean, and Stoic categories to illumine the theological teachings of the Jewish Scripture, often expressed through an allegorical interpretation. This is nowhere more

⁴⁶ This dualism was fully developed in the Christian tradition by late first and second century Gnostic groups.

⁴⁷ Scholarly presentations which more fully develop this option include; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Black, 1968; 2nd ed. 1971), 374-75; R. A. Horsley, “How can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? Spiritual elitism in Corinth,” *Novum Testamentum* 20 (1978): 203-31; B. A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS 12; Missoula: Scholars, 1973), 24; R. Sider, “St. Paul’s Understanding of the Nature and Significance of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians XV 1-19,” *Novum Testamentum* 19 (1977): 137.

⁴⁸ One significant historical point of connection between Hellenistic Jewish Alexandrian thought and the Corinthian congregation is the influence of Apollos and his teaching in the congregation. (e.g., Acts 18.24-28; 1 Cor 1.12, 3.5, 4.6 etc.)

evident than with his extensive and speculative interpretations of Genesis 1-3 as expressed in three literary works: *On the Creation of the World (De opificio mundi)*, *Allegorical Interpretation (Legum allegoriae)* and *Questions and Answers on Genesis (Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin)*.⁴⁹ In addition, he incorporates reflections on Gen 1-3 throughout many of his other writings with varying degrees of explanation.⁵⁰

At least three points of intersection between Paul and Philo suggest to many scholars that some element(s) of the speculative Jewish creation interpretations may have taken root in the Corinthian Church. In particular, scholars suspect that Paul's use of the Adam-Christ typology is employed in part to counter Jewish speculative interpretations of Adam in the creation account.

The first point of intersection is the *similar vocabulary and concepts* used by Philo, particularly in terms of the "two Adam" typology. As a speculative, philosophical exegete, Philo was keenly interested in the two different creation accounts of human persons presented in Genesis (vv.1.26f, 2.27). Incorporating Platonic concepts (e.g., idea/sense perception) to the interpretive task, he concluded that there were two distinct human persons created, succinctly summarized in *Allegorical Interpretation 1*.

There are two types of men; the one a heavenly man (οὐράνιος ἄνθρωπος), the other an earthly (ὁ δὲ γήινος). The heavenly man, being made after the image of God, is altogether without part or lot in corruptible and terrestrial substance; but the earthly one was compacted out of the matter scattered here and there, which Moses calls "clay." For this reason he says that the heavenly man was not moulded, but was stamped with the image of God; while the earthly is a moulded

⁴⁹ The most comprehensive secondary discussions on Philo's interpretation of Creation include, R. Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories of Male and Female* (ALGHJ 3; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970); J. Jervell, *Imago Dei. Gen I, 26f im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1960); B. Stegmann, *Christ, The "Man From Heaven": A Study of 1 Cor 15, 45-47 in the Light of the Anthropology of Philo Judaeus* (Washington: Catholic University of American, 1927) and T. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* (Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 14; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983).

⁵⁰ Examples include, Philo, *Cher.* 53; *Det.* 80-90, 151; *Plant.* 18-19, 23-24, 34, 44; *Migr* 3; *Her.* 56-58, 64, 184; *Congr.* 90; *Somn.* 1.34, 210; 2.70; *Abr.* 56; *Spec.* 4.123; *Virt.* 199, 203; *QE* 2.46, *QG* 56.

work of the Artificer, but not His offspring. We must account the man made out of the earth to be mind mingling with, but not yet blended with, body. But this earthlike mind is in reality also corruptible, were not God to breathe into it a power of real life; when He does so, it does not any more undergo moulding, but becomes as soul, not an inefficient and imperfectly formed soul, but one endowed with mind and actually alive; for he says, “man became a living soul.”⁵¹

The second point of intersection is the concern for *sequence* in the created order.

Philo’s reading of creation led him to the conclusion that the two persons of creation had a distinct order. Reflecting on Genesis 2.7, Philo makes a sharp distinction between the two creation accounts.

