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*Christ, Creation, and the Cosmic Goal of Redemption:
A Study of Pauline Ktisiology and its Interpretation by
Irenaeus*

By

J. J. Johnson Leese

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

At The

University of Durham

Department of Theology and Religion

2014

Abstract

J. J. Johnson Leese

Christ, Creation and the Cosmic Goal of Redemption: A Study of Pauline Ktisiology and its Interpretation by Irenaeus

The primary aim of this dissertation is to consider how Irenaeus of Lyons' christocentric reading of protology, soteriology, and eschatology provides a useful theological framework for organizing Pauline ktisiology in a way that contributes to contemporary ecotheological scholarship. This investigation builds upon recent shifts away from covenant theology and toward theological frameworks that more thoroughly consider creation themes, as well as cultural shifts toward greater ecological consciousness. Together, these shifts have contributed to the development of ecotheology as a new respected field within constructive theology. Given that creation theology has not been considered a strong thread within Pauline theology and that the Pauline corpus has not been a source for many contributions to the ecotheological discourse, this study opted for a history-of-reception approach. Irenaeus of Lyons (115-202 CE) is an exceptional example of a reader who is sensitive to both creation categories and christological texts within the Pauline corpus, and he was, therefore, a valuable resource for this study.

In order to bring the creation theology of Paul, as framed by Irenaeus, into conversation with the emerging corpus of ecotheological scholarship, this study is organized around three areas of exegetical and theological inquiry. First, it explores the structural significance of creation motifs in Pauline theology as well as their relation to Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology. Second, it analyzes Irenaeus' deployment of Paul in the formation of a biblical theology of creation. And third, through these exegetical and theological resources, this study suggests possibilities for how Pauline theology might contribute toward the growing corpus of ecotheology.

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Abbreviations

All abbreviations of ancient literature, academic journals, and monograph series follow the forms indicated in the *SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006).

Declaration

This work has been submitted to the University of Durham in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and none of it has been previously submitted to the University of Durham or in any other university for a degree.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis is the culmination of a very long journey supported and encouraged by many individuals. I am both grateful and indebted to my primary academic advisor, Prof. John Barclay at University of Durham, England. His steady and constant critique, guidance, and encouragement has made a less-than-ideal working arrangement possible (a six-year, part-time study from my primary residence in Hong Kong). While I attempted to balance family, teaching, and travel responsibilities, John's timely advice, astute eye for precision, and multiple readings of chapters has made a successful completion of this degree possible. His model as a master advisor is one I can only hope to emulate in my own teaching and advising of students. Thank you, John, for your enduring support!

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This journey toward doctoral work began, however, over twenty years ago with the encouragement and support of Dr. David Scholar, my former (now deceased) professor and mentor. I am disappointed that David is not here to celebrate in this accomplishment, which is due in large part to his role in my academic and personal journey. I continue to joyfully cherish the support, friendship, and prayers of his family, particularly his wife, Jeannette. As they know more than any others, the circuitous journey of the past twenty years met with

unexpected delays and joys, including three children, moving to India and then Hong Kong, and traveling and teaching in over thirty other countries.

My most recent partners on this journey have been my new colleagues at Seattle Pacific University (SPU) in Seattle, Washington. They have encouraged me toward the completion of this degree, while fondly reminding me that although my office is the smallest one at SPU, it is also the office where the most dissertations have come to completion. I now join the ‘cloud of witnesses’ before me as I bring yet one more dissertation to completion while residing in 402 Alexander Hall. I especially wish to thank the Dean of the School of Theology, Doug Strong, who has shown keen sensitivity toward the unique challenges I have faced this past year, my SPU School of Theology colleagues, and most particularly, my fourth-floor colleagues of Alexander Hall.

But the most enduring sacrifices of this long journey have been shouldered by my immediate family. I am forever grateful for the support of my husband, Bill, who has provided me assistance at every level. He has given professional support by reading my pages and offering me thoughtful editorial suggestions for each chapter. Even when I was discouraged, Bill never was. At the practical level, he fulfilled all the household responsibilities during my excursions to Durham, England, even while working as a full-time professional and maintaining his own travel schedule. Thank you, Bill, for your support, love, and long-suffering endurance on this journey together! Our children, Nate, Pragati, and Sanjay, have likewise spent many months of the past six years with one absentee parent – as I was off to Durham, the library, or distracted by an impending deadline. I love each of you and am grateful for your patient understanding of my desire to complete this degree. Having now watched me complete a Master of Divinity, a Master of Sacred Theology, and now a PhD, I can with confidence promise -- it is finished! Now it is your turn. I will experience great satisfaction in assisting each of you toward the completion of your higher academic pursuits and professional goals.

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Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Abstract | i |
| Statement of Copyright | ii |
| Abbreviations | iii |
| Declaration | iv |
| Contents | vii |
| Chapter One: Introduction and Background to Study | 1 |
| 1.1 The Aims of the Thesis | 1 |
| 1.2 The Scholarly Context | 3 |
| 1.2.1 Creation in the Old Testament | 3 |
| 1.2.2 Creation in the New Testament | 8 |
| 1.2.3 Paul and Creation | 11 |
| 1.2.4 The Bible and Ecotheology | 13 |
| 1.3 Methods and Sources | 16 |
| 1.4 Chapter Outlines | 21 |
| 1.4.1 Chapter Two: Christ of the New Creation | 21 |
| 1.4.2 Chapter Three: Christ of the Beginning and End | 22 |
| 1.4.3 Chapter Four: Christ as Image of God and as Adam | 23 |
| 1.4.4 Chapter Five: Irenaeus of Lyons, Theologian of Creation | 23 |
| 1.4.5 Chapter Six: Irenaeus and Paul | 24 |
| 1.4.6 Chapter Seven: Paul, Irenaeus, and Ecotheology—Possibilities for Consideration | 24 |
| Chapter Two: Christ of the New Creation | 26 |
| 2.1 New Creation within a Pauline Theological Framework: The Debate | 26 |
| 2.1.1 J. Louis Martyn: New Creation as A Cosmic Act of God in Christ | 30 |
| 2.1.2 M. Hubbard: New Creation as Personal Conversion | 32 |
| (a) Internal Spiritual Conversion of Human Hearts | 33 |
| (b) Paul’s Defense of his Apostolic Ministry | 34 |
| (c) Paul’s Own Conversion | 35 |
| 2.1.3 T. Ryan Jackson: New Creation as Inclusive of Personal, Communal, and Cosmic Dimensions | 37 |
| 2.1.4 A Comparative Analysis: Methodological Considerations | 39 |
| (a) Isaiah or Aseneth? | 41 |
| (b) Personal Conversion or Apocalyptic Unveiling? | 44 |
| 2.2 An Apocalyptic Paul? Revisiting the Scholarly Debate | 47 |
| 2.2.1 Definitions and Characteristics of Apocalyptic Eschatology | 49 |
| 2.2.2 The Linguistic Web of Apocalyptic Motifs in Paul | 52 |
| (a) ἀποκάλυψις | 53 |
| (b) αἰών | 56 |
| (c) καταργέω | 58 |
| (d) ἐν τάχει | 63 |
| (e) κόσμος | 64 |
| (f) κτίσις/κτίζω | 66 |
| 2.2.3 Preliminary Conclusions | 68 |
| 2.3 Conclusion: The Scope of New Creation — Humanity, Community, and/or Cosmos? | 70 |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Chapter Three: Christ of The Beginning and End | 74 |
| 3.1 Christ and the Creation of All Things (1 Corinthians 8:6 and 1 Cor 10:26) | 74 |
| 3.1.1 Introduction | 74 |
| 3.1.2 Background and Context | 77 |
| (a) Background Issues (1 Cor 8:1-11:1) | 77 |
| (b) The Historical and Social Setting (1 Cor 8:1-11:1) | 78 |
| 3.1.3 First Corinthians 8:6: Introduction and Guiding Questions | 81 |
| (a) Semantic Sphere of Reference | 81 |
| (b) Syntactical, Linguistic, and Contextual Issues | 82 |
| (i) First Pair of Clauses: ἡμῶν εἰς Θεοῦ ὁ πατήρ . . . καὶ εἰς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός | 84 |
| (ii) Second Pair of Clauses: ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα . . . δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα τὰ πάντα | 85 |
| ἐκ and δια | 87 |
| (iii) Third Pair of Clauses: ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν . . . ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ | 89 |
| 3.1.4 First Corinthians 10:26: Psalm 24:1 (LXX, Ps 23:1) | 90 |
| 3.1.5 Ethical Imperative: Life in the Law of Christ | 92 |
| 3.2 Christ and the Telos: Subjection and Reconciliation of All Things (1 Cor 15:20-28) | 97 |
| 3.3 Implications and Conclusion | 102 |
| | |
| Chapter Four: Christ as Image of God and as Adam | 104 |
| 4.1 Introduction | 104 |
| 4.2 Image of God in Primal Creation: Divine Likeness in the Creation Narrative (Gen 1:26-28) | 105 |
| 4.3 Image of God in Paul: Introduction to Paul's Reading of Gen 1:26-28 | 111 |
| 4.3.1 Man as Image and Glory of God (1 Cor 11:2-16) | 114 |
| 4.3.2 Humanity as Bearing the Image of the Earthy First-Born Man (1 Cor 15:47-49) | 118 |
| 4.3.3 Christ as Image of God (2 Cor 4:3-4; Col 1:15) | 121 |
| (a) 2 Cor 4:3-4 | 123 |
| (b) Col 1:15 (Col 1:9-23) | 125 |
| 4.3.4 Believers as in the Image of Christ (Rom 8:28-30; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:9-10) | 131 |
| (a) Rom 8:28-30 | 131 |
| (b) 1 Cor 15:49 | 134 |
| (c) 2 Cor 3:18 | 136 |
| (d) Col 3:9-10 | 138 |
| 4.3.5 Preliminary Conclusions | 140 |
| 4.4 Adam and Christ: The New Creation in Christ Illuminates the First Creation in Adam (1 Cor 15:21-22; 1 Cor 15:42-49) | 141 |
| 4.5 Conclusions | 147 |
| | |
| Chapter Five: Irenaeus of Lyons, Theologian of Creation | 152 |
| 5.1 Introduction | 152 |
| 5.1.1 Scholarship on Irenaeus and Creation | 155 |
| 5.1.2 Background and Setting of Irenaeus | 157 |
| 5.1.3 'Gnostic' Teaching on the Creator, Creation, and Redemption | 158 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 5.2 | The Irenaean Response | 161 |
| 5.2.1 | Pillar One: The Integrity and Unity of God Who Creates through His Two Hands, Son and Spirit | 162 |
| | (a) The Motivating Principle of Creation..... | 162 |
| | (b) Creatio Ex Nihilo..... | 164 |
| 5.2.2 | Pillar Two: The Integrity of the Incarnation..... | 166 |
| | (a) Incarnation and Protology: Mediating God to Creation | 166 |
| | (b) Incarnation as Material and Spiritual: The Humanitas and Divinitas of Christ | 168 |
| | (i) Incarnation as Human: Adam as a ‘Type’ of Christ | 170 |
| | (ii) Incarnation and the Goodness of Creation..... | 171 |
| | (iii) Incarnation and the Eucharist | 173 |
| | (c) Incarnation and Soteriology..... | 174 |
| | (i) Soteriology as the Redemption of Sin: The Redirection of Human Free Will toward God..... | 175 |
| | (ii) Soteriology as the Redemption and Immortality of the Flesh | 176 |
| | (iii) Soteriology as the Perfecting of All Things..... | 178 |
| 5.2.3 | Pillar Three: The Climax of Creation in the Economy of God | 179 |
| | (a) A Modified Chiliastic Vision | 179 |
| | (i) The Inheritance of the Earth | 180 |
| | (ii) Participation with God: A Theocentric Climax..... | 181 |
| 5.3 | Conclusion..... | 182 |
| Chapter Six: Irenaeus and Paul..... | | 184 |
| 6.1 | Hermeneutical and Exegetical Conventions..... | 184 |
| 6.1.1 | Background and Current Scholarship on Irenaeus’ Reading of Paul | 185 |
| 6.1.2 | The Prolegomena to the Hermeneutical Task | 188 |
| | (a) Establishing Authoritative Texts: The Unity and Harmony of the New with the Old..... | 188 |
| | (b) Establishing Epistemological Limitations on Human Knowledge..... | 190 |
| | (c) Establishing the Rule of Faith as the Basis for Community Reading..... | 191 |
| 6.2 | Irenaeus’ Ktisiological Framework: The Pauline Texts | 195 |
| 6.2.1 | Christ and Creation: A Pauline Framework | 195 |
| | (a) Christ and Creation: Protology | 199 |
| | (b) Christ and Creation: The Incarnation | 203 |
| | (c) Christ and Creation: Soteriology and Eschatology | 209 |
| 6.3 | Conclusions | 215 |
| Chapter Seven: Paul, Irenaeus, and Ecotheology — Possibilities for Consideration.... | | 218 |
| 7.1 | Pauline Creation Themes and Ecotheology..... | 218 |
| 7.2 | Ecological Hermeneutic Considerations..... | 219 |
| | 7.2.1 A Christocentric Theological Hermeneutic..... | 219 |
| | 7.2.2 Beyond Romans 8:19-25 and Colossians 1:15-20 | 221 |
| | 7.2.3 Ecology as a Hermeneutical Lens | 222 |
| 7.3 | Pauline Theological Categories | 223 |
| | 7.3.1 Soteriology: Redemption to Creation and Telos | 223 |
| | 7.3.2 Incarnation and Eucharist in Relation to the Creation | 227 |
| | 7.3.3 Theocentric Directed Eschatology | 228 |
| 7.4 | Conclusion: In the Beginning . . . In the New Beginning ‘In Christ’ | 230 |
| Bibliography..... | | 232 |

Chapter One

Introduction and Background to Study

1.1 The Aims of the Thesis

In recent decades, biblical scholarship has experienced a rather significant shift in emphasis: the central prominence once attributed to covenant theology with an anthropological soteriological approach has been overshadowed by a scholarly trajectory that deems creation themes and motifs as equally important, if not more important, to the theological framework of the biblical narrative.¹ This theological shift is mirrored - and perhaps intensified - by an increased ecological consciousness that has emerged during this same time. As a result of the natural interrelationship of these trends, an entirely new sub-discipline of ecotheology has risen as a recognized and respected category for theological inquiry. Most of the scholarly attention to these related trajectories, however, has occurred within Old Testament (OT) scholarship and, to a lesser degree, New Testament (NT) scholarship. Overall, the Pauline corpus has only been used to make minor contributions to both creation theology and ecotheology; in relationship to the ecotheological discussion, these contributions have been primarily limited to Rom 8:18-25 and Col 1:15-20.

Just as the new emphasis on creation themes and ecotheology has modified the horizon of biblical interpretation, the field of hermeneutics has likewise undergone systemic change in recent decades, as scholars now give greater attention to theological and/or canonical interpretations of Scripture rather than focusing purely on the historical-critical methods of former generations. As a result of this shift, the history-of-reception approach has increasingly been viewed as a potentially rich resource for informing scriptural interpretations. This dissertation attempts to draw upon the integration of these three distinct yet related scholarly trends - the increased importance placed on biblical creation themes, the emergence of ecotheology, and the theological interpretation of Scripture enhanced through a history-of-reception approach - while focusing particularly on how the Pauline corpus might contribute toward a robust creation and ecotheological theology. Thus, the primary aim of this

¹ Developments briefly mentioned in these introductory comments are documented within this introductory chapter below.

dissertation is to ask how a historical interpreter of Paul with a particular interest in the structural and theological relationship of Christ and creation might illumine the interpretive possibilities therein that could ultimately produce fresh ecotheological readings of Paul. This aim led to the selection of Irenaeus of Lyons (115-220 CE) as one valuable reader of Paul. Drawing significantly on the Pauline corpus, Irenaeus' creation theology was constructed through connecting and organizing biblical creation texts into a Christological framework.² His approach provides possibilities for Paul to contribute to ecotheology, not as a set of unconnected proof texts, but by way of a theological vision where the whole of reality in relationship to Christ and creation and by extension, to soteriology and ecclesiology, are central components of Paul's theology. This selection of Irenaeus in relationship to the Pauline corpus provides the primary question of this dissertation: *Does Irenaeus help us discern a structural relationship between creation and Christology in Pauline theology in a way that could prove fruitful for a Christian ecotheology?* Given this aim, one essential biblical exegetical task is to explore the various ktisiological themes in Paul, specifically in terms of their relation to Christology and, thus, by extension, to soteriology and ecclesiology.³ The following question shall therefore guide this complementary inquiry: *How does Paul articulate the relationship of Christ to the cosmological origins of the first creation, to the ongoing creative work of God, and to the eschatological culmination of creation in the telos?*

Having established the broad contours of this research, my attention now turns to defining terminology: specifically ktisiology and ecotheology. I carefully selected the relatively uncommon theological term *ktisiology* in order to accentuate the comprehensive scope of what is meant in this dissertation by the phrase 'creation themes and motifs'. Ktisiology encompasses more narrowly defined approaches to creation including *creatio originalis* (e.g., protology, cosmology), *creatio continua* (e.g., incarnation, pneumatology), and *creatio nova* (e.g., new creation, soteriology, eschatology). The term uniquely brings these more narrowly construed categories together into a comprehensive theological approach to creation, and it is necessary for responding to the essential questions of this dissertation. As I have already noted, the term *ecotheology* refers to a relatively new field in constructive theology that has emerged as a burgeoning sub-discipline with Jewish/Christian theology.

² For a justification of the selection of Irenaeus of Lyons, see §1.3.

³ For a justification of the selection of Pauline texts, see §1.3.

One primary premise of ecotheology is that there is an interrelationship between the natural world and religion, and thus, I have given special focus to the ways in which sacred texts might provide trajectories for addressing environmental concerns as they relate to ethics, cosmology, and anthropology. Currently ecotheological works are represented within a consultation at the Society of Biblical Literature and similar initiatives are emerging within other religious communities, yet only minor contributions have been made from the Pauline corpus to this discipline.

To draw out connections which identify and illumine the interrelationship of these three theological traditions, this study is structured using the following organization scheme. First, it explores the structural significance of creation motifs in Pauline theology and their relation to Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology. Second, it analyzes Irenaeus' deployment of Paul in the formation of a biblical theology of creation. And third, through an exegetical and history-of-reception approach, it suggests possibilities for how Pauline theology might contribute toward the growing corpus of ecotheology.

Attention now turns to a brief history of the scholarship on creation and ecotheology and then to an overview of my methods and a justification for my selection of Pauline texts and Irenaeus as a useful reader of Paul. The final section includes a succinct summary of each chapter and a further description of the specific questions that have guided this dissertation.

1.2 The Scholarly Context

1.2.1 *Creation in the Old Testament*

From the establishment of the creedal statements in the third and fourth centuries to the middle of the twentieth century, theological and biblical scholars, while affirming creation as an article of faith, have effectively approached it as an ancillary theme overshadowed by the prominence of covenant/salvation history.⁴ Over the past generation of scholarship, an

⁴ See for example, G. von Rad, "The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (Edinburgh/London: Oliver & Boyd, 1965), 131–43 (134). For a succinct list of factors contributing to the neglect of creation in scholarship, see T. E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), ix-x and R. Knierim, *The Task of Old Testament Theology: Substance, Method and Cases* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 185–91. For a summary of developments, see W. Brueggemann, "The Loss and Recovery of Creation in Old Testament Theology," *ThT* 53 (1996): 177–90; Fretheim, *World*, x1-xvii; W. P. Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1999), 1–10.

expanding interest in creation theology by Jewish and OT scholars has challenged the former approach by affirming the prominence of creation themes throughout the OT. The central prominence once attributed to covenant and/or redemption themes in OT theology has been increasingly overshadowed by a scholarly trajectory that deems creation themes and motifs as equally important, if not more important, to the OT narrative and theological framework.⁵ Works by Westermann, Anderson, Fretheim, and Brown particularly provide persuasive assertions that creation themes are integral to the overall substratum of OT thought and theology.⁶ Many factors have contributed to this burgeoning interest, yet certainly one formative factor, and one of importance for this study, is the influence of new scientific findings that predict a global ecological crisis barring dramatic change in human behaviour. This heightened awareness, coupled with a critical assessment of the Judeo-Christian traditions as exacerbating environmental problems, has foisted upon biblical scholars a reassessment of historical readings of Scripture that have, at least since the Reformation, almost entirely focused on anthropological soteriology.⁷ Another factor contributing toward this shift is a broadened scholarly approach that has identified creation themes beyond Gen 1-3 throughout the OT. This has also been an era where a renewed interest in the Wisdom literature has drawn attention to the mediatorial role of wisdom in creation.⁸ One final factor has been a growing appreciation for and awareness of the function of creation narratives within the ancient Near Eastern worldview.⁹

⁵ Within the preface to their collection of articles, Brown and McBride describe this change in emphasis as “a tectonic shift.” See W. P. Brown and S. D. McBride, eds, *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), xi.