After this he says that ‘God formed man (ἄνθρωπος) by taking clay from the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life’ (Gen. ii.7). By this also he shows very clearly that there is a vast difference between the man (ἄνθρωπος) that came into existence earlier after the image (εἰκὼν) of God. . . .⁵²

The “heavenly man,” sometimes also identified with “reason,” was created first (Gen 1.27f), in the Divine image and was immortal, “while, he that was after the (Divine) image was an idea or type or seal, an object of thought (only), incorporeal, neither male nor female, by nature incorruptible.”⁵³ The man formed from the earth (Gen 2.7f) “earthly man,” sometimes also identified with the realm of “sense-perception” was created second as a copy or model of the first, “for the man so formed is an object of sense-perception, partaking already of such or such quality, consisting of body (σῶμα) and soul (ψυχῆ), man or woman, by nature mortal.”⁵⁴

The third point of intersection is that of the *dualist form* and *contrast* of the two created human persons. The “heavenly man” was considered immortal, incorruptible;

⁵¹ Philo, *Leg.* 1.31f (Colson/Whitaker, LCL). All citations of Philo in this paper will be from the Loeb Classical Library.

⁵² Philo, *Opif* 34

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

whereas the “earthly man” was considered mortal, corruptible. One cannot with absolute certainty prove that this Hellenistic Jewish interpretative tradition was in view when Paul wrote these verses. Nevertheless, it is reasonable and perhaps even probable that such teachings were familiar to the Jewish members of the congregation and would have been especially appealing to those from a Greek background. Within such an intellectual environment, Paul’s re-reading of the creation narrative is particularly striking. As developed below, his reading places Christ at the center of the creation narrative informing his eschatological teaching of present and future bodily existence.

Part Three: Limits, Structure, and Style of the 1 Corinthians 15.42-49

1 Corinthians 15.42-49 is a distinct sub-unit within this larger self-contained unified treatise on the future resurrection of dead ones. It is not an isolated text, but on the contrary is integrally related to Paul’s more comprehensive exposition of his theology of resurrection as articulated in 1 Corinthians 15.1-58 and specifically to 15.35-49. Semantically it is connected to the immediately preceding analogy by the adverbial phrase οὕτως καί. Similarly, its content is shaped by the introductory question to the entire sub-unit as expressed in verse 35, “*But one may ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?*” (αλλὰ ἐρεῖ τις· πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται). Although tightly woven together with the entire argument and flow of chapter 15, verses 42-49 justify a more narrowly defined study as one discrete unit. This judgment is confirmed by the presence of several distinct literary and lexical internal markers.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Each will be discussed in more detail within the main body of this study.

First, there is a marked difference in Paul's approach to the question of the form of the resurrected body in these verses. Paul shifts from appealing to observable truisms from nature to appeals shaped by Scriptural tradition based on Genesis 1-2 (e.g., 15.45). Especially relevant is the unique Pauline typology of the first and second Adam. Second, there is a marked change in style and vocabulary from the former unit. The literary use of parallelisms and carefully selected vocabulary that echo earlier themes sets these verses apart. Third, rhetorical style shifts from a more didactic exposition to a tone more characteristic of a polemic. Although Paul pointedly addresses the Corinthians elsewhere (e.g., v. 36), the developed teaching from Scripture in this text indicates that more may be at stake. For example, Paul's emphatic concern for the proper chronological succession of the resurrected bodies (physical first and then the spiritual, v. 46) signals that there may have existed a counter Pauline reading of these scriptures. Fourth, the accent of Paul's response in verses 42-49 is for the purpose of answering the question "*With what kind of body do they come?*" (v. 35b) instead of the former question "*how are the dead raised?*" (v. 35a). Finally, verse 50 introduces a new thought as indicated by "This I say" (Τοῦτο δέ φημι), literarily supporting the conclusion that there exists a distinct unity to verses 42-49.

On the basis of these distinct characteristics, it is reasonable to conclude that embedded within these specific verses is a tightly knit dialog between Paul and the Corinthian opponents. In other words, verses 42-49 are not simply a soliloquy presenting Paul's teaching on the resurrection. Rather, this text represents a complex dialog between Paul and specific opponents at Corinth, in which Paul strategically incorporates their language and concepts in such a way as to bring them to a new and proper understanding

of resurrection. E. Sterling suggests that in these verses there exists a “real exchange in which the views of the Corinthians are taken seriously.”⁵⁶

Part Four: An exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 15.42-49

15.42-44

Paul begins this sub-unit by referring to the immediately preceding analogies to establish a comparison. This comparison introduces the main idea of the concluding movement in the second sub-unit, “So also, is the resurrection of the dead ones. . .” (v. 42a).⁵⁷ Connecting the immediately preceding discussion by the comparative connector “so also” (οὕτως καί) Paul enters into the difficult discussion of *what form* the resurrected body is to be constituted (αλλά ἐρεῖ τις πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται v. 35).⁵⁸

Paul’s approach for describing the complex theological concept of the resurrected body initially unfolds with four parallel pairs of contrastive clauses. In each clause, the repetition of the verb “is sown” (σπείρω) keeps alive the immediately preceding analogy of the sown seed, yet applies the metaphor to the resurrection (ἐγείρω). G. Fee identifies the closely aligned use of the conception in this verse with the former analogy of the “naked seed” and “the body that is to be” (v. 37). He suggests that to understand “sown” in this text as referencing “dead body” is misguided. Rather, Paul is drawing a

⁵⁶ Sterling, “Wisdom,” 357.

⁵⁷ There is difference among scholars of how the organization of these verses should be cataloged. Some group 42-44a with the preceding discussion, see e.g., Lockwood, 583-589; whereas others discuss them more collectively in verse 35-58, see e.g., Thiselton, 1257f; Conzelmann, 279-280, suggests the grouping of vv. 35-49; cf. Hays, 269-277. Although exact divisions may vary, nearly all confirm the inter-relatedness and logical connection of Paul’s argument throughout the chapter.

connection between “the present body with its future expression.”⁵⁹ This way of understanding the text also guards against drawing too sharp of a distinction between the pre- and post- resurrected body, as if Paul were conceptualizing two different bodies. These clauses conceptualize one body in two different expressions.

The unexpressed subject “body” (σῶμα) of the first three pairs of clauses is revealed with rhetorical force as the subject’s apposite in the fourth set of clauses (42b-44a).

σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ	ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ
σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ	ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ
σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ	ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει
σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν	ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν
It is sown in perishability	it is raised in imperishability
It is sown in dishonor	it is raised in glory
It is sown in weakness	it is raised in power
It is sown - a physical body	it is raised - a spiritual body.

This literary anaphora (σπείρεται. . . σπείρεται) carefully contrasts four features of the present and future body, theologically affirming genuine *discontinuity* of the present body with its future bodily expression.⁶⁰ Paul identifies the body that is sown with the terms φθορά, ἀτιμία and ἀσθενεία. The body that is raised is associated with ἀφθαρσία, δόξα, and δυνάμις. Generally, these antithetical descriptors emphasize the exalted and glorious character of the “spiritual body” in contrast to the earthly nature of the “physical body.”

The first set of binary contrasts, in perishability/ in imperishability (φθορά and ἀφθαρσία) are unique to this chapter (vv. 42-44, 50, 52-54), likely indicating their

⁵⁸ N. T. Wright suggests that Paul has now entered into a theological discussion that is “at the borders of human language.” *Reflecting The Glory: Meditations for Living Christ’s Life in the World* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1998), 159.

⁵⁹ Fee, 784.

distinctive use among the Corinthians. The meaning generally references the deterioration of matter, most often translated into English as “perishable” (NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB) or “in corruption” (AV/KJV). In this context, Thiselton suggests the more graphic “decay” and that the contrastive clause is best read as “decay’s reversal.”⁶¹ The next contrast between “dishonor” (ἀτιμία) and “glory” (δόξα) echoes an earlier text where Paul sarcastically identifies the Corinthians as those who are “held in honor” in comparison to Paul who is viewed as one in “disrepute” (ἡμεῖς μωροὶ διὰ Χριστόν, ὑμεῖς δὲ φρόνιμοι ἐν Χριστῷ· ἡμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰσχυροί· ὑμεῖς ἔνδοξοι, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄτιμοι 4.10; cf. more complex use in 11.2-16). In the theological context of the resurrected body, Paul’s “glory” here probably far exceeds the notion of “honor” but could reference a brilliant, reflected radiance (e.g., Col 3.3-4).⁶² Weakness (ἀσθενεία) and power (δυναμία) also picks up prior themes where Paul compares himself with those at Corinth (1.24f; 4.10; also 2 Cor 12.10; 13.3, 9).⁶³