⁶ C. Westermann, *Creation* (J. J. Scullion; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974); Fretheim, *World*; Brown, *Cosmos*. See also Brown’s more recent work, W. P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). See also the works of Anderson. For example, B. W. Anderson, *Creation Versus Chaos: The Reinterpretation of Mythical Symbolism in the Bible* (New York: Association Press, 1967); B. W. Anderson, *From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives*. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1994); B. W. Anderson, “Creation and Ecology,” in *Creation in the Old Testament* (ed. B. W. Anderson; IRT; Philadelphia/London: Fortress/SPCK, 1984), 152–78.

⁷ The influential article by J. L. White prompted reassessments. See J. L. White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–7. See discussion of White’s article in H. P. Santmire, *Nature Reborn: The Ecological and Cosmic Promise of Christian Theology* (Theology and the Sciences; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 10–15. Further developed in §1.2.4.

⁸ For example, S. Terrien, “The Play of Wisdom: Turning Point in Biblical Theology,” *HBT* 3 (1981): 125–53.

⁹ For a representative study, see R. J. Clifford and J. J. Collins, eds, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and the Bible* (CBQMS; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1994).

Claus Westermann is often identified as one of the influential scholars who laid the groundwork for establishing creation as having ‘a stature in its own right’.¹⁰ His scholarship provided a corrective to the earlier work of Gerhard von Rad who famously asserted that creation theology was ‘but a magnificent foil for the message of salvation’.¹¹ Westermann provided one of the most important paradigmatic shifts for understanding the integral relationship between creation and redemption. Instead of viewing these theological categories in tension or allowing creation to become eclipsed by redemption, he asserted that creation and redemption are two aspects of God’s one creative plan: ‘The acting of God in creation and his action in history stand in relation to one another in the Old Testament; the one is not without the other. . . . Creation and history arise out of the same origin and move toward the same goal’.¹² The thesis that creation and redemption should be understood as two related expressions of the one creator God has significantly reshaped the contours of OT theology.

These early insights subsequently led many scholars to rethink the place of creation in biblical theology. H. H. Schmid, R. Kneirim, R. Clifford, R. Simkins, B. Anderson, T. Fretheim, and W. Brown (among others) have each contributed in distinct ways toward the second paradigmatic theological shift, which gave priority to creation as the ‘horizon of biblical faith’.¹³ R. Knierim has particularly identified how this development has stark implications for how one views God: ‘Yahweh is not the God of creation because he is the God of the humans or of human history. He is God of the humans and of human history because He is the God of creation. . . . The most universal aspect of Yahweh’s dominion is not human history. It is the creation and sustenance of the world’.¹⁴ Acknowledging this universal frame of reference has led Fretheim to emphasize the importance of canonical

¹⁰ Fretheim, *World*, xii. See for example, C. Westermann, “Creation and History in the Old Testament,” in *The Gospel and Human Destiny* (ed. V. Vajta; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1971), 11–38; Westermann, *Creation*; C. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984); C. Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible and in the Life of the Church* (trans. K.R. Crim; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).

¹¹ von Rad, “Problem,” 134.

¹² Westermann, “History,” 24, 34.

¹³ Brueggemann, “Loss,” 187. See also, H. H. Schmid, “Creation, Righteousness and Salvation: ‘Creation Theology’ as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology,” in *Creation in the Old Testament* (ed. B. W. Anderson; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 102–17. For a representative list of important OT scholars, see Fretheim, *World*, xi-xii.

¹⁴ Knierim, *Theology*, 40.

starting points: ‘The Bible begins with Genesis, not Exodus, with creation, not redemption, [that] is of immeasurable importance for understanding all that follows’.¹⁵

Equally significant is the scholarly attention given to reading the creation narrative in relationship to other ancient Near Eastern approaches to origin stories. T. Hiebert, R. Simkins, and R. Clifford have each demonstrated convincingly that within the ancient worldview *origins mattered*.¹⁶ Creation narratives factor significantly into the emerging identity of ancient people groups. Recorded cosmologies exist from many ancient societies and it is within this larger historical and literary milieu that some of the earliest Israelite affirmations of a creator God emerged.¹⁷ Inherent to the ancient Near Eastern worldview was the conviction that the essence and identity of reality, self, moral character, societal structure, and even the universe were most clearly understood through the identification of one’s point of origin. This defining function of cosmological formulations is succinctly summarized by Clifford and Collins:

In the ancient Near Eastern intellectual universe the origin of a phenomenon was a defining moment. That universe was not influenced by the modern idea of evolution that supposes that things begin in a simple state and gradually become more complex, more “perfect,” in response to new situations. On the contrary, the essence or purpose of a particular entity, indeed the universe, was given in the beginning. At that moment the imprint of the gods was clearest. There and then was fixed the way things worked.¹⁸

Thus, cosmological accounts, which take shape in a variety of genres (including epic narratives such as Gen 1-3) function primarily as conduits for illuminating one’s place within the created realm, as well as one’s relationship to the divine.

The Israelite reflections on creation are present in a variety of genres that themselves preserve some of the mythical components of other ancient cosmologies (e.g., Ps 8; 19;

¹⁵ Fretheim, *World*, xiv.

¹⁶ For example, R. A. Simkins, *Creator and Creation: Nature in the Worldview of Ancient Israel* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1994); T. Hiebert, *The Yahwist’s Landscape: Nature and Religion in Early Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); R. J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* (CBQMS; Washington D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994).

¹⁷ For a succinct overview of ANE creation narratives including Sumerian, Egyptian, Babylonian, and Assyrian, see Brown, *Pillars*, 21–32.

¹⁸ R. J. Clifford and J.J. Collins, eds, *Creation in the Biblical Traditions* (CBQMS; Washington DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1992), 2–3. For other authors who develop this theme, see for example, Hiebert, *Yahwist*; Simkins, *Nature*.

74:12-14; 77; 89; Prov 8; Job 26:12; Gen 2:4b-25).¹⁹ Many scholars suggest that it was during the exilic and post-exilic period when the rich creation theology of Gen 1-3 first began shaping the faith and life of those who claimed Yahweh as their God and some of the features of this Genesis narrative align with its ancient corollaries. For example, within virtually all of the ancient creation narratives, the origin of humanity is organically connected to the creation of the earth. Yet in other significant ways, the authors of Gen 1-3 depart from their contemporaries. Certainly, the affirmation of a singular creative God stands in stark contrast to the warring deities of many ancient accounts. Additionally, Gen 1-3 demythologizes the creation stories replacing struggle with divine sovereignty and depicting a harmonious relationship between God, humanity, and the broader created realm. These stories became the prologue and starting point from which to interpret God's creative and redemptive purposes within history.²⁰ Indeed, within later Isaianic accounts (e.g., Isa 42:5-7; 51:15-16), the ongoing creative acts of God were linked to the anticipation of the future promise of a new heaven and new earth (Isa 65-66).

The important and formative work of H. H. Schmid has further developed the link between origin accounts and the societal and political structure of ancient peoples.²¹ His study argues that creation narratives not only identify the source of all things but that they also provide a framework for understanding the ongoing ordering of all things. Specifically he suggests that in keeping with other ancient creation narratives the righteousness (צדקה) of God refers to the right and harmonious ordering of the world, an ordering present in the infrastructure of the cosmos from the beginning. Fretheim summarizes the significance of Schmid's observations: 'So, wherever righteousness is practiced by human beings in the sociopolitical spheres, that act is in tune with the creation, and it fosters the proper integration of social and cosmic orders'.²² Brown furthers this thesis by demonstrating that this 'ordering' is linked to the moral character of people as they engage with the creation.²³ These

¹⁹ See for example the articles in Clifford and Collins, *Creation*.

²⁰ N. Young, *Creator, Creation, and Faith* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 33-34.

²¹ Schmid, "Horizon."

²² Fretheim, *World*, xiii. See also Brueggemann, "Loss," 182-83.

²³ This is essentially the thesis undergirding the study presented by Brown, *Cosmos*.

important studies confirm that unlike modern scientific theories, the role of ancient cosmologies was *not* primarily to explain how reality came into being *per se*; rather they functioned to give purpose, direction, and substance to how people were to live in the world and in relationship to their god(s). In short, the originating moment was *the* defining moment toward understanding the present; origin accounts functioned as a blue-print of sorts, informing humans how they were to relate to the religious, social, moral, and political structures of their day.

These three important developments within OT studies — approaching creation and redemption as complementary and integrally linked theologies, viewing creation as the horizon of biblical theology, and acknowledging the function of creation narratives as structuring both societal and moral orders — have contributed toward a new era of scholarly works that identify creation themes as central to OT theology. Each of these developments, to differing levels, has propelled scholars to consider how OT creation theology might inform and enhance ecotheological studies (see §1.2.4).

1.2.2 Creation in The New Testament

In tandem with OT scholarship, yet to a lesser degree, NT scholars have increasingly identified connections between the revelation of God in Christ and creation theology.²⁴ The reticence among NT scholars can be attributed in part to the perception that creation themes explicit in the OT period were simply taken for granted by NT writers. Thus R. Bauckham states, ‘The Bible’s theology of creation is to a large extent developed in the Old Testament and then presupposed in the New’.²⁵ At one formative level this may be correct; however, this minimalist approach does not adequately account for the multifaceted ways that broader ktisiological categories are embedded throughout the NT narratives -- ways which I contend are both explicit and latent within the letters of Paul and specifically inform his Christology.

²⁴ Brown’s seismic shift has not materialized, however, within NT studies, particularly not within Pauline scholarship. For example, in the collection of articles edited by Brown and McBride, only two of seventeen are devoted to the NT. See Brown and McBride, *God*. Within the past few decades there has emerged some interest among NT scholars in creation themes, although scholarship on these themes in Paul remains modest. Pauline scholarship discussed in §1.2.3.

²⁵ R. Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 141. See also B. Witherington, *Paul’s Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 9f.

Therefore, the initial stage of this study is to intentionally probe the ways that Paul incorporates, interprets, alludes to, cites directly, and/or re-appropriates many features of OT creation theology within the fabric of his understanding of the mysteries of God's purposes in Christ (1 Cor 2:7). *Which creation motifs and theological structures are taken up by Paul, either on the surface of his discourse or at a deeper substructural level?* As a result of this inquiry, I hope to demonstrate that creation motifs and themes inform Paul's Christology, ecclesiology, soteriology, eschatology, and at times, his ethical directives. This more thorough exegetical and theological assessment of Pauline ktisiology provides a fruitful avenue whereby sharpened by Irenaeus' reading of Paul, new possible ecotheological readings of Paul come into sharper focus.

Currently, there does not exist a comprehensive study dedicated to creation theology in the NT. The most significant resources have occurred in comprehensive biblical theologies, particularly by J. Moltmann,²⁶ C. Gunton,²⁷ and, most recently, S. M. McDonough.²⁸ The works of J. Moltmann have especially been influential for developing a trinitarian biblical theology of creation that draws upon the dominant themes of eschatology, pneumatology, hope, and the cross. Although many of his works incorporate creation themes, *God in Creation* presents his most systematic approach to the themes of creation in the Bible.²⁹ Moltmann's theological approach is shaped by a trinitarian understanding of God's presence in the world through the Spirit's active engagement. He couples the indwelling function of the Spirit in creation with the eschatological goal of creation, which he articulates as culminating in 'eternal sabbath'. Both the indwelling of the Spirit and the eschatological goal of creation inform what he develops as an 'ecological doctrine'.³⁰ One central component of Moltmann's ecological doctrine is the interrelatedness of humanity and creation, an

²⁶ See particularly, J. Moltmann, "Creation and Redemption" (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1976), 119–34; J. Moltmann, *God in Creation: The Gifford Lectures 1984–1985: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (trans. M. Kohl; England: SCM, 1985).

²⁷ See particularly, C. E. Gunton, *Christ and Creation* (The Didsbury Lectures 1990; Carlisle/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Eerdmans, 1992); C. E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (ESCT; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

²⁸ S. M. McDonough, *Christ as Creator: Origins of a New Testament Doctrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁹ Moltmann, *God*. See also, J. Moltmann, "The Resurrection of Nature: An Aspect of Cosmic Christology," *Concilium* 5 (2006): 81–89, and J. Moltmann, "The Resurrection of Christ and the New Earth," *CV* 49, no. 2 (2007): 141–49.

³⁰ Succinctly outlined in Moltmann, *God*, 1–19.

interrelatedness that is underscored by the goal that humans are to dwell in harmony with creation: ‘The divine secret of creation is the Shekinah, God’s indwelling; and the purpose of the Shekinah is to make the whole creation the house of God. If this is the theological side of the ecological doctrine of creation, the anthropological side must correspond to it’.³¹

Moltmann’s magisterial work is a landmark contribution to the biblical theology of creation, but it lacks a systematic portrayal of how or even whether such contours are present within the Pauline corpus.

Colin Gunton’s trinitarian approach to creation shares similar emphases to Moltmann while also including something of a Pauline perspective. Two books are particularly important contributions outlining his theology of creation: *Christ and Creation* and *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study*.³² Gunton views Christology as central to understanding God’s work of both creation and redemption, and his work *Christ and Creation*, for example, directly draws from the NT and the Pauline corpus. He is deeply influenced by the work of Irenaeus who wrote that the incarnation was the hinge linking creation with redemption, an eschatological vision that emphasized the belief that all things would be made new. As Gunton proposes, ‘If God’s purpose is for the redemption and perfection of the whole creation, then *all* human action will in some way or other involve the human response to God that we call ethics’.³³ He develops Pauline themes of creation, new creation, the image of God, and realized eschatology; each of these themes has influenced my own work and is incorporated into this study where appropriate.

In his recent and important work *Christ as Creator*, S. M. McDonough provides a systematic study of creation texts from the NT with a particular focus on the role of Jesus Christ as the mediator of originating creation.³⁴ Drawing upon OT scholarship that highlights the relationship between creation and redemption, McDonough develops this union of concepts as the horizon from which NT authors link the agency of Jesus in redemption to the agency of Jesus in creation: ‘The basic categories of creation and redemption were explicitly and inextricably linked in the biblical tradition. The pattern of salvation as a kind of new

³¹ Moltmann, *God*, xiii.

³² Gunton, *Triune*; Gunton, *Christ*.

³³ Gunton, *Triune*, 13.

³⁴ McDonough, *Christ as Creator*.

creation occurs at every turn in the Old Testament'.³⁵ The two Pauline texts which he incorporates into his study are Col 1:15-20 and to a lesser degree 1 Cor 8:6.³⁶

1.2.3 Paul and Creation³⁷

Several trajectories in contemporary Pauline scholarship illumine aspects of Paul's theology of creation, though these writers have primarily approached the topic through narrow exegeses of individual texts. The works of U. Mell, M. Hubbard, and T. Jackson, for example, have adeptly addressed the meaning of the term *new creation* in the two instances where Paul uses the phrase.³⁸ Likewise, several monographs have been written on Paul's use of the Adam/Christ typology in Rom 5 and 1 Cor 15.³⁹ These latter texts have prompted numerous articles and extensive discussion within commentaries, especially in terms of how the Adam/Christ typology illuminates Paul's theology of the resurrection in 1 Cor 15.

Another trajectory within Pauline studies is represented by the work of G. Van Kooten who has written two important monographs on Pauline cosmology and anthropology. In both instances while not denying the Jewish backdrop to particular texts, Van Kooten reads Paul primarily through the lens and background of Greco-Roman cosmology and pagan philosophical anthropology. Van Kooten's earlier work *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School* outlines the relationship between God, Christ, and the cosmos with a primary focus on texts from Colossians and Ephesians.⁴⁰ Within his more recent work *Paul's*

³⁵ McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 49.

³⁶ This resource is particularly useful in chapter three of this study.

³⁷ Within this brief summary of Pauline scholarship, I have primarily identified relevant monographs. Within each category presented, there are many shorter works including articles, commentary discussions, and book chapters that are valuable resources. Many of these works are noted in subsequent chapters and thus are not included in this introduction. Additionally, given that many of these works are incorporated within this study, only a brief description is included here.

³⁸ M. V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thought* (SNTSMS, Vol 119; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); T. R. Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters* (WUNT, Vol. 272; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); U. Mell, *Neue Schöpfung: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Studie zu einem soteriologischen Grundsatz paulinischer Theologie* (BZNW, Vol 56; Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1989).

³⁹ K. Barth, *Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5* (trans. T. A. Smail; Edinburgh, London: Oliver & Boyd Ltd., 1956); C. K. Barrett, *From First Adam to Last* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962); R. Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study of Pauline Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966). See also examples of articles, R. Bultmann, "Adam and Christ According to Romans 5," in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation* (ed. W. Klassen and Snyder G. F.; New York: Harper, 1962); Swee-Hwa Quek, "Adam and Christ According to Paul" (Devon: Paternoster, 1980), 67–79; N. T. Wright, "Adam in Pauline Christology," in *SBL Seminar Papers* (ed. K.H. Richards; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 359–89; M. D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁴⁰ G. H. Van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School* (WUNT, Vol 171; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

Anthropology in Context, Van Kooten draws implications from Paul's use of 'image of God' language that illumine the broader contours of Pauline anthropology.⁴¹ Another monograph, written by H. Hahne, provides an example of an extensive study of one creation text in Paul, Rom 8:19-22.⁴² His research attentively considers Paul's description of the corruption and redemption of creation within an apocalyptic framework. Although there is no single monograph which covers creation themes in Romans, S. Kraftchick and B. Gaventa have each contributed important articles which develop creation and cosmological themes in Romans⁴³ and in May 2012, Princeton Theological Seminary sponsored a scholarly conference entitled, 'Creation, Conflict, and Cosmos: A Conference on Romans 5-8', and a collection of the papers presented and have been recently published.⁴⁴ Such promising trends suggest a growing scholarly interest in creation themes within the Pauline corpus.⁴⁵

The monographs by J. Gibbs and E. Adams provide rare examples of current work that incorporates a broader selection of Pauline texts into research on creation; both originated as dissertation topics. The earlier and slightly modified dissertation of J. Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption: A Study of Pauline Theology* builds upon the work of OT scholars who understand creation and redemption as related. Gibbs states upfront, 'Let it be underscored that the object of investigation is not two separate doctrines of Pauline thought, namely the doctrines of creation and redemption, but rather the single doctrine of the *relation* between creation and redemption'.⁴⁶ To this end he incorporates a number of Pauline texts (e.g., Rom 8:19-23, 38-39; 1 Cor 8:6 and Col 1:15-20), demonstrating convincingly his main thesis that redemption presupposes and includes the creation and that Christ is the means

⁴¹ G. H. Van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity* (WUNT, Vol 232; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

⁴² H. A. Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation. Nature in Romans 8.19–22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (LNTS; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2006).

⁴³ S. Kraftchick, "Paul's Use of Creation Themes: A Test of Romans 1–8," *ExAud* 3 (1987): 72–87. See also B. R. Gaventa, "Neither Height Nor Depth: Discerning the Cosmology of Romans," *SJT* 64, no. 3 (2011): 265–78.