The larger context of 1 Corinthians suggests that these terms were used by some at Corinth as self-descriptors, especially by those who considered themselves “spiritual” (πνευματικός).⁶⁴ Paul, however, adopts the Corinthian language and reshapes it into a new conceptual frame of reference. Of special poignancy within the Corinthian setting is

⁶⁰ Lincoln suggests the contrast as “the pre-eschatological state of the body over against the eschatological,” 39-40.

⁶¹ Thiselton, 1272; cf. Fee, 785.

⁶² Danker, 259-60; Kittel, “δόξα,” *TDNT* 2:232-255, esp. see, 242-245. In the LXX, δόξα was most often used to translate כְּבוֹד when referencing the presence of God in Old Testament theophanies, the “divine radiance” in the giving of the law, and the “divine presence” within the Temple. As a result of the LXX, the semantic field of δόξα extended from the Hellenistic usage to express the visible, reflected, radiant expression of the divine. New Testament authors incorporate this semantic sense of δόξα into their interpretation of Christ as the divine presence. Perhaps here Paul is not so much saying that one is raised in “prestige,” “honor,” but rather is making a claim that is theologically tied with the ecclesiological transformation into the “likeness” of Christ.

⁶³ The terminology of “glory” and “weakness” appear in an eschatological description of the end in Ezra (4 Ezra 7.112-115).

that Paul defers “glory” and “power” as descriptors of the future, “in imperishability” (ἀφθαρσία) realm. Conversely, he reserves the terms “dishonor” and “weakness” as descriptors for the present, “in perishability” (φθορά) realm. This conceptual reversal could hardly have been satisfying to the Corinthians who apparently believed that their present existence was characterized by power and glory.

The literary movement continues with the emphatic element of this series in the final pair that supplies an explicit apposition to the implicit subject (v. 44a).

It is sown a *physical body*, it is raised a *spiritual body*.
σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν

The literary structure of these two clauses departs from the former pattern by excluding the repetition of the prepositional phrase “in” (ἐν) as well as introducing a unique *combination* of vocabulary restricted to this text alone; “physical body,” (σῶμα ψυχικόν) “spiritual body” (σῶμα πνευματικόν). Lexically, “body” (σῶμα) means the full expression of a human body.⁶⁵ The use of “spiritual” (πνευματικός) to define the “body” (σῶμα) is of special significance in the broader Corinthian context. It seems undeniable from the high frequency of the general term πνευματικός in this letter (see esp., 2.13-15), that it was a Corinthian concept which Paul is incorporating apologetically at this juncture to describe the nature and character of the raised body.⁶⁶ If the situation was indeed that some were denying the bodily resurrection, then the combination of

⁶⁴ Horsley, “Spiritual Elitism at Corinth,” 206.

⁶⁵ Danker, 983-84; Schweizer, *TDNT* 6:420f; cf. 7:1060-70; See also the more extensive theological discussion in R. H. Gundry, *Soma*, 3-8, 159-183.

⁶⁶ This terminology recalls earlier themes of the letter (2.10-16; cf. Fee, 786). ψυχικός occurs 6 times in the New Testament (4t in 1 Cor.; Jas 3.13; Jude 19). πνευματικός occurs 26 times in the New Testament (24t in the Pauline corpus, 15t in 1 Cor; 2t in 1 Peter; cf Rev 11.8). The high frequency of these terms in 1 Corinthians indicates strongly that these terms used within the Church at Corinth as suggested by Fee, 785;

“spiritual” (πνευματικός) to describe the raised, imperishable body (σῶμα) would have been a troubling oxymoron for the Corinthians.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the combination of the adjectival descriptor “physical” (ψυχικός) with body would have caused no difficulty. Both adjectives function to define more precisely the respective expressions of the body in its present “earthly” state and in its future “heavenly” state. G. Fee suggests further that these verses are countering the misunderstanding of a disembodied future resurrection, “The transformed body, therefore, is not composed of “spirit”; it is a *body* adapted to the eschatological existence that is under the ultimate domination of the Spirit.”⁶⁸

In these four pairs of short contrastive clauses (vv. 42-44a), Paul’s careful word selection, repetition of verbal forms combined with literary devices of antitheses and climax have responded to the imaginary interlocutor question, “*With what kind of body do they come*” (v. 35). His response is “a spiritual body” (σῶμα πνευματικόν), one raised in imperishability, glory, and power. This provides a segue into the next unit where *Paul’s thesis* is further developed (v. 44b).

If there is a physical body, then there is also a spiritual body
Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν

Theologically Paul’s teaching of the contrast of the “physical body” with the “spiritual body” is at the heart of the matter for his teaching on bodily resurrection. In keeping with Fee, B. Witherington suggests one way for understanding the contrast of “physical” with “spiritual.”

R. Jewett, *Paul’s Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (AGJU 10; Leiden: Brill, 1971), see esp. 265-267.

⁶⁷ See E. Schweizer, *TDNT* 6:420.

It is thus unlikely that Paul means by *soma pneumatikon* (v. 44) a “body made up of spirit.” That would be a non sequitur, since Paul elsewhere assumes that spirit is immaterial. He means, rather, that the resurrection body will be animated and empowered by the Spirit, just as the present physical body (the *soma psychikon*) is animated and empowered by a physical life principle or force, which the creation story says God breathed into human beings.⁶⁹

15.45-47⁷⁰ The last Adam typological interpretation of Creation

Verse 44b functions as a linking verse with Paul’s next comparison (οὕτως καί) as developed in the following movement (vv. 45-47). Paul makes an intentional hermeneutical shift in verse 45 as indicated by the grammatical marker “it is written” (γέγραπται). Moving beyond abstract descriptors, Paul now draws upon the faith history of Israel by offering Gen 2.7 (LXX) to logically substantiate and explain the immediately preceding thesis “*If there is a physical body, then there is also a spiritual body*” (v. 44b).

Having earlier argued that “as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive” (15.22), Paul now elaborates further the Adam/Christ analogy by way of citing Gen 2.7. His scriptural citation varies from the LXX witness and has drawn some scholarly discussion.⁷¹ It is reproduced here with agreements between the LXX version and Pauline citation underlined.

⁶⁸ Fee, 786.

⁶⁹ B. Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 308.

⁷⁰ Although the possibility of this text being an interpolation will not be addressed in this study, at least one scholar has concluded that 15.44b-48 is an interpolation, see M. Widmann, “1 Kor 2 6-16: Ein Einspruch gegen Paulus,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 70 (1979): 47-48; Response in J. Murphy-O’Connor, “Interpolations in 1 Corinthians,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 48 (1986): 94; W. O. Walker, Jr. *Interpolation in the Pauline Letters* (JSNTSup 213; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 19, 95.

⁷¹ One succinct discussion of the textual differences is found in Stanley, *Paul and the Language*, 207-209; see also Conzelmann, 284-287; E. E. Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 141-43. R. Scroggs, *The Last Adam* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 86-89; Thiselton, 1281-1288. For an opposing view, see Lenski, *St. Paul’s I and II Epistles To The Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937, repr 1963), 717-721.

חַיָּה:וַיִּצְרֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עֹפֶר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי
הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ

(Hebrew – Genesis 2.7)

καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς
καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς
καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζώσαν

(LXX – Genesis 2.7)

ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζώσαν,
ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν.