⁴⁴ B. R. Gaventa, ed., *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropology in Romans 5–8* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013)

⁴⁵ During the final editing of this dissertation, N. T. Wright's most recent work was made available. His presentation of "Creational Monotheism" aligns with my work in chapter 3 particularly, affirming that 1 Cor. 8:6 and Col. 1:15-20 incorporate Christ within the Second Temple Jewish notions of God's creative role. For a full elaboration, see N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 219–773.

⁴⁶ J. G. Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption. a Study in Pauline Theology* (NovTSup, Vol 27; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 2.

whereby the redemption of ‘all things’ will be realized.⁴⁷ A more recent work, E. Adams’ *Constructing The World* studies each instance of Paul’s usage of κόσμος and κτίσις through the lens of ‘world-construction’ theories developed by sociologists.⁴⁸ Adams systematically evaluates Paul’s use of these terms throughout his letters and outlines the multivalent meanings present within each epistolary context. The result is a comprehensive study of these words and functions something like a reference work for the individual passages and letters of Paul. His focus, however, is on the sociological construction of Paul’s word usage and not the theological questions of how these terms might be informed by other related creation texts within the Pauline corpus.

Each of these scholarly trajectories takes up important creation sub-themes in Paul and is further supported by articles and studies.⁴⁹ What these related yet distinct studies establish is that there has been substantive work done on Paul and creation, and they collectively affirm that Paul was aware of and incorporated creation categories into his theology at multiple levels. Yet none of these studies attempts to analyze and synthesize how these motifs and texts interrelate, and possibly inform a distinct creation theology within the Pauline corpus. Nor do they explore how Pauline cosmology and soteriology may be held together by Paul’s Christology, as explored in this dissertation. It is this type of theological synthesis that I hope to contribute to Pauline theological studies. Further, it is my contention that Irenaeus’ reading of Paul helps us to identify how the various motifs of creation theology can be linked together through their connection to Pauline Christology. This configuration can then add significantly to the current discussions of Christian ecotheology.

1.2.4 *The Bible and Ecotheology*

As noted, recent scholarly interest on biblical creation theology has grown in tandem with questions emerging from contemporary ecological crises. These developments have ignited an entire corpus of biblical studies with an ecotheological focus. Clearly, the contemporary

⁴⁷ Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption*, 140.

⁴⁸ E. Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul’s Cosmological Language* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 1–38. See also E. Adams, “Paul’s Story of God and Creation: The Story of How God Fulfills His Purposes in Creation,” in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (B. Longenecker; Westminster: John Knox, 2002), 19–43.

⁴⁹ Bibliography is incorporated throughout this study where relevant.

ecological questions are far removed from the concerns of first century communities, yet contemporaneously contextualized readings of the OT and NT have drawn relevant inferences for consideration.⁵⁰ It is often noted, that modern ecotheological scholarship was propelled by the influential article by J. L. White. His thesis placed the blame for the environmental crisis on the Christian interpretation of biblical texts, with special attention given to interpretation of Gen 1:26-28.⁵¹

Today, the majority of academic ecotheological studies are represented within two related yet distinct scholarly approaches.⁵² The first is the *Earth Bible Project* headed by Norman Habel. This group of scholars approaches the biblical narrative with the goal to identify texts which are not ‘earth friendly’. One of the goals of this approach is to critically engage with scriptural texts ‘from the perspective of the Earth’ and to thereby develop hermeneutical strategies that liberate the text from anthropocentrism. To this end, six general, non-theological ecojustice principles have been developed as an *external* standard for assessing the Bible, as well as a five-volume *Earth Bible* and a new initiative for an ecotheological commentary series.⁵³ The second scholarly movement to focus on ecotheology is broadly represented by the Exeter project.⁵⁴ This approach rejects the use of external criteria (e.g., ecojustice principles) for assessing the biblical text and seeks instead to employ hermeneutical considerations which affirm that ‘the Bible will need to have some formative and authoritative place and which will need to be in some kind of demonstrable continuity with the Christian tradition’.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Many volumes represent these attempts, but few are specific to Paul. See for example, Bauckham, *Ecology*; all volumes of the *Earth Bible* series, N. C. Habel, ed., *The Earth Bible* (Sheffield/Cleveland, OH: Sheffield/Pilgrim, 2000); D. Horrell, C. Hunt, and C. Southgate, *Greening Paul: Rereading the Apostle in a Time of Ecological Crisis* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010); D. Horrell, et al., *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspective* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2010).

⁵¹ White, “Crisis.”

⁵² Within each of these two trajectories, there exist nuanced approaches as outlined by Santmire. He distinguishes the various perspectives as reconstructionists, apologists, revisionist, and orthodox neo-Catholic. See Santmire, *Nature*, 1–15.

⁵³ See all volumes of this series, Habel, *Earth*. The first volume in the commentary is forthcoming, N. C. Habel, *The Birth, the Curse and the Greening of Earth: An Ecological Reading of Genesis 1–11* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix). This group, as well as many ecofeminist approaches are cataloged within the reconstructionist category of Santmire.

⁵⁴ This project was centered at University of Exeter, UK, and received funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council of the UK (AHRC). David Horrell was one of the key leaders for research and publishing in the Exeter project. For an example of scholarship that resulted from this initiative, see Horrell, Hunt, and Southgate, *Greening*.

⁵⁵ Horrell, et al., *Ecological*, 8.

Paul's letters, situational as they are, address specific concerns of first-century communities, reflect his passionate theological justification for the inclusion of Gentiles into the people of God, and anticipate the imminent return of Christ. These factors have, in part, contributed to a rather modest contribution from mainline Pauline scholars toward ecotheology, with virtually all attention centered on Rom 8:18-23 and Col 1:15-20. The most comprehensive work to date, *Greening Paul: Rereading the Apostle in a Time of Ecological Crisis* is a collective work by D. Horrell, C. Hunt, and C. Southgate that has its origin in the Exeter project. *Greening Paul* is the only book-length resource dedicated to Paul and ecology, and it serves as a resource for this study. The authors organize their research around three considerations for reading Paul's letters from an ecotheological perspective: hermeneutical considerations, the ecotheological 'mantra' texts of Rom 8:19-23 and Col 1:15-20 as read through a narrative lens, and proposals for Pauline ecotheology and ecoethics. This final section is particularly fruitful as it considers how the ecoethics of 'other-regard' and 'corporate solidarity' are manifest in the Pauline theology of reconciliation. The conclusion also includes a brief yet useful discussion of possibly relevant Pauline texts other than Rom 8:19-23 and Col 1:15-20. Reconciliation, not creation, is the overarching theological category in which they organize the Pauline material, with the explicitly stated caveat that 'The Pauline letters do not focus significantly on what we might call the doctrine of creation'.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, this study provides an important resource for chapter seven.

Other movements have approached the matter of ecology and theology from ideologies advocating a variety of ecopractices. For example, based on popular eschatological teachings that are especially prominent in the United States, some Christian traditions remain skeptical of scientific findings, generally espousing a dispensational pre-millennial posture which suggests that the world will be destroyed in the end anyway, 'so what's the fuss?'. These approaches generally approach the spiritual as otherworldly, resulting in the neglect of the material realm.⁵⁷ Representatives of the opposite extreme elevate the earth and its non-

⁵⁶ Horrell, et al., *Ecological*, 8.

⁵⁷ See for example, the discussion of H. O. Maier, "Green Millennialism: American Evangelicals, Environmentalism and the Book of Revelation," in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives* (eds D. Horrell, et al.; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 246–65.

human inhabitants to such an esteemed level that within this position the primacy of humanity and of a sovereign God is in danger of being eclipsed and/or Scripture becoming sidelined.⁵⁸

In light of these ecotheological approaches, my specific contribution to the field is an exploration of the potential Pauline resources that contribute to a Christian and christological way of framing the issues. Thus, I will not here interact with all the various dimensions of ecotheology, but I am interested primarily in the contribution of biblical, and specifically Pauline, texts in the debate. My approach is thus closest to that of the Exeter project, described above, and my contribution to the debate will be limited by this particular, but very significant, angle of approach.

1.3 Methods and Sources

Methodologically, the primary texts for this study are the Pauline letters and the works of Irenaeus of Lyons. My first step in investigating these sources is to perform a careful exegetical and theological examination of a substantial selection of the relevant Pauline corpus. Thus, I seek to initially study the Pauline texts in their own right with the aid of modern critical methods of exegesis. Keeping in mind my special interest in Irenaeus' reading of Paul, where the connection of Christology and redemption with creation is striking and clear, I have chosen to focus on Pauline texts that connect creation motifs, explicitly or implicitly, to *Christology* and, therefore, to soteriology and ecclesiology. The framing texts of 1 Cor 8-10, for example, align with this criterion: 1 Cor 8:6 addresses Christ's role with originating creation and ecclesiology, and likewise, 1 Cor 10:26 affirms Christ's lordship role within creation (chapter three). In contrast, I have not included an in-depth analysis of Rom 8:19-23 because the christological feature does not emerge in that chapter until Rom 8:29-30, verses which later feature significantly in chapter four. Additionally, my primary focus in this work is on the undisputed letters of Paul, yet I have included Col 1:15-20 because of its

⁵⁸ Often these groups have adapted traditional Western religious practices by adopting more Eastern traditions and have reconstructed classical Christian theology. See for example, T. Peters, *The Cosmic Self: A Penetrating Look at Today's New Age Movements* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991); R. R. Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992).

current importance for ecotheological discussions as well as its alignment with the criterion mentioned above; the central focus of this Colossians passage is to portray Christ's relationship to the cosmos and the church. It is also the case that unlike the era of Bultmann and Käsemann where Colossians was considered pseudonymous by most scholars, today there is a growing number of scholars who argue for either Pauline authorship or a shared authorship with Timothy.⁵⁹ If Colossians was not written by Paul, it was certainly written early in the Pauline school, and thus, despite the disputed authorship of Colossians, it is included within the canonical corpus of Pauline letters.⁶⁰ For the purpose of this study, I analyze Col 1:15-20 (and to a lesser degree, Col 3:9-10), and I believe it provides a useful contribution toward a Pauline creation theology. Questions about dating and authorship of this text do not substantively influence my findings.⁶¹

My selection of Pauline creation texts is, as already noted, influenced by my interest in Irenaeus as a reader of Paul, particularly when Irenaeus considers the connections between Christology and creation. Thus, the second primary text that I consult in this study is the work of Irenaeus of Lyons with special attention to *Adversus haereses*.⁶² As is clear from recent trends in the theological interpretation of Scripture, understanding the reception history of the Bible is not just a supplementary discipline that traces the influence of the Bible in later centuries; the reception history is also a hermeneutical resource, since later readers often draw out the meaning potential of a text, as well as the inner structural connections of its various motifs, in ways that standard historical-critical exegesis can miss.

A growing number of scholars suggest that a history-of-reception approach can be especially fruitful when applied to texts that are significantly shaped by historical interpretive

⁵⁹ For a succinct history of material relevant to authorship questions, see J. M. G. Barclay, *Colossians and Philemon* (T and T Clark Study Guides; London/New York: T & T Clark, 1997), 18–36. For shared authorship, see for example, R. Wall, *Colossians and Philemon* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 15–16. For either shared authorship or Timothy as sole author, see J. D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids/Carlisle: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 1996), 35–39. For pseudonymous authorship, see E. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 84–91.

⁶⁰ Thus, I am not making a historical statement about the authorship of disputed Pauline letters, but I am selectively including Col 1:15-20 (and to a lesser degree Col 3:9-10) because of Colossians' inclusion in the canonical corpus of Paul and its importance in current ecotheology.

⁶¹ It could be argued that with the inclusion of Col 1:15-20, and to a lesser degree Col 3:9-10, Ephesians should also be incorporated into this study. As I will discuss in chapter five, Eph 1:9-12 is a significant text for Irenaeus, yet has not been a principal text for ecotheology. As suggested in the conclusion to this study, future research could certainly explore the additional significance of this text for Pauline ecotheology.

⁶² For a thorough articulation of textual and manuscript history, see §5.1.

traditions; such insight is directly applicable for this study.⁶³ Until very recently, exploration of creation theology in the NT, and particularly within the Pauline corpus, has not been a strong thread in Western readings. Rather, for most of the Western interpretive tradition, readers such as Augustine and Luther have shaped a ‘horizon of expectation’ where justification by faith has been understood as the central organizing thought in Paul, and this manner of thought has taken root in the vast majority of scholarly theological works. Hans Robert Jauss suggests that when dealing with theological subjects that have not been significant in a particular tradition, early readers of the scriptural text provide the most promising lens whereby the modern reader may encounter a fresh perspective.⁶⁴ Early readers had not yet inherited fixed interpretive readings of Paul, certainly not readings that had already defined the contours of their theological traditions. For these reasons, an early reader, such as Irenaeus, provides the potential for a new perspective for readers who are influenced by the Western traditions of Paul.

Although other early readers of Paul may have contributed work related to this study, I selected Irenaeus based on three primary criteria. First, perhaps the most important criterion for my selection of an interpreter was to identify a reader who develops and employs Christology and creation as central pillars in his or her theology and one who marshals the Pauline corpus extensively. Irenaeus was a strong contender in both of these categories because for Irenaeus, *origins matter* and *Christ matters*. Because of this dual focus, scholars regularly refer to Irenaeus as ‘a model theologian of creation’.⁶⁵ Within his context, speculative interpretations of Genesis formulated by Ptolemaean Valentinians and other contemporary ‘Gnostic’ thinkers compelled Irenaeus to confront readings of Scripture that denigrated the created realm.⁶⁶ In order to counter readings he considered grossly misguided, Irenaeus constructed a comprehensive and robust biblical ktiology that has as its interpretive

⁶³ See for example, H. R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (T. Bahti; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

⁶⁴ Jauss, *Reception*, 25–26.

⁶⁵ Gunton, *Triune*, 2. See also, M. C. Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation: The Cosmic Christ and Saga of Redemption* (VCSup; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 1.

⁶⁶ The term *Gnostic* is used somewhat generally here to reference all those named groups within the works of Irenaeus. For a more nuanced description of these groups as well as more precise terminology, see Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 11–15. My understanding of and use of this term is further discussed in §5.1.

center the incarnate Jesus Christ. In affirmation of the one creator God and the goodness of the material realm, Irenaeus essentially weds Christology with creation and redemption by way of weaving together various texts primarily from Paul and the Gospels. Irenaeus is an exceptional example of a reader who is sensitive to creation categories in the Pauline corpus, and he was therefore a valuable resource in my development of a theological framework and organizing structure for reading Paul's creation texts.⁶⁷ Complementing the strength of Irenaeus on these theological fronts was the recent increase in scholarly interest on Irenaeus, both in relation to his creation theology and his deployment of Paul. These areas of scholarship have resulted in at least three recent monographs and numerous articles of importance that provide invaluable secondary discussions for this study.⁶⁸ Additionally, although little work has been done to consider how historic theological voices may be possible resources for ecotheology, the two volumes which do explore these potential intersections suggest the works of Irenaeus as promising.⁶⁹

A second reason that the selection of Irenaeus is attractive for this study is that because his context has elements that correlate with our modern context. For example, today there exists a similar divide between hyper-dualism, which prioritizes the spiritual realm, and a form of monism, which blurs the distinction between the created and the Creator. Given his contemporary philosophical environment, Irenaeus finds in Paul a compelling argument for the goodness of creation. Therefore, he counters the 'Gnostic' denigration of creation by constructing a theology of creation that has the incarnate Jesus Christ as the defining interpretive hinge. He draws heavily upon the Pauline corpus, interweaving themes of

⁶⁷ Important secondary discussions include, Gunton, *Triune*; T. Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus and Genesis: A Study of Competition in Early Christian Hermeneutics* (JTISup; Warsaw, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009); J. T. Nielsen, *Adam and Christ in the Theology of Irenaeus of Lyons: An Examination of the Function of the Adam-Christ Typology in the Adversus Haereses of Irenaeus, Against the Background of the Gnosticism of His Time*. (Van Gorcum's Theologische Bibliotheek; Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp. N. V., 1968); Steenberg, *Irenaeus*.

⁶⁸ Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus*; Steenberg, *Irenaeus*; R. Noormann, *Irenäus als Paulusinterpret. Zur Rezeption und Wirkung der paulinischen und deuteropaulinischen Briefe im Werk des Irenäus von Lyon* (WUNT, Vol 66; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994). For more detailed information on these works and others, see chapter five.

⁶⁹ H. P. Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) and F. Watson, "In the Beginning: Irenaeus, Creation and the Environment," in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives* (eds. D. Horrell, et al.; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 127–39.

anthropology, soteriology, eschatology, ecclesiology, and pneumatology within a christological framework. Due to the overarching Christology that shapes his approach to creation theology, this second-century writer is particularly relevant to this study. Therefore, it will be helpful to analyze *how* Irenaeus reads Scripture, particularly the Pauline letters, but not necessarily to emulate his interpretative method or even to affirm his theological conclusions. Rather, I will consider how Irenaeus uses particular hermeneutical conventions to reach his theological conclusions. For this study, Irenaeus serves not only as a hermeneutical case-study but also as an important theological resource who, by connecting Pauline creation motifs within a christological frame, suggests the potential for a specifically Pauline contribution to Christian ecotheology.

And third, the inclusion of the works of Irenaeus also parallels the emerging significance of theological readings of Scripture found in such initiatives as the Scripture Project sponsored by the Center of Theological Inquiry at Princeton and by the Theological Hermeneutics of Christian Scripture Group of the Society of Biblical Literature. Biblical scholars and theologians are currently finding great value in a cross-disciplinary approach that seeks to go beyond and to build upon the historical-critical tools of former eras. This emphasis affirms the multifaceted character of the interpretive exercise, and it acknowledges that Scripture was originally collected, interpreted, and applied within the context of believing communities. This approach has led to the resurgence of interest in pre-modern interpretations of Scripture (formulated within and for faith communities) as potential resources for informing contemporary scriptural interpretation.⁷⁰ Including Irenaeus in this study reflects the view that such retrospection has the potential for gleaning fruitful interpretive and theological insight when approaching Paul.⁷¹

After a careful reading of Paul and Irenaeus, my final methodological task in this dissertation is to bring the creation theology of Paul, as framed by Irenaeus, into conversation with the emerging corpus of ecotheological scholarship and with the questions which drive

⁷⁰ This type of exercise is modeled by R. Hays who reads Romans through the lens of a historical creed. See R. B. Hays, "Spirit, Church, Resurrection: The Third Article of the Creed as Hermeneutical Lens for Reading Romans," *JTI* 5, no. 1 (2011): 35–48.

⁷¹ Very few individuals have attempted to draw this kind of connection between Irenaeus and ecotheology. See for example, Watson, "Beginning" and H. P. Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 35–44.

that research. This aim plays a subsidiary role to the explicit exploration of Paul and Irenaeus in the context of creation theology, yet it flows naturally from those discussions and should provide hermeneutical possibilities for fresh applications of Paul to the contemporary challenge of sustaining our planet. In performing this hermeneutical exercise it is important that we allow the contours of Paul's theology of creation, as it is enhanced through the lens of Irenaeus, to inform and expand our interpretive horizons for current ecotheological readings of Scripture. This hermeneutical task does not impose anachronistic questions on Paul (e.g., what does Paul say about recycling?) but rather seeks to 'articulate semantic potentialities generated by the figures in the text'.⁷² And one key textual 'figure' for this study is God's *creation*. Therefore, bringing Paul, Irenaeus, and ecotheology together involves a reconceptualization of Paul's creation framework to address a new situation - a task whose outlines will be suggested primarily in chapter seven.

1.4 Chapter Outlines

Chapters two, three, and four identify, develop, and describe how creation themes and motifs are both explicitly and implicitly woven into the framework of Paul's theology giving attention to the study of texts with the aid of modern critical methods of exegesis. Chapters five and six outline and assess the creation theology of Irenaeus with special attention given to his reading of Paul. Collectively, these chapters provide the resources for chapter seven, which uses the stimulus of Irenaeus' synthesis to suggest how Pauline creation theology might have implications for contemporary ecotheology.

1.4.1 Chapter Two: Christ of the New Creation

The primary inquiry in chapter two is the question of what Paul means by the phrase *new creation* (καινή κτίσις, 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). Given that Paul is the sole NT author to use this relatively rare Jewish phrase and that he cites the phrase in only two letters, one may rightly wonder why I chose to begin this study with these texts. This methodological decision,

⁷² R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1989), 156.

however, was intentional and strategic. If, as this study suggests, creation themes and motifs are more central to Paul's theological framework than typically acknowledged, then the combination of 'new' with 'creation' needs to be analyzed in relationship to the Christ event. Although many studies have addressed the theological significance and meaning of new creation in Paul's letters, a consensus has not been reached. The debate hinges primarily on which of three possible trajectories Paul intends: an anthropological, ecclesiological, or cosmological new creation. This chapter considers this matter at length through an analysis of three scholarly traditions that align with the three interpretive options. After ascertaining the sphere intended by Paul for the phrase new creation, the primary question guiding this inquiry is: *What are the christological implications and how does Paul relate Christ to the new creation?* A comparison of these approaches reveals that the theological significance and meaning of the phrase *new creation* is to a large extent dependent on how scholars place Paul's theology within an apocalyptic framework. This highly significant feature of the debate becomes the focus of the second part of this chapter.⁷³ Thus, this chapter begins to draw conclusions regarding how new creation, as understood within a christologically determined framework, may provide the theological horizon from which to organize other creation motifs and themes in the Pauline letters.

1.4.2 Chapter Three: Christ of the Beginning and End

In chapter three I narrow my focus slightly by addressing Christ's relationship to the very beginning and ending of all things. *As Paul came to understand Jesus as the risen Messiah, how does he understand and articulate the relationship of Christ to the origination of the creation and to the telos of his own creation?* By asking this question, I am considering the

⁷³ The bibliography on the apocalyptic features in Paul is enormous with only a few representative works included here. A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (London: Black, 1931); E. Käsemann, "Die anfänge christlicher theologie," *ZTK* 57 (1960): 162–85. Later published in English translation, E. Käsemann, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology," in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Fortress, 1971), 1-31; J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); J. L. Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (SNTW; New York: T & T Clark, 1997); J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroads, 1984); M. C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death. Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (JSNTSup, Vol 22; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988) and so on.

relationship between protology and eschatology to be an essential framework for the study of Christ and creation. Although Col 1:15-20 is traditionally the primary text for evaluating the mediatorial roles of Christ in the creation and the eschaton (sometimes termed ‘cosmic Christology’), this chapter focuses instead on 1 Cor 8-10 with added insight from 1 Cor 15:20-28. Special attention is given to the articulation of the relationship between Christ and creation in 1 Cor 8:6 and 10:26 combined with a more thorough study of 1 Cor 8:6 guided by the following question: *How is the relationship between Christ, God, all things, and us formulated, and what implications might be drawn from that formulation?*

Because Paul is dealing with the practical questions related to one’s relationship to food in 1 Cor 8-10, his directives provide a unique example of the ethical implications for believers in their relationship to the created realm; and of special significance is that his directives are grounded upon theological claims about the relationship of Christ and creation.

1.4.3 Chapter Four: Christ as Image of God and as Adam

Chapter four takes up the incarnate nature of Jesus Christ as articulated through two Pauline *signature* motifs drawn from Gen 1-2: the Adam/Christ typology (Rom 5; 1 Cor 15) and the image of God (εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ) language (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Rom 8:28-30; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:9-10). Through a careful study of Paul’s intertextual application of these motifs, the distinctiveness of God in Christ *as creature* comes into sharper focus. Through use of these first creation categories, Paul both compares and contrasts the first humanity with Jesus Christ, prompting the primary question for consideration: *How does Paul interpret and apply the first creation narrative in light of the new creation in Christ framework?* These texts provide probing examples of Paul’s intertextual hermeneutic whereby he interprets the first creation narrative through the new creation narrative, while also shedding light on his ecclesiological formulation.

1.4.4 Chapter Five: Irenaeus of Lyons, Theologian of Creation

This chapter is dedicated to a summary of Irenaeus of Lyons’ historical situation and an analysis of his creation theology with an emphasis on his incorporation of Pauline texts. As one of the earliest interpreters of Paul, Irenaeus crafted innovative intertextual interpretations that intricately fused redemption with creation. Yet, as scholars regularly note, due to the

nature of his works, formulating his creation framework seems ‘difficult to define with precision’.⁷⁴ This chapter provides a new conceptual framework for organizing Irenaeus’ creation theology which attempts to demonstrate the degree to which creation themes and motifs are thoroughly embedded within Irenaeus’ theology. Irenaeus reads the creation narrative as a conceptual framework with a ‘Christ centered vision of history moving from creation to eschatological fulfillment’, famously known as his signature *recapitulation* reading.⁷⁵ In order to access and learn from Irenaeus, this chapter probes the following question: *In what ways can Irenaeus’ theological readings of Scripture, which bind redemption to creation/pre-creation, be the stimulus for interpreting a substructure of creation theology in Paul?*

1.4.5 Chapter Six: Irenaeus and Paul

This chapter focuses more closely on *how* Irenaeus employs the Pauline corpus in the construction of his creation theology and on what interpretive methods inform Irenaeus’ hermeneutical exercise. The chapter begins with an analysis of his hermeneutical approach to reading Paul. This task is an important starting point because Irenaeus’ hermeneutical approach is decidedly different from what characterizes a modern historical/exegetical inquiry (more characteristic of chapters two through four). This naturally leads into the final goal of this chapter, which is to determine which Pauline texts bind his creation framework together. The primary question guiding the latter part of the chapter is: *How might the theological matrix of texts that Irenaeus weaves together establish a trajectory for reconceptualizing Paul’s teaching on creation as outlined in chapters two, three, and four?* This synthesis of the structural and theological connections of Irenaeus’ reading of Paul with my own facilitates new possibilities for constructing a Pauline theology of creation; a theology that enables Paul to speak into the ecotheological debate, not by way of a few isolated proof-texts, but rather by way of a broader theological framework connecting Christology to creation and redemption.

⁷⁴ Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 3.

⁷⁵ Z. Hayes, *The Gift of Being: A Theology of Creation* (NTS 10; Minneapolis: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 102.

1.4.6 Chapter Seven: Paul, Irenaeus, and Ecotheology - Possibilities for Consideration

The final chapter combines all the themes from the former chapter, identifying the gains of the trajectory of this study for current ecotheological readings of the Pauline corpus. One intent of this concluding chapter is to break open the artificial constriction that primary attention given to Rom 8:18-23 and Col 1:15-20 has created for ecotheological readings of Paul. The question guiding this inquiry is: *In what ways does this study of creation categories in Paul and of Irenaeus' reading of Pauline motifs inform a theology of creation that extends and broadens a contemporary ecotheological reading of Scripture?* This question provides the basis for a conclusion to this study that offers proposals on two key fronts: first, to consider possible new hermeneutical considerations for ecotheology and second to outline three Pauline theological categories for further exploration.

Each individual Pauline text that I identify here has already received a vast amount of scholarly attention. Many of the Pauline texts have full-length monograph analyses and each individual text has drawn considerable scholarly interest, resulting in a massive corpus of secondary scholarship. This large web of texts necessarily limits the detailed treatment that any one text can receive, yet it also provides an adequate breadth of texts from which to evaluate the structural relation between various creation themes in Pauline theology. Furthermore, this focus of the dissertation — the relationship between creation and Christology in Pauline theology — is strengthened and made more fruitful by its relationship to Irenaeus and then to ecotheology. The inclusion of Irenaeus supplements and develops the exegetical and theological contours of my reading of Paul and provides a deeper and stronger basis from which to suggest fresh readings of Paul for contemporary ecotheology.

Now, I conclude this introductory chapter by restating the overarching questions driving this research: *How does Paul articulate the relationship of Christ to the cosmological origins of the first creation, to the ongoing creative work of God, and to the eschatological culmination of creation in the telos? Does Irenaeus help us discern a structural relationship between creation and Christology in Pauline theology in a way that could prove fruitful for a Christian ecotheology?*

Chapter Two

Christ of the New Creation

2.1 New Creation within a Pauline Theological Framework: The Debate

Now my attention turns to the Pauline letters. The aim of the next three chapters is to investigate the ways that Paul adopts and incorporates OT creation themes and motifs into his theology. As already noted in the introduction, OT scholars have made a significant shift towards affirming the multivalent ways that a rich creation theology is present in the OT and in tandem with these biblical and theological developments, my goal is to explore in what ways, and to what degree, such creation categories may be present in the theology of Paul. As proposed in my overview of Pauline scholarship (§1.2.3), current scholarship collectively suggests that Paul significantly drew upon OT creation themes, yet there is little work which attempts to consider how these texts inform his Christology and more broadly how they interface together into a coherent creation theology. The goal of these three chapters is to provide a close and necessary exegetical and theological examination of key texts where Paul does inform Christology with creation categories and how they might inform a fresh approach to the contours of Pauline theology and by extension to ecotheology. Methodologically, this initial investigation seeks to interpret the Pauline texts in their own right, and with the aid of modern critical methods of exegesis.

The primary aim of this chapter is to ascertain what Paul means by the phrase *new creation* (καινή κτίσις). This task means first teasing out what is ‘new’ in relation to the ‘first’ or ‘old’ creation/creature and determining the referent for κτίσις. Paul’s use of καινή κτίσις is a natural point to begin this study because the phrase is unique to Paul. He is the only NT author to use this term and the exact phrase does not appear in the OT, although scholars regularly identify the Isaianic concept of ‘new heavens and new earth’ (Isa 65:17 and 66:22) as an analogous theme. The phrase is also relatively rare in Second Temple Jewish literature, showing up with increased frequency in the emerging apocalyptic literature of the Second Temple period.¹ Nevertheless, Paul’s use of the phrase in two climactic texts in 2 Corinthians and Galatians (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15) has drawn considerable scholarly attention.

¹ The actual term *new creation* occurs in *1 Enoch (Ethiopic Apokalypse)* 72:1; *Jubilees* 1:29; 4:26; *2 Baruch (Syriac Apokalypse)* 44:12; *4 Ezra* 7:75. Related ideas such as a new heaven and earth are also present, see

Interpretations diverge about whether new creation in these passages refers to individual, community, or cosmic realms. If it can be demonstrated that the phrase has a cosmic referent, then it follows that Paul understands the relationship of Christ and the new creation within the broadest possible terms.

The modern debate over the meaning of Paul's phrase new creation is often thought to originate with Rudolf Bultmann's influential theological project to demythologize Paul, which characterized new creation as limited to anthropological categories.² Although Bultmann's perspective has historically been the most common reading, it has come under scrutiny as scholars have become more aware of how significant the apocalyptic thought was for NT authors.³ Especially since the work of Käsemann, many Pauline scholars have contributed more nuanced readings of this phrase in Paul.⁴ These approaches take into account the broader features of each letter and highlight the apocalyptic motifs present. Scholars such as J. C. Beker, U. Mell, J. Louis Martyn, and more recently, M. Hubbard and T. R. Jackson have each provided well-argued readings that emphasize an anthropological, ecclesiological, or more broadly, a cosmological new creation. Although the meaning of this phrase remain unresolved, scholars do agree that its strategic placement in Paul's letters theologically functions to encapsulate the core of Paul's gospel. Determining the referent for *καὴν κτίσις* is therefore important for ascertaining the full implications and scope of Paul's understanding of the Christ event.

What becomes apparent from a close reading of the interpretive trajectories associated with Paul's use of the phrase new creation is that, to a large extent, current interpretations of

for example, Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1; *1 Enoch (Ethiopic Apocalypse)* 91:15-16; *4 Ezra* 7:31; *2 Enoch (Slavonic Apocalypse)* 70:9-10; *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* 12:5-8; *Sibylline Oracles* 4:186; 3:92; 7:118-49; *Assumption of Moses* 10:1-10. Also note references to a renewed creation, see for example, *Ezra* 6:25; *2 Baruch (Syriac Apocalypse)* 21:17; 40:3; 1QS 4:25; 1QH 11:10-14; 13:11-12.

² R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament II* (trans. K. Grobel; London: SCM, 1955), 191. See also, W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 119. See Minear's critique of Bultmann, P. S. Minear, "The Crucified World: The Enigma of Galatians 6,14," in *Theologia Crucis - Signum Crucis* (ed. C. Andresen and K. Günter; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1979), 395-407.

³ T. R. Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters* (WUNT, Vol. 272; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 7-9.

⁴ For example, Martinus C. de Boer has provided an analysis of Bultmann and Käsemann which seeks to demonstrate that both cosmological and anthropological approaches were present in different apocalyptic traditions of Second Temple Judaism. He further suggests that both are present in Paul. See M. C. de Boer, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology," in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (eds J. Marcus and M. L. Soards; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 169-90.

καινή κτίσις diverge based on the degree to which scholars emphasize apocalyptic influences on Paul's theology. For example, J. L. Martyn reads Paul within a thoroughly *apocalyptic matrix* grounded in an 'apocalypse of Jesus Christ' as unveiled in the cross, where God has 'invaded the world in order to bring it under his liberating control . . . the whole of humanity — indeed, the whole of creation (Gal 3:22) — is in fact, trapped, enslaved under the power of the present evil age'.⁵ He interprets these key motifs as the warp and woof of Paul's thinking, suggesting that they culminate in a climactic apocalyptic declaration of the cosmic new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). In sharp contrast, M. V. Hubbard interprets the new creation motif within a thoroughly *anthropological soteriological matrix* where the cross has inaugurated a new creation defined as 'the new inner dynamic of the Spirit which has begun the process of restoring the *imago dei* marred by Adam's sin, and which enables those who rely on its power to fulfill the (true) requirement of the law (Rom 8:4)'.⁶ Offering a middle ground between these alternatives, T. R. Jackson suggests that any approach which demarcates so sharply between anthropological and cosmological frameworks imposes on Paul an anachronistic distinction foreign to Jewish theological traditions of the time.⁷ It is important to note that all three of these approaches essentially agree that the inner transformation of human beings is one referent for Paul's use of new creation terminology, yet Martyn forcefully argues that readings which limit new creation *exclusively* to anthropology (e.g., Hubbard) depart significantly from Paul by placing his message (at least in Galatians) within a 'personal and polemical apology, a negation of circumcision and thus an attack on Judaism'.⁸

Because this discussion has a considerable history and is only one component of my work, I will not rehash the entirety of these arguments here. In order to consider the referent for new creation, this chapter is organized into two main sections. First, I summarize and compare three representative approaches featuring the work of J. L. Martyn, M. Hubbard, and

⁵ J. L. Martyn, *Galatians* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 105.

⁶ M. V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thought* (SNTSMS, Vol 119; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 235. See also R. B. Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul: Paul's Interpreters and the Rhetoric of Criticism* (JSNTSup, Vol 127; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) whose critique of reading Paul through an apocalyptic lens aligns with Hubbard.

⁷ Jackson, *New Creation*, 4.

⁸ Martyn, *Galatians*, 560.

T. R. Jackson, and second, I segue into consideration of the degree to which apocalyptic motifs shape the conceptual theological framework of Paul. Revisiting this scholarly debate is instructive because it helps determine the parameters in which Paul's notion of new creation should be read, and these parameters fundamentally inform how one selects which OT and Second Temple Jewish texts are best suited to shed light on Paul's use of *καινή κτίσις*. More broadly, understanding how Paul uses the phrase new creation is crucial to my overarching study, which aims to identify the relationship of Christ and those 'in Christ' to the whole created order.

In my judgment, and to anticipate the conclusions of this chapter, the arguments in favor of reading new creation within an apocalyptic framework inclusive of anthropological, ecclesiological, and cosmological categories are persuasive.⁹ Jackson's work is particularly insightful on two levels which are pertinent for this study. First, he identifies the prevailing ancient worldview, which presupposed that humanity was integrally linked with the broader social and cosmic world orders; and second, he successfully argues for and incorporates Rom 8:18-25 within the study of new creation. I hope to demonstrate, in keeping with Martyn, Jackson, and others, that Paul employs the terse phrase new creation as a succinct designation which encapsulates the comprehensive and universal scope of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Certainly for Paul, human salvation constitutes a central component of the redemptive work of God with the church as the sphere where the new creative act of God in Christ is most vividly and personally manifest. Nevertheless, I argue that redeemed humanity constitutes only one feature of the broader project whereby *all things* will ultimately be restored back to the creator God. In this chapter I argue that Paul communicates the effects of the Christ event through apocalyptic categories where the *redemption* of humanity is organically linked to the eschatological *restoration* of the whole creation; human redemption includes participation with Christ in view of, and directed towards, the final eschatological

⁹ For work that examines new creation with a focus on community, see for example, J. M. G. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 102. For work that examines new creation with a focus on cosmos, see for example, U. Mell, *Neue Schöpfung: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Studie zu einem soteriologischen Grundsatz paulinischer Theologie* (BZNW, Vol 56; Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1989), 324.

telos. Within the Pauline corpus, the term new creation encapsulates this comprehensive work of God in Christ having significance for Christology, soteriology and ecclesiology.

2.1.1 J. Louis Martyn: *New Creation as A Cosmic Act of God in Christ*

Building upon the influential work of Käsemann, Martyn reads new creation within a decidedly apocalyptic framework. J. L. Martyn has not written a monograph on *καὴν κτίσις*, yet his Galatians commentary and influential article on 2 Cor 5:16 serve as an adequate comparison to the monographs of Hubbard and Jackson.¹⁰ In approaching 2 Cor 5:16-17, Martyn, like Hubbard and Jackson, outlines the broader thematic context as extending literarily from 2:14 to 6:10, with the driving theme being Paul's defense of his apostolic authority. Martyn considers Paul's response to these attacks as grounded in two related arguments: the turn of the ages and a new epistemological framework.¹¹ Martyn suggests that the adverbial markers 'no longer' (*μηκέτι*, 5:15), 'from now on' (*ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν*, 5:16), and 'now, no longer' (*νῦν οὐκέτι*, 5:16) position Paul's argument within a temporal framework demarcated by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Thus, Martyn argues, all subsidiary points of Paul's defense are configured within this temporal two-age framework with the Christ event as the hinge, what Martyn refers to as a 'turning point of earth-shaking proportions'.¹² And as an extension of this eschatological shift, Martyn reads verse 16 as grounded in an epistemological distinction between a former way of knowing (*ἐγνώκαμεν*) and a present way of knowing (*οἶδαμεν*).

Central to Martyn's interpretation of these passages is an adverbial reading of *κατὰ σάρκα* as that which modifies knowledge rather than an adjectival reading of the phrase that refers to the fleshly nature of Christ. Martyn argues that some of the recipients of this letter are judging Paul according to old-age fleshly standards (e.g., outward appearance, old covenant standards that were carved in stone, letters of recommendations), so Paul reminds

¹⁰ J. L. Martyn, "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages: 2 Corinthians 5:16," in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (eds. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 269–87; reprinted in J. L. Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (SNTW; New York: T & T Clark, 1997), 89–110; Martyn, *Galatians*.

¹¹ Martyn, "Epistemology," 271–72.

¹² Martyn, "Epistemology," 90.

them that ‘we no longer know anyone by the norms of the flesh’.¹³ Based on Paul’s use of *κατὰ σάρκα* elsewhere and on the presence of these two themes throughout 2:14-6:10, Martyn argues that 5:16-17 functions as a climactic summation of the eschatological and epistemological shift inaugurated by the death and resurrection of Christ. This shift is revealed to those who have eyes to see “‘New creation!’” “‘Everything old has passed away!’” “‘Look! Everything has become new!’”.¹⁴ This text functions within Paul’s letter as a strong defense against the arguments of his opponents and the super-apostles who rely on old-age criteria. Martyn concludes that new creation refers to this all-encompassing new reality which the Christ event has inaugurated within world history, a reality which believers have been invited to embrace and participate in. The term should not be limited to ‘a private event, treasured by Paul as a radical change in his self-understanding’.¹⁵

Martyn’s commentary on Galatians outlines in a convincing and detailed way how the framework and themes of the letter align with an apocalyptic worldview. By identifying ‘this present evil age’ (1:4) in contrast to the new era, understood as the new creation inaugurated by Christ (6:15-16), Paul brackets the entire letter within a two-age framework. Martyn outlines at length how dualistic opposites, what he calls ‘apocalyptic antinomies’, are interspersed throughout this letter. The baptismal creed of Gal 3:27-28, for example, depicts how the believers’ crucifixion into Christ is nothing short of a death of the cosmos as they once knew it; Jew/Gentile, slave/free, and male/female present oppositional elements in the former world that have now been eclipsed. With a climactic crescendo, Paul personalizes the Christ event by declaring, ‘But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world’ (6:14). Martyn notes that in the following verse, circumcision is placed in the *same* category as uncircumcision, both former ways of relating and knowing. Those in Christ must die to the former bondage of the ‘elemental pair of opposites that stood at the foundation of the entire cosmos of religion’.¹⁶ Martyn highlights multiple apocalyptic dualisms throughout the letter to elaborate

¹³ Martyn translation. See Martyn, “Epistemology,” 95–96.