(1 Corinthians 15.45)

While the changes in Paul’s citation may reflect a textual tradition no longer extant,⁷² more likely the differences reflect a point of intentional theological emphasis to assist Paul in developing a convincing polemic to counter the Corinthian misunderstandings related to resurrection. The first part of Paul’s citation is closely aligned with Gen 2.7c with the addition of the term πρῶτος and Ἀδὰμ⁷³ both modifying ἄνθρωπος. The significance of these added qualifiers becomes more apparent in the following clause, ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν.⁷⁴ Thus, by the addition of πρῶτος to the Scriptural citation, Paul establishes a Christological and typological link of the first Creation narrative to the new Creation narrative which for Paul is grounded in the Gospel proclamation of the cross and resurrection (cf. Rom 5.12-19).⁷⁵ C. D. Stanley judges that this typological connection is a crucial hermeneutical building block for the

⁷² Although variant readings exist among the LXX manuscripts, the addition of πρῶτος and Ἀδὰμ are not attested. See J. W. Wevers, ed., *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate academiae Scientiarum Göttingensis editum*. Vol I: Genesis (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 84.

⁷³ It has been suggested by C. D. Stanley, that Paul may be cited from the MT because of the connection of אָדָם with Ἀδὰμ; Stanley, 208.

⁷⁴ As noted by some scholars, 15.45b is cited by Paul as if he perceived it as part of “Scripture”; see e.g., Conzelmann, 284.

flow of the argument, “the fundamental contrast between Adam and Christ as the πρῶτος and ἔσχατος Adam (v. 46b) that forms the backbone of the ensuing argument.”⁷⁶

Paul’s further description of the “Last Adam” as πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν echoes two themes from Gen 2.7b (LXX) as embedded within the phrase πνοήν ζωῆς. Πνοή and πνεῦμα are related semantically⁷⁷ and the Pauline shift from ζωή to ζωοποιέω is theologically important, revealing in particular the distinctive role of Christ as the historical beginning point of the eschatological New Creation. A. Lincoln identifies the significant nuance of this semantic connection. Whereas the first Adam was the *recipient of life* (ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδάμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν), the Second Adam “has a new quality of life, for as πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν he is no longer merely alive and susceptible to death but rather has now become creatively life-giving.”⁷⁸ The contrast is emphatic and the unique role of Christ as the source and beginning point of the eschatological life for humanity is explicit.

In addition, within the larger context, these select descriptors substantiate more fully his former thesis, σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν (v. 44a). The adjectival forms of ψυχικός and πνευματικός in verse 44b derive from the noun forms ψυχή and πνεῦμα as used in verse 45. With these semantic connections, Paul has substantially buttressed his earlier thesis by associating the ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδάμ with the σῶμα ψυχικόν in distinction from ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ with the σῶμα πνευματικόν.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ M. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 28.

⁷⁶ Ibid; see also, J. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 200.

⁷⁷ The replacement of Πνοή with πνεῦμα occurs in Philo, (e.g., *Leg. all.* 1.42); There is affinity with Jewish wisdom tradition as well (e.g., *Wis* 7.22; 8.17; 9.10).

⁷⁸ Lincoln, *Paradise*, 43-44.

⁷⁹ Sterling, “Wisdom,” 358-59.

Then appears a disruption in the literary flow with the abrupt insertion of the emphatic negated conjunction *ἀλλὰ* adding what appears almost as an unnecessary aside related to the *sequence* of this typology (V. 46).

But the spiritual [is] not first, but the physical [is first], then the spiritual.
ἀλλ' οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ψυχικόν, ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν.

In keeping with v. 23, Paul may be simply re-asserting that there exists an eschatological order where Christ is the “first fruits,” although here using the creation narrative for such purposes. The addition of such a strident insistence on the ordering of the two “Adams” within Paul’s interpretation of creation has, however, prompted alternative suggestions.⁸⁰ For example, G. Sterling observes that “There is apparently some disagreement between Paul and the Corinthians about the sequence of the *ψυχικός* and *πνευματικός*.”⁸¹ Sterling and other scholars suspect that a dual Adamic teaching representative of Hellenistic Jewish thinkers such as Philo was adopted by some at Corinthian setting and was creating some of the misunderstanding on resurrection. Black asks the question;

Was he [Paul] familiar with the ‘two Adams’ in Philo? An *ἐπουράνιος ἄνθρωπος*, also called *εἰκὼν ἄνθρωπος* the “Ideal Man” in the Platonic sense, was created first, then the earthly Adam; to this corresponds, as in Paul, but again in the reverse order, the spiritual and the natural. If the Apostle was familiar with Philonic or pre-Philonic teaching, he is reinterpreting it in terms of his own mystical experience of the Risen Christ. Or rather, he is making restrained and caution use of current *theologoumena* to give expression to his own Christology.⁸²

⁸⁰ See e.g., Barrett, 374-75; Pearson, 17-23; Horsley, “Pneumatikos,” 269-288.