¹⁴ Martyn, “Epistemology,” 95–96.

¹⁵ Martyn, “Epistemology,” 94.

¹⁶ Martyn, *Galatians*, 560.

the cosmic scope of the in-breaking of Jesus Christ, what Martyn calls ‘*the cosmic apocalyptic event*’ (e.g., cross/circumcision, 6:14-15; flesh/Spirit, 5:16-17; present Jerusalem/Jerusalem above, 4:24-26).¹⁷ The power of the Spirit enables believers to resist ‘this present evil age’ (Gal 1:4) and to live according to new creation criteria directed by the Spirit (e.g., Gal 3:28; Gal 5-6). Paul then concludes by affirming those who ‘walk by this [new creation] rule’ (6:16).

2.1.2 M. Hubbard: *New Creation as Personal Conversion*

In stark contrast to Martyn and in conversation with the influential work of Ulrich Mell, Hubbard argues that *καὴν κτίσις* in 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15 refers to an inwardly transformed person; thus, he asserts an exclusively anthropological reading. Because Hubbard’s work has been received with some enthusiasm and is the view countered here, I give more attention to his work than to Martyn or Jackson. This extended treatment provides a context from which to provide exegetical and methodological critique.

Hubbard identifies a variety of texts for consideration but gives special attention to the themes of new heart/new Spirit present in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.¹⁸ He also incorporates a new methodological twist by including *Joseph and Aseneth* as the primary Second Temple Jewish text most suited for a comparative analysis.

Additionally, Hubbard’s reading of Paul is informed by cultural anthropological studies that analyze ‘death-life symbolism’ from a variety of cultural groups and time periods. Drawing primarily from the work of Arnold van Gennep, yet including others (V. Turner, L. La Fontaine, M. Douglas, M. Houseman, and M. Eliade), Hubbard provides an informative discussion of the wide-ranging practices related to conversion and initiation rites observed when a neophyte passes from death-to-life. He includes this material as an anthropological framework for better understanding the religious context and phenomenology of Paul’s death-to-life statements, statements which Hubbard fundamentally equates with new creation.

Hubbard aptly evaluates three Pauline passages in light of these studies: Rom 6:1-11 (chapter 6), Rom 7:1-6 (chapter 7), and Gal 2:19-20 (chapter 10), as well as an excursus on

¹⁷ Martyn, *Theological*, 121.

¹⁸ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 11–25.

the function of the Spirit within Pauline eschatology (chapter 9). These Pauline texts, as informed by Hubbard’s cultural anthropological studies, provide an interpretive lens for understanding new creation in 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15 as limited to individual conversion. Three foci emerge as interpretive hooks for Hubbard: the focus on the internal *spiritual conversion* of the human heart, Paul’s defense of his *apostolic ministry* as grounded in the work of the Spirit, and finally, Paul’s self-understanding of *his conversion*. In the sections below, I summarize Hubbard’s thesis as it intersects with these three foci, particularly in regard to 2 Corinthians.

(a) Internal Spiritual Conversion of Human Hearts

To frame 2 Cor 5:11-17 within the broader concern of the *internal spiritual conversion* of the heart, Hubbard identifies 2 Cor 1:20-21 and 5:5 as thematic verses that define and clarify Paul’s pneumatological and salvation-history agenda in these chapters. Hubbard connects the similar phrases *δοῦς τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν* (2 Cor 1:22) and *κατεργασάμενος ἡμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο θεός, ὁ δοῦς ἡμῖν τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος* (2 Cor 5:5), highlighting the theme of a renewed spiritual heart, a theme that is accentuated when juxtaposed with corresponding themes found in the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel.¹⁹ To further extend this reading to emphasize renewal as a divine creative act, Hubbard suggests that the force of *κατεργάζομαι* is best translated as ‘to fashion’ or ‘create’, leading to his conclusion: ‘These two passages bracket and summarize the major themes of chapters 3 and 4 and provide access to the theological corridor which leads to 2 Corinthians 5.17’.²⁰

Hubbard reads the Adam-Christ typology in Rom 5-8 as a key theological substructure of 2 Cor 5: ‘The failings of the first Adam are rectified by the second (Rom. 5.12-21) who restores the *εἰκὼν* (Rom. 8.29) and *δόξα* (Rom. 8.30) lost by the former (cf. Rom. 3.23)’.²¹ This ‘grand salvation-history metaphor’ interfaces with 2 Cor 5:14-17 where Paul shifts from the universality of Christ’s salvation (*πᾶς*) to a more defined group (*τίς*), leading Hubbard to conclude that ‘soteriology — specifically, conversion — forms the basis of the transformation

¹⁹ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 236.

²⁰ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 137–39.

²¹ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 172–73.

which Paul describes in verses 16-17'.²² These conclusions draw upon soteriological death-to-life imagery that symbolizes the transition of a person from one status to another (e.g., Rom 6:1-11).²³ In this transition, we see the new spiritual life of those in Christ as positioned antithetically to the life shaped by the flesh (e.g., Rom 7:1-6).²⁴ Thus, Hubbard closely aligns new creation motifs with the pneumatological restoration of an individual person, as 'the Spirit gives life' (2 Cor 3:6; cf. Rom 8:2, 6, 10; 1 Cor 15:45; Gal 5:25).²⁵ Hubbard further suggests that the new creation should be interpreted within the antithesis of internal/external 'new covenant' language in Jeremiah and the 'new heart and new Spirit' language of Ezekiel.²⁶

(b) Paul's Defense of his Apostolic Ministry

The rhetorical question 'And who is sufficient for these things?' (2 Cor 2:16) provides the second critical motif for understanding what is at stake for Paul in this letter. Based on socio-historical studies and hints throughout the Corinthian correspondence (e.g., 1 Cor 1-4; 2 Cor 2:17; 5:11; 10:10; 11:6; 12:19; 13:3), it can be determined that those opposing Paul at Corinth valued sophistry-for-pay, eloquent words, and rhetoric, each *external* qualities that one can demonstrate in the *sarx*. Hubbard draws upon this comparison and concludes that Paul contrasts new creation with *sarx*, creating an important antithesis. This prompts Hubbard to read 5:11-17 primarily as a Pauline defense against the complaint of his unimpressive rhetorical skills.²⁷ He supports this thesis in part by drawing a comparison between rhetorical terminology from Hellenistic literature and the language Paul uses in this text, suggesting that Paul intentionally selects rhetorical and political language 'in order to correct their own misunderstanding of his apostolate' (e.g. πείθω, 5:11; ἐξίστημι - σωφρονέω, 5:13; πρεσβεύω, 5:20; καταλλάσσω, 5:18-21).²⁸ Thus, the antithesis between Spirit and flesh becomes important in Hubbard's analysis of these chapters, especially as it relates to Paul's ministry.

²² Hubbard, *New Creation*, 174.

²³ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 91–103.

²⁴ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 104–12.

²⁵ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 235.

²⁶ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 17–25.

²⁷ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 140–49.

²⁸ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 161–70.

In an effort to convince this church that the earthen vessel of his ministry concealed the very δὴναμις of God (4.7), Paul directs their attention back to the inner dynamic of the Spirit. From this pneumatological basis Paul articulates his perception of his New Covenant ministry and the transformation which it entails. These two closely related items, Paul's New Covenant retrospective and the motif of transformation must be explored in order to grasp adequately 2 Cor. 5.11-21.²⁹

Important to Hubbard's conclusion is an adjectival reading of κατὰ σάρκα in 5:16, which he interprets as a 'veiled exhortation' for those opposed to Paul's ministry based on judgments of the flesh.³⁰ Thus, this text rhetorically functions to juxtapose Paul's former misunderstanding of the mission of the human Jesus with the Corinthians' current misunderstanding of the mission of Paul.³¹

(c) *Paul's Own Conversion*

Through select, careful exegesis Hubbard outlines what he considers motifs of personal conversion throughout the central chapters of 2 Corinthians. For example, 2 Cor 4:6, which says that 'The same God who said, "Let light shine from darkness", made his light shine *in our hearts*',³² provides Hubbard with the guiding theme for this passage: the inner transformation of the human heart. He also reads this text as a clear allusion to Paul's own conversion experience on the Damascus Road, providing 'further reference to conversion, and one in which the apostle offers his own experience as somehow typical of believers generally'.³³ Hubbard links this theme to the pericope of Moses and the veiled glory where Paul writes, 'Whenever *anyone* turns to the Lord, the veil is removed' (3:16). Hubbard suggests that Paul's citation of Exod 34:34 confirms that conversion is referenced in this text.

²⁹ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 150.

³⁰ Hubbard's adjectival reading of κατὰ σάρκα is one important distinction from Martyn. Hubbard translates as "Christ, in so far as his human lineage is concerned." See Hubbard, *New Creation*, 175. In agreement with Martyn, O'Connor disagrees with Hubbard: "This line of interpretation (adj) is excluded by the fact that when Paul uses *kata sarka* as an adjective, it follows the noun (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26; 10:18; Rom 4:1; 9:3). Here it precedes the noun, and so it must be understood as an adverb qualifying 'to know'." J. Murphy-O'Connor, *The Theology of the Second Letter to the Corinthians* (NTT; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 58.

³¹ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 177. Hubbard suggests that "Paul's reflective glance at his past" in this text is a self-confession. As Kreitzer points out, Paul begins this clause with a plural pronoun, "if we regarded Christ according to the flesh" which calls into question Hubbard's interpretation. L. Kreitzer, *2 Corinthians* (NTG; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 108.

³² Emphasis Hubbard, he also notes that Paul did not say, "in the world" (4:6; cf. 3:18). See Hubbard, *New Creation*, 153.

³³ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 158–59. See further discussion in §2.1.4.a.

In citing this passage from Exodus, Paul changes the verb εἰπορεύετο to ἐπιστρέφη and leaves the subject nonspecific; Hubbard considers the subject to be *anyone*, as the passage seems to imply, and he takes this to be an allusion to ‘the hearts of his (Paul’s) unbelieving kinsmen’.³⁴

Narrowing his attention to 5:11-17, Hubbard carefully develops a number of other exegetical points to crystallize his conclusions, including an analysis of the governing τίς (5:17, anyone), ἐν Χριστῷ (5:17 as soteriological transformation), and κόσμος (5:19), which Hubbard translates as ‘the world as mankind’.³⁵ These exegetical conclusions are supported by offering Isa 43:15-21 as the closest OT parallel text to 2 Cor 5:17. In particular Paul’s phrase τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρήλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά, is read as an echo of Isa 43:18: τὰ ἀρχαῖα μὴ συλλογίζεσθε ἰδοὺ ποιῶ καινά. Hubbard argues that this motif is generally viewed as ‘soteriological and depicts God’s impending action on Israel’s behalf as a kind of second exodus’.³⁶ These contextual and exegetical pointers lead him to conclude that the term καινή κτίσις is ‘an anthropological motif relating to the situation of the individual “in Christ”’.³⁷

Using a similar methodology, Hubbard also collects a web of interrelated texts that each contribute toward an interpretation of new creation in Gal 6:16 as ‘individual renewal’. As with 2 Corinthians, Paul’s personal conversion experience serves as an interpretive crux within a former-now antithesis. Hubbard again sees Paul intentionally contrasting his ‘former life’, which was shaped by nomistic observation (ancestral traditions; law; under law; observance of ‘days, months, seasons and years’; ‘circumcision and uncircumcision’), with his ‘now’ internal experience of the Spirit (‘his son *in me*’; ‘Christ lives *in me*’; ‘the Spirit of his son *in our hearts*’; ‘until Christ is formed *in you*’), and these latter points are equated with new creation and as analogies they provide background to Paul’s statement, ‘I no longer live’.³⁸ The death-life symbolism in Galatians is thus understood by Hubbard as ‘anthropologically oriented’ and focused on the ‘individual’.³⁹ Hubbard understands the dichotomy woven throughout this letter as one of external appearance (6:12) in contrast to

³⁴ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 155–56.

³⁵ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 181.

³⁶ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 182.

³⁷ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 183.

³⁸ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 194.

³⁹ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 129.

internal renewal of the Spirit, and thus, when Paul states, ‘neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but new creation’, his words stands as an explicit rejection of the external nomistic framework of the agitators.⁴⁰ Hubbard concludes that because ‘world’ in 6:14 is in close literary proximity to ‘boasting in the flesh’ (6:13b) and ‘circumcision and uncircumcision’ (6:15a), it is legitimate to interpret Paul’s intended meaning of the term *world* as the ‘flesh’ and even more narrowly as ‘circumcision of the flesh’.⁴¹

2.1.3 T. Ryan Jackson: *New Creation as Inclusive of Personal, Communal, and Cosmic Dimensions*

Engaging primarily with the work of Mell and Hubbard, Jackson argues that a polarized emphasis on either cosmological or anthropological readings results in ‘mutually exclusive distinctions with which Paul may not have been comfortable’.⁴² Jackson’s primary thesis is that Paul’s eschatological soteriology is inclusive of individuals, community, and the cosmos, and that this dynamic interrelatedness is representative of Jewish apocalyptic traditions of the time. In keeping with Mell, Martyn, and others, Jackson argues that Isaiah (chapter 6) and *Jubilees* (chapter 3),⁴³ alongside texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), provide the best comparative literature to evaluate Paul’s use of new creation. Jackson supports these methodological parameters by highlighting the scholarly consensus for the importance of Isaiah within the Pauline corpus as well as the influence of Isaiah more generally as ‘the headwaters for many streams of Jewish tradition’.⁴⁴ Although the exact phrase *καινή κτίσις* is not found in Isaiah, analogous motifs are evident throughout, particularly the Isaianic ‘new heavens and new earth’ themes (Isa 65:17; 66:22) and the motif of ‘former/new’ (e.g., Isa 42; 43; 48; 65 and 66).⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 229.

⁴¹ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 217. See the apposite critique of this reading of *κόσμος* by Jackson, *New Creation*, 89.

⁴² Jackson, *New Creation*, 4.

⁴³ There exist different opinions regarding the categorization of *Jubilees*. Although a substantial number of scholars affirm it as a text in the literary genre of apocalypses others believe that it reflects more generally the apocalyptic thought world. Jackson and Mell suggest it should be catalogued as a historical apocalypse. See discussions in Jackson, *New Creation*, 39; Mell, *Neue Schöpfung*, 152; Hubbard, *New Creation*, 27–28.

⁴⁴ Jackson, *New Creation*, 33.

⁴⁵ Jackson, *New Creation*, 17–32.

In support of his thesis, Jackson outlines OT texts which advocate that ‘the world of ancient Israel held an indissoluble link between the spiritual and physical. . . . The state of the world is directly related to the state of the people’.⁴⁶ Within Isaiah, for example, human sin is often connected with the destructive results evidenced in the created realm. Additionally, the promise of ‘new heavens and new earth’ in Isa 65 and 66 emphasizes both the restoration of God’s people and the world in which they live. External political and social oppression was often explained as a natural consequence of the internal spiritual failure of Israel. In these ways, Judaism reflects the ancient Near Eastern worldview which presupposed that ‘matters such as justice, politics, and nature are interrelated as “aspects of one comprehensive order of creation”’.⁴⁷

Through a careful analysis of *Jubilees* and texts from the DSS, Jackson develops how the earlier Isaianic motifs intensify during the Second Temple period, particularly in the DSS literature where the renewal of the temporal world was eschatologically anticipated through the faithful community.⁴⁸ Building upon the work of M. C. de Boer and others, Jackson demonstrates that *Jubilees* and texts from the DSS depict new creation themes within a dualism that links the cosmological and anthropological within an eschatological expectation of divine intervention to defeat oppressive powers.⁴⁹ This leads Jackson to conclude that in terms of an interpretation of *Jubilees*, to bifurcate anthropology from cosmology ‘obfuscates the more important issue of how the author of *Jubilees* preserves Jewish identity during difficult times’.⁵⁰

Jackson identifies similar connections within the Pauline corpus: ‘Paul moves from what God did on a universal scale — in Christ — which brings about his community which,

⁴⁶ Jackson, *New Creation*, 31.

⁴⁷ Quote from T. E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), xiii; internally citing H. H. Schmid, “Creation, Righteousness and Salvation: ‘Creation Theology’ as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology,” in *Creation in the Old Testament* (ed. B. W. Anderson; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 105. Although Jackson does not reference the work of Fretheim or Schmid, his study identifies the same features of the ancient worldview.

⁴⁸ Jackson, *New Creation*, 33–59, 174–175. This development emerged in tandem with (and perhaps as a result of) the intensified political situation faced by Jews. 1QS 4.23–25 is one such important text, see also the discussion in G. H. Van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity* (WUNT, Vol 232; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 19–20.

⁴⁹ Jackson, *New Creation*, 33–59.

⁵⁰ Jackson, *New Creation*, 40.

in turn, continues his work in the cosmos'.⁵¹ In addition to the larger contexts of Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17, Jackson identifies Rom 5, 1 Cor 15, 2 Cor 6:2, and particularly Rom 8:18-25 as key texts to inform a reading of new creation.⁵² In contrast to Hubbard, who dismisses Rom 8:18-25 as irrelevant to the discussion,⁵³ Jackson includes Rom 8:18-25 as a related text based on three primary considerations: the lexical and semantic resonance between these texts, Paul's theological and thematic development from creation to new creation in Rom 1-8, and the eschatological themes that Rom 8 has in common with both the new creation texts and the OT prophetic traditions such as Isaiah.⁵⁴ In my judgement, Jackson's methodological decision is correct and because of the importance of reading Rom 8:18-25 in tandem with Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17, I include a discussion of this text within the section on κτίσις/κτίζω below (§2.2.2.f).

Another unique contribution of Jackson to the debate is his analysis of new creation themes within the broader Roman imperial ideology where the *Pax Romana* was propagated through cosmological language in terms of a new age. The emperor is depicted as inaugurating a new world order with Rome as the central power.⁵⁵ Whether Paul's letters are to be read as an anti-imperial polemic is disputed among Pauline scholars, yet as Jackson suggests, regardless of that larger scholarly debate, Paul's message of the turning of the ages centered in the power of the Christ event would have been a stark contrast to the prevailing imperial ideology of the first century:⁵⁶

The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ had transformed time and inaugurated the new age expected at the end of history. This established a new order which transformed the way people were evaluated and created an entirely new society defined not by the morality of imperial legislation but by the law of Christ (cf. Gal 6:2). The new order this gospel proclaimed was spoken of as *καινή κτίσις*. The distinctions of the old age were irrelevant. All that mattered was the eschatological order established by the death and resurrection of Jesus (cf. 2 Cor 5:16).⁵⁷

⁵¹ Jackson, *New Creation*, 58.

⁵² Jackson, *New Creation*, 116–69.

⁵³ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 224–25. See also the only other mention of this text on pages 236 and 238.

⁵⁴ Jackson, *New Creation*, 150.

⁵⁵ Jackson, *New Creation*, 60.

⁵⁶ One anthology that would argue that Paul was to some degree responding to the Roman empire is R. A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, Penn: Trinity Press International, 1997).

⁵⁷ Jackson, *New Creation*, 176.