⁸¹ Sterling, “Wisdom,” 359; See also, Thiselton, “Clearly Paul’s reversal of the order of the first and last Adam in 15.45-49 may well reflect a Philonic type of speculation,” Thiselton, 1176.

⁸² Black, “The Pauline Doctrine,” 171.

R. Hays suggests that if the Philonic interpretive tradition of creation lies behind the Corinthian problem, then it would have likely influenced those in the community who identified themselves as “spiritual.”

It is possible that all of this is a subtle rebuttal to an interpretation of Genesis that was influencing those Corinthians who thought of themselves as *pneumatikoi*. Perhaps their reading was more like Philo’s, connecting the “heavenly man” with their own exalted knowledge and wisdom; if so, Paul’s opposition between Adam and Christ seeks to reshape their understanding and to beckon them to look to the future transformation of their bodies.⁸³

After this clarifying addition, Paul returns to the former literary parallel structure. He asserts a second Adam-Christ correlative idea, yet employs different vocabulary that thematically draws attention to different elements of the Creation narrative (Gen 2.7a). He shifts from using the titles ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ and ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ (v. 45) to ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος and ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος. The overall focus shifts toward identification of the source/originating point of the ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος as having come from the ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός. The adjective χοϊκός is used only here and has no other Hellenistic Greek parallel, leading some scholars to suggest that Paul coined the term.⁸⁴ Through this careful use of vocabulary, Paul alludes to the Creation narrative which uses the noun form χοῦς (Gen 2.7a). By use of a parallel literary structure, Paul identifies the source/origination point of ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος as ἐξ οὐρανοῦ.

Thus, 15.45-47 further grounds and expands on the thesis of 15.44b, “If there is a physical body, then there is also a spiritual body” by use of a typological reading between ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ and ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ (v. 45) and ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος and ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος (v. 47). Thiselton nicely summarizes how this typology presents the

⁸³ Hays, 273.

⁸⁴ Schweizer, *TDNT*, 9:472-79.

Pauline theological framework for the order of reality, the *First Creation* and the *New Creation*:

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**.⁸⁵

The final two verses of this unit bring the preceding analogies to a climax with a more personal application through a syntactically tightly woven structure (vv. 48-49).

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 48 | οἷος ὁ χοϊκός
καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος | τοιούτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί,
τοιούτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι· |
| | As [was] the one of the dust,
and as [was] the one of heaven, | also [are] those who are of the dust;
also [are] those who are of heaven. |
| 49 | καὶ καθὼς
ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ
φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ. | |
| | Also, just as
we have worn the image of the one of dust,
we will also wear the image of the one of heaven. | |

Leaving behind the typological terms, ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος and ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος Paul employs the more graphic substantives, ὁ χοϊκός and ὁ ἐπουράνιος, to continue the analogy. By way of a shift from singular to plural (οἱ χοϊκοὶ and οἱ ἐπουράνιοι), Paul applies the analogy collectively to groups or classes of human persons.

⁸⁵ Thiselton, 1284

This subtle shift confirms that Adam and Christ are to be interpreted as representative progenitors of human persons who belong to them.

The final comparison (καὶ καθὼς) develops this further by incorporating yet one more *echo* of the Genesis narrative by the use of the term “image” (εἰκὼν; perhaps Gen 5.3 cf. Gen 1.26). Apart from one isolated and untypical usage in 1 Cor. 11.7, Paul’s use of εἰκὼν is limited to Christological and ecclesiological contexts. Distinct to Pauline theology is the conviction that *Christ is the image of God* (e.g., 2 Cor 4.4; Col 1.5) and that those who are “ἐν Χριστῷ” are being changed into and conformed to the very image of Christ (e.g., Rom 8.29; 2 Cor 3.18; Col 3.10). In other words, Paul’s typological reading of Genesis 1-2 is distinctively Christological, affirming Paul’s ecclesiological conviction that the Church will be transformed into the image of Christ.