2.1.4 A Comparative Analysis: Methodological Considerations

This brief comparison of three scholarly views that are representative of alternative interpretive trajectories demonstrates the determinative influence which the broader conceptual framework or web of texts has on one's interpretation of new creation in Paul. All three scholars carefully work through Paul's letters, yet they come to link new creation with different strands of his theology. Each consults OT and Second Temple Jewish texts, yet each comes to a different conclusion. It is not surprising that the conclusions of Martyn and Jackson more closely align, given that they draw upon similar apocalyptic textual traditions and highlight cosmic references in Paul, both of which are down-played by Hubbard. Taking a different methodological trajectory, Hubbard reads Paul's new creation text by way of anthropological references in Paul and through the lens of cultural anthropological studies of 'life-crisis rituals', studies that are based upon historical contexts far removed from ancient Judaism and early Christianity. This methodological decision likely builds into his study a prejudice toward individual conversion. A more thorough assessment would need to be made to determine whether these cultural anthropological studies can meaningfully inform Paul's use of new creation terminology. To further support these studies, Hubbard's selection of *Joseph and Aseneth* as a lens for reading Paul cements his conclusions.

By drawing attention to the interrelatedness of the anthropological and cosmological orders within Jewish creation/new creation texts, Jackson's work complements and perhaps even corrects the more polarized approaches of Martyn and Hubbard. As already shown in chapter one, the work of OT scholars such as H. H. Schmid, T. Fretheim, and W. Brown demonstrates that the creative and redemptive acts of God should not be approached as separate and distinct theologies; their work also argues convincingly that redeemed humanity, endowed with the Spirit of God, is *integrally connected* to the purposes of God within, and for, creation. Jackson's appropriation of this Jewish worldview to the Pauline letters provides a promising way forward in the ongoing debate.

There are many finer points of exegesis that could be identified and analyzed here, but in this analysis I am limiting my evaluative comments to the two foundational constructs of Hubbard's work which strike me as systemic weaknesses of his study. The first point relates to his selection of comparative Jewish background texts, particularly his insistence that *Joseph and Aseneth* is the best Second Temple Jewish text for illuminating Paul. And the

second point, which is related to the first, is his employment of Paul's own 'conversion' as a paradigmatic basis for limiting new creation to an internal anthropological transformation. These considerations will then segue into the second part of this chapter, which I judge to be the determinative and underlying crux of this debate: an analysis of the degree to which Paul's theology is shaped by an apocalyptic eschatological framework.

(a) *Isaiah or Aseneth?*

Hubbard's inclusion of *Joseph and Aseneth* as the primary Second Temple Jewish text to illumine Paul's use of new creation is misguided for several specific reasons. In contrast to the exhaustive approach of U. Mell, who considers every possible allusion to new creation in Jewish literature, Hubbard takes a self-consciously narrower approach, limiting the non-biblical literature primarily to *Jubilees* and *Joseph and Aseneth*. This selective comparative approach is certainly valid. His study of *Jubilees* coheres in some ways with the work of Jackson in its conclusion that 'the motif of new creation has an anthropological as well as a cosmological expression' and that *Jubilees* comports with other apocalyptic literature where new creation primarily functions as a cosmological reference with cosmic renewal in view.⁵⁸ Yet Hubbard's hesitation in ascribing any relevance to cosmological interpretations of Paul is linked to his perception that historical apocalypses, such as *Jubilees*, view the battle in terms of extrinsic forces: 'When the plight is perceived primarily in terms of extrinsic factors, political and demonic oppression, it follows that the solution will be similarly conceived: a newly created cosmos'.⁵⁹ This feature of an apocalyptic worldview creates a tension for Hubbard, who reads Pauline soteriology as exclusively anthropological and *intrinsic*, the realm of 'sin, bondage, depravity, and wickedness. Its rulers are *sarx* and *hamartia*'.⁶⁰ Thus, Hubbard concludes that an *internal* struggle is to be rectified through an *internal* solution. This distinction between the external/internal plight leads him to conclude that *Joseph and Aseneth* provides a 'very close parallel to Paul's new-creation motif'⁶¹ precisely because the

⁵⁸ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 238.

⁵⁹ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 53.

⁶⁰ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 239.

⁶¹ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 240.

focus of the *Joseph and Aseneth* narrative is on the internal struggle and spiritual conversion of Aseneth. Hubbard aligns *Joseph and Aseneth* with 2 Corinthians and Galatians because he believes that one key subtext of these letters is Paul's own internal struggle and spiritual conversion. Hubbard concedes that a text like Rom 8 affirms that in the final *eschaton* the cosmos will be renewed, yet he sees the renewal of the cosmos as a future event, one which *de facto* excludes the possibility that new creation refers to cosmic renewal and/or the advent of the new age in the present.⁶² Therefore, Hubbard concludes, 'so it is less accurate to speak of the believer entering the new age *than it is to speak of the new age entering the believer*'.⁶³ One driving factor in this methodological decision is his conviction that Paul's theology is not to be understood within an apocalyptic framework.⁶⁴

Hubbard selects *Joseph and Aseneth*, in part, as a reaction to the weaknesses he perceives in the *traditionsgeschichtliche* approach to new creation scholarship. He correctly identifies that at times this method placed too much emphasis on a text's 'prehistory', which in turn eclipses primary biblical texts. His criticism of Mell's reliance on the Isaiah tradition pointedly makes this case, 'This prejudicial selectivity [of Isaianic texts as precursors for new creation] not only *affects* Mell's conclusions, it was probably the *function* of these (predetermined?) conclusions, and further illustrates the *de facto* circularity of this approach'.⁶⁵ However, the same criticism can be made of Hubbard's methodology. His selection of *Joseph and Aseneth* and texts from Jeremiah and Ezekiel that specifically focus on internal spiritual renewal serve his conclusions well. *Yet none of these texts actually includes the phrase καινή κτίσις*, a term most often used within contexts having an apocalyptic ethos. Additionally, his conclusions are buttressed by the inclusion of anthropological studies specific to death-life rituals. As already noted, these studies are drawn from cultural contexts far removed from ancient Judaism and any value they may provide as a broader context for reading Paul remains unproven.

⁶² Hubbard, *New Creation*, 5.

⁶³ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 224.

⁶⁴ Hubbard specifically states that he will critically appraise the scholarly consensus which regards Jewish apocalyptic traditions as a "theological matrix from which Paul derived his new-creation motif." See Hubbard, *New Creation*, 7–8.

⁶⁵ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 7.

In terms of determining what new creation means in Paul, the task is not primarily to establish that Pauline soteriology includes an anthropological component — *all scholars concur on this point*. The redemption of humans, as those beings who were uniquely created in the image of God is central to the redemptive work of God in Christ (this point will be demonstrated as a major element of Pauline creation theology in chapter four). In many respects Hubbard’s exegetical work represents a fresh and thorough affirmation of this theology within Paul. The debate hinges, however, on whether Paul means *more than* anthropological soteriology when he used the phrase new creation. Given that the precise phrase *καινή κτίσις* and its analogous concepts, such as ‘a new heaven and new earth’, occur almost exclusively within apocalyptic Jewish texts of the Second Temple Period, it naturally seems to follow that those texts must be given priority when reading Paul. This becomes especially relevant if one can demonstrate that Paul’s theology fits within the broader Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, albeit modified by his understanding of the present reality of the Christ event in history. Hubbard’s study while offering an extended discussion of anthropological soteriology in Paul, does not directly or indirectly address the apocalyptic framework as a possibility in Paul; it is assumed throughout his work that an apocalyptic framework is neither present in nor relevant to Paul’s theology. In relation to this latter point, I propose and develop below (§2.1.4.b) that there exist good reasons why *Joseph and Aseneth* has never been a significant text for determining Paul’s usage of new creation, whereas 2 *Baruch*, *Jubilees*, and/or *1 Enoch* seem to be better candidates for comparison.

Another methodological issue that arises when examining Hubbard’s perspective on Paul is his lack of consideration for the deutero- and trito-Isaianic creation and new creation motifs. Having mentioned these texts briefly, he neither revisits them nor even mentions them in his conclusion.⁶⁶ Given that Isaiah is commonly recognized by Pauline scholars as a central scriptural corpus, if not *the* scriptural corpus shaping Paul’s theological horizon, more consideration needs to be given to these texts.⁶⁷ Both Jackson and Martyn carefully consider

⁶⁶ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 12–17.

⁶⁷ See for example, S. Moyise and M. J.J. Menken, eds, *Isaiah in the New Testament* (New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2005). Also F. Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998). Mell, *Neue Schöpfung*, 47.

Isaiah as a central scriptural text for Paul, and they consequentially build a stronger argument for the cosmic scope of new creation. For example, Paul builds his discussion of new creation to a semi-climax by boldly citing Isa 49:8 as fulfilled in Christ: ‘Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation’ (2 Cor 6:2).⁶⁸ Yet what does the phrase *day of salvation* mean for Isaiah and how is it related to new creation in Paul? Is it limited to individual salvation or is it more inclusive of community and/or the cosmic renewal? More attention needs to be given to other Isaiah influences in the verses and chapters where new creation terminology occurs.

In short, three of Hubbard’s methodological decisions — his primary reliance on *Joseph and Aseneth*, his lack of incorporation of Isaianic creation/new creation motifs, and his omission of a discussion of Paul’s use of κτίσις/κτίζω — call into question Hubbard’s conclusions.

(b) Personal Conversion or Apocalyptic Unveiling?

My final critique of Hubbard concerns his comparison of conversion motifs from *Joseph and Aseneth* with Paul’s Damascus Road experience. As a Hellenistic romance within the Jewish tradition, *Joseph and Aseneth* is a unique literary text, one that Hubbard concedes ‘is the work least often used’ to ‘explicate Paul’s new-creation motif’.⁶⁹ Yet because it features the conversion of Aseneth, which is depicted as from death-to-life, *Joseph and Aseneth* correlates well with the cultural anthropological studies Hubbard cites and it aligns with some of the Pauline themes he chooses to highlight (e.g., newness, Spirit, and life). This combination of material leads him to draw conclusions about Paul’s ‘conversion’ that are anachronistic and that, in turn, distort his articulation of Pauline soteriology. In the space below, I present arguments that demonstrate these weaknesses in Hubbard’s work.

As already noted, it is important to highlight that as the *Joseph and Aseneth* narrative recounts the dramatic conversion of a polytheistic Egyptian to Judaism, the phrase καινή κτίσις never occurs, but Hubbard repeatedly uses it to describe the conversion of Aseneth.

⁶⁸ See Hubbard’s brief acknowledgment of the broader vision of 2 Cor 6:2, Hubbard, *New Creation*, 174.

⁶⁹ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 7.

Within Hubbard's conclusion to his study, entitled 'New creation and conversion', he juxtaposes Aseneth's conversion with Paul's conversion, forming one of the major foundations for a reading of new creation as personal conversion: 'The similarities between Paul's new-creation motif and that found in *Joseph and Aseneth*, however, are not rooted simply in a shared historical-cultural milieu, but issue from the fact that both make use of a common repertoire of religious symbols to describe *conversion*'.⁷⁰ This juxtaposition, which relies on Hubbard's flawed dealings with the phrase *καινή κτίσις* and other presuppositions, come to eclipse Paul's own description of the Damascus Road encounter while also serving as a significant building block in Hubbard's overarching argument.

At least since the time of K. Stendahl's influential article 'The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West',⁷¹ scholars have discussed at length whether conversion language, in the traditional western articulation, is accurately applied to Saul/Paul. I do not intent to rehearse this larger debate except to clarify Hubbard's application of the term *conversion* and to establish how this application of the term shades Hubbard's reading of new creation and informs more broadly his reading of Pauline soteriology. Within the scholarly corpus, the work of the sociologist Lewis Rambo has helped provide nuance to conversion terminology for NT scholars and thereby helped such scholars avoid anachronistic readings. For example, drawing upon the work of Rambo, Scot McKnight concludes that

Paul's conversion was an "institutional transition." Paul moved from one kind of Judaism to another, but even this "other" Judaism was like new wine in old wineskins and would soon burst the boundaries. Paul was a convert; but his kind of conversion was within a religion and not from one religion to another.⁷²

Even more relevant to an evaluation of Hubbard's work is the recent article by G. Sterling. Like McKnight, Sterling employs the terminology of Rambo, yet he applies it more broadly to the ancient literature about conversion. Sterling's careful study of motifs in Hellenistic philosophy and Second Temple Jewish texts includes an extensive analysis of *Joseph and*

⁷⁰ Hubbard, *New Creation*, 240.

⁷¹ K. Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *HTR* 56, no. 3 (1963): 199–215. Reprinted in the collection, K. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 78–96.

⁷² S. McKnight, "Was Paul a Convert?" *ExAud* 25 (2009): 110–32 (131).

Aseneth, Philo, and the NT.⁷³ In that analysis, he highlights four terms that are consistently used in these narratives: ἐπιστρέφω, ἐπιστροφή, μετανοέω, and μετάνοια. Sterling further identifies Jewish texts that represent an ‘intensification’ conversion representative of Jews who turn back to God from idol worship (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:47-48; Sir 5:7) in contrast to prophetic texts that envision the ‘tradition’ conversion, where pagan nations turn to God (e.g., Ps 21:28 [LXX, 22:27]; Tob 14:6).

Within this contrast between intensification and tradition conversions, Sterling provides a detailed description of the dramatic conversion of *Aseneth*, identifying it as one of the clearest examples in the ancient world of ‘tradition’ conversion: *Aseneth* turns from polytheistic worship of Egyptian gods to worship of the one true God of Judaism, a clear example of a person converting from one religion to another religion. Her repentance and change of divine allegiance is personified by the author as the heavenly virtue of *metanoia* (ἡ μετάνοια).⁷⁴ As Hubbard highlights, *Aseneth*’s conversion is linked with motifs of new life that transpire as she repents of sins and changes her allegiance to Yahweh. What Hubbard fails to clarify is that these components of *Aseneth*’s conversion are decidedly absent in Paul’s Damascus Road encounter which is depicted more as a call or divine appointment. Paul himself describes it as an ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 1:12), a revealing of the plan of God in Jesus Christ through which Paul’s role within that plan is announced. Unlike *Aseneth*’s conversion, Paul’s ‘conversion’ was neither a change of allegiance nor an introspective repentance of sin. Rather, it was an epistemological and theological defining moment in which Paul came to see all reality differently and in which his calling within God’s eternal plan of salvation became crystal clear; it was the moment in which Paul was commissioned to be an apostle to the Gentiles.⁷⁵

⁷³ See the excellent work of G. E. Sterling, “Turning to God: Conversion in Greek-Speaking Judaism and Early Christianity,” in *Scripture and Traditions: Essays on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Carl R. Holladay* (eds P. Gray and G. R. O’Day; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 69–95. For a comprehensive study on Paul and conversion, see the work of Chester who concludes that Paul saw his “conversion” as a calling that set him apart. See S. J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul’s Theology and the Corinthian Church* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 153–63.

⁷⁴ Sterling, “Conversion,” 80. Cf. *Joseph and Aseneth* 15:7-8.

⁷⁵ This comports with how Luke’s account where Paul states, “Wherefore, O King Agrippa, *I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision*, but declared first to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that *they should repent and turn to God* and perform deeds worthy of their repentance” (Acts 26:19-20; my emphasis, cf. 9:1-19; 22:6-16).

Any reading of Paul that likens the Damascus Road encounter to a tradition transition is thus anachronistic and lacks the nuance which Paul himself uses to describe this encounter. Paul understood this event as grounded in the pre-eternal plan of God for which Jesus Christ is central. This leads J. Dunn to suggest the term *christophany* as a more accurate description of the Damascus Road encounter. Although not without its problems, the term *christophany* aligns more closely with how the narrative describes the exchange.⁷⁶ To juxtapose Paul's 'conversion' with Aseneth's 'conversion' is thus misconstrued, and it prejudices Hubbard's reading of new creation as limited to personal conversion. The story of Aseneth and the story of Paul relate two different events of two different natures, and importantly, neither story uses the phrase new creation as a descriptor. The careful work of Sterling affirms their *differences*, not their similarity.⁷⁷

No Second Temple Jewish author uses the phrase *καὴν κτίσις* as a reference to a personal conversion and thus Hubbard's conclusions are suspect. One may agree with Hubbard that the Damascus Road experience was a defining moment for Paul, yet it was not grounded in a personal, internal, spiritual, conversion. Rather it was grounded in a divine epiphany, a revelation of God in Christ which made known to Paul that all the promises of God for Israel were reconfigured in the incarnate Jesus Christ. This revelation now leads to the second primary focus of this chapter and now perhaps to the crux of the interpretive differences I have outlined above: an analysis of the influence that apocalyptic categories exercise on Paul's understanding and articulation of the Christ event.

2.2 An Apocalyptic Paul? Revisiting the Scholarly Debate

Most current Pauline scholars presume that the apocalyptic milieu of Second Temple Judaism had a least a minimal influence on Paul's theology, but this was not the case before Albert Schweitzer broke new ground on the topic in 1930 or before Ernst Käsemann's influential 1960 lecture markedly increased the scholarly attention to determining the influence that

⁷⁶ See J. D. G. Dunn, "A Light to the Gentiles': The Significance of the Damascus Road Christophany for Paul," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament, Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird* (eds L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright; Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 251–66 (251).

⁷⁷ Sterling, "Conversion," 94.

Jewish apocalyptic and eschatological ideas and motifs had on Paul's thinking.⁷⁸ Since then, a considerable debate has resulted in a number of influential studies that have affirmed and further developed Käsemann's thesis.⁷⁹ As already outlined, J. C. Beker and J. Louis Martyn each convincingly suggest that to read Paul correctly, one must acknowledge an apocalyptic framework as the organizing principle of God's eschatological engagement with the universe.⁸⁰ The impact of these scholarly discussions has resulted in a general recognition among the vast majority of Pauline scholars that the language, motifs, and perspective of the apocalyptic worldview shape Paul's thought and theology.⁸¹ Disagreement, however, remains in terms of the degree to which apocalyptic motifs influence Paul and in terms of the specific aspects of apocalypticism that shaped his theology. Such disagreement appears significantly to guide how interpreters understand new creation within Paul.

The importance of pursuing this discussion within the context of my study is two-fold. First, in the immediate context, the degree to which apocalyptic categories shape Paul's theology has direct implications for how one understands his use of the term new creation. This hermeneutical judgment is likewise related more broadly to how one conceives of the *scope* of the Christ event. If, as Hubbard suggests, new creation is limited to referring to 'the sin of Adam' that is present in each individual human heart, then the Christ event is

⁷⁸ A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (London: Black, 1931); E. Käsemann, "Die anfänge christlicher theologie," *ZTK* 57 (1960): 162–85. Later published in English translation, E. Käsemann, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology," in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Fortress, 1969), 82–107. See also, E. Käsemann, "On Paul's Anthropology," in *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 1–31. See Jackson, *New Creation*, 100–103.

⁷⁹ The bibliography on this topic is vast with only a few representative works included here. See W. D. Davies and D. Daube, eds, *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge at the University Press, 1956); J. Marcus and M. L. Soards, eds., *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (JSNTSup, Vol 24; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989). Other classic and/or helpful contributions include, K. Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic: A Polemical Work on a Neglected Area of Biblical Studies and Its Damaging Effects on Theology and Philosophy* (trans. M. Kohl; SBT; London: SCM, 1972); J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); Martyn, *Theological*; J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroads, 1984) and M. C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death. Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (JSNTSup, Vol 22; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988).

⁸⁰ Beker, *Triumph*, 135–81 and subsequently, J. C. Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982).

⁸¹ For a succinct overview of the debate, see E. E. Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9–11* (SBLDS, Vol 109; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 4–23.

essentially a response to the human plight. The natural implication is that if there were ‘no sin’, there would be no need for ‘redemption’. Such a narrowly focused interpretation of the Christ event makes any connection of redemption to creation or to the preplanned will of God tangential at best. If, however, one can demonstrate persuasively that new creation should be read within a broader apocalyptic framework, then the Christ event has implications that go beyond human soteriology. In my judgment, the apocalyptic motifs woven into the Pauline theological matrix both overwhelmingly challenge Hubbard’s conclusion that the Christ event is limited to individual conversion and support a more inclusive reading for new creation, one which includes humanity, community, and the broader creation. Second, demonstrating that Paul is influenced by apocalyptic categories and motifs goes hand in hand with demonstrating that a creational matrix informs his theology; both frameworks are cosmic in nature and both position anthropological soteriology as one component of the larger economy of God in Christ.

In order to frame this discussion, I give preliminary attention to defining terminology and outlining the general features of what is called *apocalyptic eschatology*. The precise definitions for apocalyptic terms are controversial among scholars, yet I nevertheless attempt to pinpoint them here as a necessary precursor for developing my thesis that apocalyptic notions of the first century are embedded within Paul’s letters and provide an organizing matrix for his theology. Then I focus my attention on how features of Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic motifs are present within the Pauline corpus, giving priority to the undisputed letters of Paul.⁸²

2.2.1 Definitions and Characteristics of Apocalyptic Eschatology

It is important first to acknowledge that the phrase *apocalyptic eschatology* is not a term which Paul or other ancients used. It is a modern construct developed by scholars to articulate

⁸² In addition to all of the major works already identified, see for example, W. Meeks, “Apocalyptic Discourse and Strategies of Goodness,” *JR* 80, no. 3 (July 2000): 461–75; A. J. Hultgren, “Eschatology in the New Testament,” in *The Last Things: Biblical & Theological Perspectives on Eschatology* (eds C.E. Braaten and R. W. Jenson; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2002), 67–89; M. L. Soards, “Paul: Apostle and Apocalyptic Visionary,” *BTB* 16 (1986): 148–50; B. W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1–11* (JSNTSup, Vol 57; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

the presence of apocalyptic categories and motifs within the NT literature. The term *apocalypse*, coming from ἀποκάλυψις, refers technically to a particular genre of literature that flourished within Judaism and early Christianity between approximately 300 BCE and 300 CE and that was intended to ‘disclose’ or ‘unveil’ divine secrets.⁸³ The leader of the Society of Biblical Literature Forms and Genre Project, John Collins provides the following definition:

Apocalypse is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality, which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.⁸⁴

This genre emerged during the Second Temple Period in part as a response to post-exilic historical, political, and religious uncertainty. Rowland and others agree that these divine revelations are given by God, within social situations of crisis, ‘directly to man and thereby give them knowledge of the true nature of reality so that they may organize their lives accordingly’.⁸⁵ The apocalyptic genre functioned to challenge the temporal sovereignty of oppressive political rulers, providing people with hope and expectation for the ultimate cosmic sovereign rule of God. As a result of the historic characteristics prompting this literary tradition, a heightened anticipation of divine intervention flourished in post-exilic Judaism.⁸⁶

The term *eschatology*, originating from the Greek word ἔσχατος, was traditionally understood as concerned with the ‘final’ or ‘end’ time plan of God. This meaning expanded into a much broader theological category and was identified as particularly prominent in the Pauline corpus where it is often embedded within texts in which apocalyptic features are present, though not exclusively so.⁸⁷ C. H. Dodd introduced more technical vocabulary to the

⁸³ Daniel and Revelation are the two biblical examples of the genre of apocalypse, although the apocalypse of Revelation is embedded within an epistolary structure.

⁸⁴ J.J. Collins, ed., *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (Semeia; Missoula, MT, 1979), 9. For an article which reviews the history of interpretation, see R. E. Sturm, “Defining the Word ‘Apocalyptic’: A Problem in Biblical Criticism,” in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (J. Marcus and M. L. Soards; SNTSup, Vol 24; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 17–48.

⁸⁵ C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982), 11.

⁸⁶ For example, Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 194–213. See also Jackson, *New Creation*, 33–37; N. Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 163–64.

⁸⁷ See the helpful chapter on the language of eschatology in G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London: Duckworth, 1980), 243–71. For a more comprehensive account, see O. F. Cummings, *Coming to Christ: A Study in Christian Eschatology* (New York/Oxford: University Press of America, 1998), 91–227.

idea of eschatology in his descriptions of the NT's eschatological interpretation of the Christ event: 'The eschaton has moved from the future to the present, from the sphere of expectation into that of realized experience'.⁸⁸ Thus, the phrase *realized eschatology* became the standard theological terminology to describe NT references to the presence of the eschaton within history. The term *apocalyptic eschatology* emerged as a theological way to refer to the thought of ancient authors whose conceptual frameworks were influenced by the apocalyptic worldview but who were not necessarily writing within that genre. Hence, J. Collins defines this, in distinction from the genre of apocalypse, as 'a set of ideas and motifs that may also be found in other literary genres'.⁸⁹ P. Hanson further suggests that apocalyptic eschatology within the NT was not only influenced by apocalyptic literature but was also an outgrowth of the kind of prophetic eschatology that was representative of the post-exilic prophets (e.g., Isa 65:16b-17). Hanson explains, 'Common to both is the belief that, in accordance with the divine plan, the adverse conditions of the present world would end in judgment of the wicked and vindication of the righteous, thereby ushering in a new era of prosperity and peace'.⁹⁰ Such a milieu resulted in a symbolic universe that was widely accepted among Second Temple Jewish authors. This worldview influenced literary works of the time and functioned to shape community and social realities while simultaneously igniting a heightened expectation for divine intervention.

Thus, the features of apocalyptic eschatology are useful and appropriate for analyzing Pauline theology. Paul draws upon the pervasive apocalyptic impulse of his first century Jewish setting to describe the eschatological work of God in Christ without writing in an apocalyptic genre.⁹¹ In order to ascertain *to what degree* Paul's thinking is influenced by apocalyptic categories, it is useful first to outline the standard tenets of apocalyptic

⁸⁸ C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom, Rev. Ed.* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 34–35.

⁸⁹ J.J. Collins, *Imagination*, 2. Meeks suggests the term *apocalyptic discourse*. W. Meeks, "Goodness," 463. Barr suggests that when using the term *apocalyptic* "we think of a set of ideas and attitudes, which find typical expression in the apocalypse form more strictly so called but which are also found over a much wider range of literature." See J. Barr, "Jewish Apocalyptic in Recent Scholarly Study," *BJRL* 58 (1975): 9–35 (18).

⁹⁰ P. D. Hanson, "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism," in *ABD, Vol 1* (D. N. Freedman, exec. ed.; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 279–82 (281).

⁹¹ See for example, de Boer, "Paul", (172-173) and W. Meeks, "Goodness," 463. This is not to suggest, however, that Paul was not influenced by other ideologies and worldviews.

eschatology and then to consider how these features are embedded within the Pauline corpus. Multiple attempts have been made to formulate such a list and the classic works of Koch, Hanson, Rowland, Meeks, Collins, and others have led the way in articulating a general consensus. Drawing upon these authors, D. Aune has produced a representative list that I have reproduced here with one additional feature from the work of Klaus Koch (#9):⁹²

- (1) The temporal dualism of the two ages
- (2) The radical discontinuity between this age and the next coupled with pessimism regarding the existing order and otherworldly hope directed toward the future order
- (3) The division of history into segments (four, seven, twelve), reflecting a predetermined plan of history
- (4) The expectation of the imminent arrival of the reign of God as an act of God spelling the doom of existing earthly conditions
- (5) A cosmic perspective in which the primary location of an individual is no longer within a collective entity such as Israel or the people of God, and the impending crisis is not local but cosmic in scope
- (6) The cataclysmic intervention of God will result in salvation for the righteous, conceived as the regaining of Edenic conditions⁹³
- (7) The introduction of angels and demons to explain historical and eschatological events
- (8) The introduction of a new mediator with royal functions
- (9) The catchword *glory* is used wherever the final state of affairs is set apart from the present and whenever a final amalgamation of the earthly and heavenly spheres is prophesied⁹⁴

2.2.2 The Linguistic Web of Apocalyptic Motifs in Paul

In this section, I evaluate the degree to which apocalyptic features are embedded within the Pauline corpus, limiting my discussion to an analysis of several prominent apocalyptic themes which align with the list above. I discuss each of these themes under the heading of a key Greek term that is representative of these themes within Paul's writing. In this way, I first review the contexts where Paul uses the term ἀποκάλυψις, particularly in reference to the new age inaugurated by the Christ event (§2.2.2.a). This usage overlaps with some aspects of categories 1, 2, 3, and 8 in the list above and brings Paul's eschatological difference from his Jewish contemporaries into sharper focus. The next two categories are selected, discussed,

⁹² Reproduced from D. E. Aune, "Apocalypticism," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (eds. G. and Martin Hawthorne R.; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 25–35 (27).

⁹³ This motif is sometimes connected to the notion of a reversal of Adam's fall; see E. Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul's Cosmological Language* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 175. For example, *4 Ezra* 7:11-14; *Apoc. Mos.* 10-11.

⁹⁴ Koch, *Rediscovery*, 28–33. Reprinted in P. D. Hanson, *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses: Edited with an Introduction* (IRT; Philadelphia/London: Fortress/SPCK, 1983), 24–29.

and organized around the appearance of the terms αἰών (§2.2.2.b) and καταργέω (§2.2.2.c) in Paul’s writing; both terms further define Paul’s notion of the two ages and his eschatological vision. This discussion then leads naturally to the Pauline expectation of the arrival of God’s reign (category 4 above), and the texts for this category are organized under the apocalyptic catch word ταχύς (§2.2.2.d). The final portion of this section discusses Paul’s use of the terms κόσμος (§2.2.2.e) and κτίσις (§2.2.2.f), which are central components which overlap many of the categories listed above. Organizing Pauline texts collectively around these themes more clearly demonstrates the way in which apocalyptic categories shape Paul’s theology and thereby contributes to a clearer understanding of καινή κτίσις.

Other apocalyptic motifs could certainly be expanded upon in this space.⁹⁵ For example, the presence of angelic and demonic forces in the Pauline corpus is consistent with the Judaism of his time (category 7 above; e.g., Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 4:9; 6:3; 11:10; 13:1; 2 Cor 11:14; Gal 1:8; 3:19; 4:14; 1 Thess 4:16), though the presence of such beings does not appear to be a dominant theme. Satan also appears in contexts that include varying degrees of cosmic battle between God and evil (e.g., Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 11:14; 12:7; 1 Thess 2:18; cf. 2 Thess 2:9). Furthermore, Paul’s use of ‘Son of God’ language comports with the apocalyptic messianic expectation of a new mediator with royal functions, a theme especially prominent in key texts such as 1 Cor 15:23-28 where Christ is portrayed as the reigning ‘King’ and ‘Son of God’ who will hand ‘all things’ back to God (category 8 and 9 above, see also Gal 4:4, 6; cf. Col 1:12-16).⁹⁶

(a) ἀποκάλυψις

As I have already noted, Paul did not write apocalyptic literature, but it is my contention that he adopted certain themes and scenarios from within that tradition in his writing, and thus,

⁹⁵ See for example, D. W. Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict: Paul’s Use of Apocalyptic Judgment Language in 1 Corinthians 3:5–4:5* (SupNT; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992). On angels see for example, C. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents & Early Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 315–46; J. White, “Paul’s Cosmology: The Witness of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians,” in *Cosmology And New Testament Theology* (ed. J. T. Pennington and S. M. McDonough; LNTS; New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 90–106, (103); G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 234.

⁹⁶ See Fee’s important discussion on Gal 4:4, 6 in G. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 211–20.

before I move to his larger corpus (1 Cor 15:51-57; 1 Thess 4:13-18; cf. 2 Thess 1:5-12, 2:1-12), I will first highlight a vivid example. In 2 Corinthians Paul unfolds a stunning mystical adventure to the ‘third heaven’ (2 Cor 12:1-10).⁹⁷ This account is described as originating in ‘visions and revelations of the Lord’ which disclose heavenly secrets (ὄπτασία and ἀποκάλυψις; 2 Cor 12:1; cf. 2 Baruch 76:1).⁹⁸ Paul describes this apocalyptic vision as occurring ‘14 years earlier’, which, depending on one’s chronological calculations, is prior to or quite early in his missionary journeys.⁹⁹ Some scholars have suggested similarities between this apocalyptic vision and the earlier divine ‘revelation’ given to Paul on the Damascus Road (Gal 1:11-12, 16; cf. Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-11; 26:12-18; note that visions are also recorded in Acts 22:17 and 27:23).¹⁰⁰

These two early experiences, received through a revelation of Jesus Christ (δι’ ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Gal 1:12) and described as visions and revelations (ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις, 2 Cor 12:1) formatively shape Paul’s sense of vocation and his interpretation of the Christ event. They also provide an interpretive clue for Paul’s use of the term ἀποκάλυψις elsewhere. Throughout his letters, Paul’s apostolic self-understanding and his ministerial authority are directly substantiated by these divine revelations. In keeping with standard usage, Paul typically uses the term ἀποκάλυψις to articulate an unveiling of the gospel of Christ that prefigures and inaugurates end-time events. Echoes of Paul’s earlier experience are present when he defends his gospel proclamation as being rooted in divine revelation: ‘For I want you to know . . . that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ’ (Gal 1:11-12; cf. 1 Cor 1:7; cf. 2 Thess 1:7).¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ In agreement with the majority of scholars, I believe that Paul is referring to a personal experience in this passage. Reference to the “third heaven” echoes the notion of the seven-tiered heaven in Jewish apocalyptic literature. For example, *Apocalypse of Moses* 35:2; *Apocalypse of Abraham* 19:4. See A. Y. Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 26.

⁹⁸ For more detailed accounts of the apocalyptic features of this texts, see especially Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 378–86. Also, C. R. Morray-Jones, “Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1–12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul’s Apostolate. Part 1: The Jewish Sources,” *HTR* 86, no. 2 (1993): 177–217; C. R. Morray-Jones, “Part 2: Paul’s Heavenly Ascent and Its Significance,” *HTR* 86, no. 3 (1993): 265–92.

⁹⁹ Hengel suggests the event happened around 42 CE, M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch* (London: SCM, 1997), xiii.

¹⁰⁰ Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 379–86.

¹⁰¹ Related terms not discussed here include φανερώω (1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 5:10; Col 3:4), φανερός (1 Cor 3:13), and φωτίζω (1 Cor 4:5).

In keeping with the LXX usage of ἀποκάλυψις, particularly as it is featured in the divine apocalyptic revelations to Daniel, Paul employs the term to identify himself as the recipient of God’s self-revelation.¹⁰² While defending his apostolic authority in this way, he uses a similar term (ὄραω) to reference this revelation (1 Cor 15:8 cf. 1 Cor 9:1).¹⁰³ Within his most extended defense of his apostolic ministry (2 Cor 2-7), Paul draws upon this terminology and affirms with the Corinthians that his gospel may be covered/veiled, but if so, it is only veiled to those whom ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου [i.e. Satan] has blinded (2 Cor 4:4). Drawing upon the servant motive of Isa 49, Paul connects the revelation ‘of God’s Son’ to divine grace bestowed on Paul even prior to his birth (Gal 1:15-16). Rowland suggests that Gal 1:16 is closely aligned with two other key Pauline texts that refer to the ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ κυρίου and concludes the following:

In the light of 1 Cor 1:7 and 2 Thess 1:7, it is difficult to see how one can interpret Gal 1:16 in any other way than as a reference to the revelation to Paul of the hidden Christ who is now in heaven. Thus we can speak of a proleptic disclosure to the apostle of one who would only be revealed from heaven to the whole world in the future.¹⁰⁴

As one of the ‘stewards of the mysteries of God’ (οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων Θεοῦ; 1 Cor 4:1), Paul describes himself as commissioned to ‘impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification’ (1 Cor 2:6-8). These texts affirm that Paul perceived another heavenly reality, one that was generally hidden yet temporally revealed to him.¹⁰⁵ In this way, Paul establishes his authority concerning the divine revelations he imparts, revelations that outline God’s *preordained* plan for faith, righteousness, final judgment (e.g., Rom 1:17-18; 2:5; 16:25-27; Gal 2:2; 3:23; cf. Eph 1:17; 3:3), and a future culmination in the ‘revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Rom 8:18-19; 1 Cor 1:7; 3:13; 2 Thess 2:6-8; cf. 4 Ezra 7:28). When the final eschatological revelation occurs, Christ will ‘defeat every ruler and every authority and power’ (1 Cor 15:24), the dead will be

¹⁰² For example, Daniel 2:19, 22, 28, 29, 30, 47; 10:1.

¹⁰³ Note the use of the term ὄρασις to describe Daniel’s angelic vision (Dan 10:16); this term is also used in Acts 26:19; Luke 1:22; 24:23.

¹⁰⁴ Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 377.

¹⁰⁵ Within the doxology of Rom 16:25-27, Paul describes the “revelations of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages” as now being disclosed through the “prophetic writing to all nations.” Issues of authorship are noted by R. Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 941–42.

raised (1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 4:13-18), and all things will be restored to God (Rom 8:18-25; 1 Cor 15:26-28).

Each of these motifs fits squarely within the apocalyptic traditions that were flourishing within Judaism in the first century. *Second Baruch* provides an important parallel; in this text, God reveals a preordained divine message (29:3; 39:7; 73:1), the dead are raised (30:1), victory over opposing power is imminent (40:2), death is defeated (40:3), eternal life results (42:7; 44:12; 51:3, 9, 16; cf. Rom 5:12), and the world is made new (44:13).¹⁰⁶ What distinguishes Paul's writings from texts like *2 Baruch* is the Christ event. Future resurrection has already begun with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the realized presence of the Spirit. Paul identifies both of these events as the first fruits (*ἀπαρχή*) of future reality (Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 15:20, 23).

(b) *αἰών*

The apocalyptic revelations of God in Paul's life (1 Cor 15:3-11; 2 Cor 12:1-10; Gal 1:11-17), his understanding of Christ as the *ἀπαρχή* of future bodily resurrection (1 Cor 15:20, 23), and the present reality of the eschatological Spirit as the *ἀπαρχή* *within* history (Rom 8:23) coalesce together to inform Paul's eschatological view of the two ages.¹⁰⁷ This feature of realized eschatology further distinguishes Paul from most of his Jewish contemporaries and provides one of the most important trajectories for understanding how the Christ event impacts Paul's view of the world and God.¹⁰⁸ Paul draws upon the standard Jewish apocalyptic construct of the two ages, yet for Paul the Christ event distinguishes between the past, present, and future ages.¹⁰⁹ By differentiating 'this present evil age' (Gal 1:4) from the proleptic *present reality* of the new age inaugurated by the Christ event (e.g., 1 Cor 10:11; cf.

¹⁰⁶ See the study of M. Henze, *Jewish Apocalypticism in Late First Century Israel* (TSAJ; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 285–93. See also de Boer, "Paul," 177–80.

¹⁰⁷ Paul never uses the standard apocalyptic phrase *age to come* which supports the suggestion that for Paul the future age has already begun in Christ. The Spirit indicates that the "last days" have arrived. See for example, Gal 3:2-5, 14; 4:6; 5:5, 16-18, 22, 25; cf. Isa 44:3; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17. See also R. J. Morales, *The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel: New Exodus and New Creation Motifs in Galatians* (WUNT, Vol 282; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 233–38.

¹⁰⁸ There are isolated instances in which Jewish groups believed that a "turning point" of the ages had already arrived. See J.J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 159–63.

¹⁰⁹ Jewish texts from the first century suggest that the perception of world history as divided into ages was a fundamental belief of the time; see for example, *4 Ezra* 7:12-13, 113; 8:1; *2 Baruch* 44:11-14; *1QpHab* 5:7.

Gal 4:4), Paul envisions an overlap of the ages where the purposes of God are manifest most vividly in and through the new community of believers who constitute the body of Christ. This new community of believers lives in both ages simultaneously.¹¹⁰ As de Boer points out, the espousal of two ages is not only a central component to the worldview of apocalyptic thinking; it is also *de facto* cosmic in nature, enveloping humanity within the broader scope of history and time.¹¹¹ In Paul's framework, the new age has partially eclipsed the old age, yet certain elements still fit within the latter age (e.g., 1 Cor 1:20; 2:6-8; 3:18; 13:12). It is argued by Martyn and Jackson that the two-age framework provides one of the most important keys to understanding Paul's new creation language.¹¹² Indeed, the implications of their thesis are significant given that the shifting of ages is decidedly cosmic in nature.