As a result of the first creation all human persons reflect the likeness of the “first Adam,” yet with the advent of the new creation, those “in Christ” have been (“already”) and will be (“not yet”) transformed into the image of Christ. The full manifestation of such an eschatological existence will find its fullest expression through the bodily resurrection where the “Church” will reflect perfectly the very likeness of Christ.

Part Five: Concluding Thoughts

1 Corinthians 15 is the Apostle Paul’s most vivid effort to describe a future reality that no living person has either experienced nor can ultimately fully understand. The primary thesis of verses 42-49 is that *there will be a future resurrected body* (v. 44b). The parallel literary structure, carefully selected vocabulary, and typological connections between the “first human Adam” with the “last Adam,” effectively communicate this

complex concept. Paul grounds this future reality upon the commonly held conviction of the resurrection of the human Christ (15.1-11). Paul presupposes this central theological proof within verses 42-49 by the use of eschatological titles applied to Christ, “The Last Adam,” “spiritual,” “heavenly human,” and “second human.”

The length of Chapter 15 combined with both strident and polemical movements throughout suggests that Paul was convinced that this foundational teaching of the resurrection was in jeopardy at Corinth. Some at Corinth likely adopted a Greek/Hellenistic Jewish philosophical dualistic approach to future existence which denied a future bodily resurrection. Or the problem may have been that some interpreted the presence of the Spirit in their midst as assurance of the eschaton’s full expression already in the present. It may be impossible to reconstruct exactly what specific theological confusion prompted the writing of these verses. Nevertheless, in this text Paul’s argument would have effectively countered both extremes by denying a “disembodied” future existence as well as calling the Corinthians to a balanced “eschatological realism” in the present.⁸⁶

In addition, Paul’s distinctively Christological hermeneutical approach in verses 44-49 for interpreting the first Creation illumines larger theological themes in the Pauline corpus. For Paul, the death and resurrection of Christ provides the unique and central pivotal event in human history that demonstrated that the eschatological time clock has begun. The resurrection of Christ and the presence of the Spirit began a complete new era in history where the “New Adam” or “New Creation” is now present in the Church and will be brought to full transformation into the very image of Christ at the final eschaton (e.g., 1 Cor. 6.16; Rom 8.3; Phil 3.20-21). Related to this observation, Goppelt concludes:

Here it is absolutely clear that the new creation is not a repetition of the first, nor is it simply a reversal of the Fall; it is a perfect, i.e., a typological, renewing of creation. . . . The church as the new creation is related typologically to the first creation, and this relationship is interwoven inextricably with the implications of Adam-Christ typology, which demonstrates that Christ is the reality in redemptive history that comprehends the new creation.⁸⁷

Within the passage as a whole, Paul presents a sweeping redefinition and affirmation of the future bodily resurrection of those who are in Christ. Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 15 are firmly grounded within the boundaries of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and integrally shape Pauline anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology and eschatology. The overriding urgency throughout is to teach that there will be a *bodily* resurrection that is both different from, as well as in continuity with, the present human body. N. T. Wright nicely summarizes the guiding theme of this text.

Paul makes the point again that resurrection does not mean returning to the present life, but going through death to the other side, into a life that death will never touch again. . . . As with the contrast between the physical and spiritual, we must remind ourselves that, for Paul, the contrast between earth and heaven is not the contrast between the "physical" in the sense of space, time and matter, and the "spiritual" in the sense of non-space, non-time and non-matter. It is the contrast between God's reality and our reality. God's reality is the heavenly reality, and Jesus has already gone into that reality as a human being, clothed in his new body. One day, God will make new heavens and new earth, and marry those two realities together so that there will be one whole, new creation. It will be what we now call "physical," but somehow more so; and it will be what we now call "spiritual," but much more so, because the two realms will be married together.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Thiselton, 1288.

⁸⁷ Goppelt, 134-135.

⁸⁸ Wright, Excerpts from 161-163.

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