This realized eschatology formatively shapes Paul's teaching regarding the human relationship with God, particularly within community,¹¹³ as well as providing a new set of criteria for comprehending the created realm.¹¹⁴ Christians exist simultaneously within the overlap of two ages, and the former, still present age is inhabited by forces that are in opposition to God: 'The god of this age (αἰών) has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the likeness of God' (2 Cor 4:4; cf. 1 Cor 3:18). Paul labels these powers with a variety of terms and identifies them, as both worldly and other-worldly realities that destructively enslave humanity and the broader creation.¹¹⁵

The work of W. Meeks is insightful for understanding how Paul incorporates humanity into a grander vision through a kind of dualism.¹¹⁶ Within the Pauline letters,

¹¹⁰ Numerous scholars have identified this apocalyptic motif in Pauline theology. For an early presentation, see E. Brandenburger, *Adam und Christus: Exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Römer 5, 12–21* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1962). More recent works include for example Beker, *Triumph*; de Boer, *Death*. It is also noteworthy that in some cases in general Greek usage, ἀπαρχή had the meaning of a "birth certificate," which corresponds to the Pauline notion of a new age and new identity having been inaugurated. See W. Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3rd; revised by Frederick William Danker; Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 98.

¹¹¹ de Boer, "Paul," 173.

¹¹² Jackson, *New Creation*, 100. Counter reading by Hubbard, *New Creation*, 216.

¹¹³ For example, Paul considers the community as the eschatological temple of God (1 Cor 6:16).

¹¹⁴ I further explore this in chapter three.

¹¹⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of this motif in the NT, see W. Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984). Within Paul see Rom 8:38; 13:1-3; 1 Cor 1:24; 15:24-27a; Gal 4:3; cf. Eph 1:21; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:2, 13-15, 20.

¹¹⁶ W. A. Meeks, "Social Functions of Apocalyptic Language in Pauline Christianity," in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (ed. D. Hellholm; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1983), 687–705.

Meeks distinguishes between cosmic dualism, temporal dualism, and social dualism suggesting that when Paul employs such apocalyptic discourse, it ‘provide[s] an alternative map of the world in which the present structures of power are not legitimate, not lasting, and not ultimately real’.¹¹⁷ These distinctions help to identify unique features of Paul compared to the typical apocalyptic Judaism of his time, which primarily perceived the age to come as a future reality with no continuity or overlap with the present. For example, in 1 Cor 2:9-10, Paul demonstrates a cosmic dualism in his juxtaposition of the limitations of human perception with divine eternal love; yet believers, as those who are bestowed with the Spirit, already have been given access to divine love and thoughts and they thereby disrupt this dualism, allowing these separate features of the ages to overlap.¹¹⁸ The dualism of the two ages often reflects the apocalyptic feature where an ‘individual is no longer within a collective entity such as Israel or the people of God, and the impending crisis is not local but cosmic in scope’.¹¹⁹ This feature is present within the Pauline corpus as well (e.g., world/cross, Gal 6:14; flesh/Spirit, Gal 5:16-17).

(c) *καταργέω*

The term *καταργέω* has not traditionally been included within the scholarly discussion of Pauline apocalyptic categories. Its occurrence, however, in Pauline texts is nearly always in places that describe the eschatological efficacy of the Christ event using the dialectic of the two ages. Therefore, its inclusion in this study is appropriate and instructive. Prior to Paul, this term was rarely used, only appearing six times outside of the NT, including four occurrences in 2 Esdras in a context where workers were ‘to cease’ building the temple (2 Esdras 4:21, 23; 5:5; 6:8).¹²⁰ Morphologically, it is a compound of *κατά* and *ἀργέω*. In the NT

¹¹⁷ W. Meeks, “Goodness,” 465.

¹¹⁸ Examples of dualism in the Pauline literature include light/darkness, law/judgment of God, holy/profane, world/cross (Gal 6:14), flesh/spirit (Gal 5:16-17), perishability/imperishability (1 Cor 15:42), dishonor/glory (1 Cor 15:43), weakness/power (1 Cor 15:43), physical body/spiritual body (1 Cor 15:44), imperfection/perfection (1 Cor 13:9-10), present Jerusalem/Jerusalem in heaven (Gal 4:25-26), male/female, Jew/Gentile, and slave/free (Gal 3:27) and so on.

¹¹⁹ Aune, “Apocalypticism,” 27.

¹²⁰ This statistic is drawn from the most extensive discussion of this term I was able to find by S. J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (WUNT, Vol 81; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1995), 301–13. See also M. E. Dahl, *The Resurrection of the Body: A Study of 1 Corinthians 15* (London: SCM, 1962), 118.

ἀργέω carries the sense of ‘unemployed’ (Matt 20:3), ‘inactive’ (1 Tim 5:13), or ‘idle’ (Titus 1:12).¹²¹ Its antonym ἐνεργέω (ἐνεργοῦμαι), almost always occurs with God as the agent and it is variously translated as ‘to work’, ‘to be at work’, ‘to produce’, or ‘to accomplish’.¹²² Clark’s careful study of the Pauline context of these terms demonstrates that a more precise translation for ἐνεργέω might be ‘being infused’; thus, as an antonym, Clark suggests that καταργέω should be translated as ‘render powerless’.¹²³ Lexical alternatives include ‘to nullify’, ‘to be ineffective, powerless, idle’, ‘to be brought to an end’, ‘to abolish’, or ‘to take from the sphere of operation’.¹²⁴

This word is used within the NT primarily by Paul and almost exclusively to describe the relationship between Christ and the structures of the cosmos that stand in opposition to the purposes of God and that have been or will be rendered inoperative by the reign of Jesus Christ.¹²⁵ Paul’s usage of this term typically occurs within contexts where the eschatological overlap of the ages is in view and/or in texts with apocalyptic motifs. The almost exclusive, consistent, and frequent use of καταργέω by Paul has led S. Hafemann to consider the term ‘a Pauline *terminus technicus*’¹²⁶ and G. Fee to label it a Pauline ‘eschatological’ verb with a view to the new age.¹²⁷ Although some of the occurrences of καταργέω are translated into English as ‘to abolish’, R. Hays concludes that for Paul, ‘it always means to nullify, to abrogate, to invalidate, or to render ineffectual’.¹²⁸ The brief studies of Dahl, Wink, and, more recently, Hafemann affirm this sense and provide necessary correctives to English translations that give the sense of annihilation or fading away.¹²⁹

¹²¹ Delling, “ἀργός, ἀργέω, καταργέω,” in *TDNT, Vol. 1* (1964), 452–54.

¹²² *BAGD*, 335. See for example, 1 Cor 12:6, 11; 16:9; 2 Cor 1:6; Gal 2:8; 3:5; 5:6; cf. Col 1:29.

¹²³ For a discussion of the relationship between these two cognates, see K. W. Clark, “The Meaning of ‘ΕΝΕΡΓΕΩ and ΚΑΤΑΡΓΕΩ in the New Testament,” in *The Gentile Bias and Other Essays* (compiled by J. L. Sharpe; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 183–91. He suggests that ἐνεργέω should be rendered “to infuse with supernatural spirit,” p. 185, or the “infusion or operation in one spirit-possessed,” p. 187.

¹²⁴ *BAGD*, 525-526.

¹²⁵ NT occurrence of καταργέω are Luke 13:7; Rom 3:3, 31; 4:14; 6:6; 7:6; 1 Cor 1:28; 2:6; 6:13; 13:8-12; 15:24-26; 2 Cor 3:7, 11, 13; Gal 3:17; 5:4, 11; 2 Thess 2:8; Eph 2:15.

¹²⁶ Hafemann, *Paul*, 309. Outside of the Pauline corpus, καταργέω only occurs in Luke 13:7 and Heb 2:14. Dahl suggests the usage in Luke is the standard usage of καταργέω in the NT: “Why should an unfruitful tree καταργεῖν the ground, that is, deprive the ground of goodness that would be more profitably used for a good tree?” See Dahl, *Resurrection*, 117.

¹²⁷ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 103.

¹²⁸ R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1989), 134.

¹²⁹ Dahl, *Resurrection*, 117–19; Delling, “Καταργέω”; Wink, *Powers*, 50–55. Hafemann, *Paul*, 301–13.

For example, 1 Cor 15:24-26 is often translated, ‘Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying (καταργήσῃ) every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed (καταργεῖται) is death’ (RSV). In agreement with Dahl, Wink suggests that the translation ‘destroy’ for καταργέω in this text is incorrect, because it rules out any possibility for the subjection of all things to Christ and the reconciliation of all things back to God (e.g., 2 Cor 5:19; Phil 3:21; cf. Col 1:20). This reconciliation is contextually *presupposed* by the citation of Ps 8:6 and 110:1 in 1 Cor 15:27-28.¹³⁰ Dahl suggests the following:

Finally — the End, when Christ, in his humanity, will hand over to God the Father his delegated authority over the Powers of the Void, of creation, of death and corruption. This will mean that the Powers will be deprived of their autonomy — they will cease to be effective. For the whole eschatological plan of creation demands that all Powers hostile to God’s will be forced into his service. Because death is such a Power and derives its dynamic from the other Powers, it will be the last to be deprived of strength (vv. 20-26).¹³¹

In keeping with Dahl, Karl Barth likewise concludes, ‘I think it is dangerous to translate the word καταργεῖν in 1 Corinthians xv. 24 as “annihilate” . . . [it] is not that they [the powers] will be annihilated, but that they will be forced into the service and the glorification of Christ, and through Him, of God’.¹³² This translation is in keeping with the sense in 1 Cor 1:28 and 2:6. Hafemann proposes the following translation for 1 Cor 1:28: ‘God has chosen the things of low birth of the world and the things that are despised, i.e. the things that do not exist, in order to render inoperative in regard to their effects the things that do exist’.¹³³ A similar translation seems to best render 1 Cor 2:6: the wisdom and rulers of this age are ‘in the process of being rendered inoperative as to their effects’.¹³⁴ The sense here is that the Christ event has decisively robbed the powers of this age of their eschatological efficacy; they are in fact nullified. In this context, the interrelatedness of the two ages becomes clear: ‘Paul’s use of καταργέω in 1 Cor. 1:28 and 2:6 reflects his understanding of the dialectic which now

¹³⁰ Wink, *Powers*, 51.

¹³¹ Dahl, *Resurrection*, 76–77.

¹³² K. Barth, *Church and State* (London: ET, 1939), 26–27.

¹³³ Hafemann, *Paul*, 307.

¹³⁴ Hafemann, *Paul*, 307.

exists between this age and the age to come, in which the eschatological victory of Christ is both here and yet to come (cf. Gal. 1:4; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:12-28)'.¹³⁵ Thus, in the final *parousia*, Jesus Christ finally and fully disarms opposing forces of their power/effectiveness rather than destroying them.

Paul uses *καταργέω* when describing those elements of creation, which in light of the Christ event have been deprived of their power and cease to have a potent existence. One final example of this usage appears in 2 Cor 3. While reinterpreting Exod 34, Paul describes the glory of God in Moses's face as representative of the old covenant being declared impermanent (2 Cor 3:7), but this is not in the sense of destruction or fading away, as Hays astutely observes, 'it has now been eclipsed by the greater glory of the ministry of the new covenant'.¹³⁶ Paul declares that even death itself has lost its power and 'is swallowed up in victory' (1 Cor 15:54). Therefore, within nearly every instance in which Paul uses the term *καταργέω*, it is to show that the decisive power of the cross of Christ renders inoperative or nullifies the effect or consequence of the power which is in rebellion to God.¹³⁷ Paul's usage of this term in such key texts reflects the nuanced apocalyptic nature of his eschatology, an eschatology that envisions an overlap of two ages where the power of the Christ event has decisively broken into the world, transforming present reality. The implications of this transformation are comprehensive and thus affect more than human souls.

Collins and others have pointed out that although apocalyptic narratives in Second Temple Jewish literature vary, 'the underlying problem of all the apocalypses [is that] the world is out of joint, one must look beyond it for a solution'.¹³⁸ These traditions draw upon scriptural texts where some ambiguity about the outcome of the creation/world exists. The post-exilic perspective represented for example in Isa 65-66 anticipates a 'new heavens and new earth' for which Second Temple authors provide divergent interpretations. Some suggest that the present evil age will return to primeval chaos and ultimately self-destruct (e.g., *I*

¹³⁵ Hafemann, *Paul*, 307.

¹³⁶ Hays, *Echoes*, 134.

¹³⁷ Dahl suggests that 2 Thess 2:8 is the one exception in the Pauline corpus where *καταργέω* has the sense of destruction. Dahl, *Resurrection*, 118.

¹³⁸ J. J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses," *Semeia* 14 (1979): 21-59 (27).

Enoch 72:1; 91:14-16; *Sibylline Oracles* 5:212; *Jubilees* 1:29; 4:26; *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* 3:10; *Apocalypse of Elijah* 5:38; 2 Pet 3:11-12; Rev 21:1, 5); the work of E. Adams provides one of the most comprehensive studies outlining this particular apocalyptic notion in the OT and Second Temple Judaism.¹³⁹ Other traditions teach that the world will be restored to the original goodness of Eden, which as a result of Adam’s disobedience was corrupted (e.g., *4 Ezra* 7:75; *2 Baruch* 4:3, 73-74; *Testament of Levi* 18:10ff.; *1 Enoch* 51:12; *2 Enoch* 8:1ff.). Still others envision a transformed world: ‘And I will transform the heaven and make it an eternal blessing and light; and I will transform the earth and make it a blessing’ (*1 Enoch* 45:4-5; cf. *2 Baruch* 32:6; 4:12; 49:3; 57:2; *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* 32:17; *4 Ezra* 7:30-31, 75).¹⁴⁰ And some traditions portray the restoration of Israel (*Jubilees* 4:26; *1 Enoch* 45:4-5) where the righteous will be restored through resurrection (*2 Baruch* 51:1-16) and/or the created world will be liberated from bondage (*1 Enoch* 51:4-5; Rom 8:18-25).¹⁴¹

A careful study of Paul’s usage of καταργέω indicates that this term, employed extensively and nearly exclusively by Paul, functions to disclose the apocalyptic horizon where God has intervened to rectify oppressive forces not through destruction but rather by rendering powerless anything in opposition to the eternal plan of God. Implied here is that those former opposing powers will have a role in the age to come or, in the case of death, will be completely swallowed up or eclipsed. Meeks identifies Paul’s modified apocalyptic eschatology as a unique trajectory in apocalyptic literature that departs significantly from the typical apocalyptic narrative in that those narratives are characterized by pessimism toward the existing order.¹⁴² Paul instead portrays a hope that envisions an otherworldly *telos* where the powers of Christ are able to transform existing oppositional powers. Meeks notes, ‘To reconcile the enemy rather than to destroy him is thus an alternative finale in the eschatological scenario, though one that is all too rare in apocalyptic discourse’.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ E. Adams, *The Stars Will Fall from Heaven: Cosmic Catastrophe in the New Testament and Its World* (LNTS, Vol 347; London: T&T Clark, 2007).

¹⁴⁰ For example, *Jubilees* 1:29. See Wink, *Powers*, 52–53.

¹⁴¹ Jackson, *New Creation*, 37.

¹⁴² Note category 2 as identified by Aune in §2.2.1.

¹⁴³ W. Meeks, “Goodness,” 468.

(d) ἐν τάχει¹⁴⁴

Especially in his early letters, Paul reflects upon the *imminent* arrival of the end-times, which in his framework equates to the return of Christ. One text, called by D. Scholer the ‘apocalyptic kicker’ comes near the end of Romans: ‘The God of Peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet’ (Rom 16:20a). This succinct reference embodies several of apocalyptic features I have discussed, including two apocalyptic key words, ‘quickly’ (τάχος, cf. Rev 1:1; 22:6, 7) and the phrase ‘under your feet’ (ὑπὸ τοῦς πόδας ὑμῶν). The latter phrase is an allusion to Ps 110:1, which is cited elsewhere by Paul (e.g., 1 Cor 15:24-28) and which was consistently understood by the early church as an apocalyptic text.¹⁴⁵ Although Paul does not often use the specific term τάχος, the notion of the imminent arrival of Christ is prevalent through other language, phrases, and concepts within the Pauline corpus. For example, 1 Thessalonians expresses the surprise nature of the end — ‘the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night’ (1 Thess 5:1-11; cf. 2 Thess 2:1-8) — which is consistent with Paul’s practical directives to the Corinthians. While responding to questions about sexual practices, Paul guides those who are single to remain so, given that ‘the present form of this world is passing away’ (1 Cor 7:31; cf. 7:26, 29, 31). Later in the letter, when concluding a long discourse on the resurrection of Christ, Paul encourages the Corinthians to live a life of focused discipline because ‘we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be transformed’ (1 Cor 15:51-58). In a dualistic comparison of dark/day in Romans, Paul again includes the motif: ‘wake up from sleep for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed . . . the day is at hand’ (Rom 13:11-14). And at a climactic point of 2 Corinthians, Paul cites Isa 49:8 and, although nuanced differently than Rom 13, declares that the prophecy has been fulfilled in Christ: ‘behold, now is the day of salvation’ (2 Cor 6:2). In tandem with the other concepts considered, Paul’s use of this term further supports the thesis that the apocalyptic worldview shapes his reflection on the Christ event.

¹⁴⁴ Although the adverbial term derived from τάχος is used infrequently by Paul, its strategic use in Revelation suggests that it has apocalyptic significance. See for example, D. M. Scholer, “‘The God of Peace Will Shortly Crush Satan Under Your Feet’ (Romans 16.20a): The Function of Apocalyptic Eschatology in Paul,” *Ex Auditu* 6 (1990): 53. *BAGD*, 992-993.

¹⁴⁵ For a full discussion of this text see, Scholer, “God of Peace,” 53–61.

(e) *κόσμος*

With the exception of the writer(s) of the Johannine literature, Paul uses the term *κόσμος* more than any other NT author, and he typically uses it as a standard term for *world* or *universe*.¹⁴⁶ The most comprehensive study to date on Paul's use of *κόσμος* is *Constructing the World*, by E. Adams. Through a careful analysis of each instance of *κόσμος* in the Pauline corpus, Adams provides a substantive corrective to the influential works of Bultmann and Sasse.¹⁴⁷ Bultmann reads *κόσμος* in a way that parallels his reading of new creation, identifying it as the 'historical' temporal sphere and further suggesting that Paul consistently cites the world as 'anti-godly' and as enslaving humanity. In contrast, Adams concludes that Paul's view of the world is shaped by the socio-historical particulars that he addresses. Therefore, according to Adams, Paul employs the term differently depending on the context: 'Our analysis has shown that Paul predominantly uses *κόσμος* with a "cosmological" sense, *κόσμος* has a clear and exclusive reference to human beings on only ten or eleven occasions. . . . Unambiguously, the term refers to something more than or other than human beings in eleven instances'.¹⁴⁸ Paul speaks of the world in positive and negative ways depending in part on the apocalyptic framework that are distinct to each letter (e.g., Rom 4:13; 11:12, 15; 2 Cor 5:19).¹⁴⁹

Both of the texts where Paul discusses new creation also reference *κόσμος* and, as might be expected, the scope of what *κόσμος* references is equally debated. In Gal 6:14, Paul claims, 'But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the *κόσμος* has been crucified to me, and I to the *κόσμος*'. The context makes clear that the Christ event have brought about a radical delineation of one 'world' from another and that through crucifixion, Paul (and through inference, all believers) has been transferred into a new reality. His immediate addendum, 'For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation' (6:15), clarifies this point. As Martyn has helpfully suggested, Paul places circumcision and uncircumcision within the same *former* cosmos that

¹⁴⁶ Adams, *World*, 12–18. Paul uses the term *κόσμος* forty-seven times.

¹⁴⁷ Adams, *World*; BAGD, 561-563; Sasse, "Κοσμῆω, Etc.," *TDNT* 3:867-898; R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament, Vol. 1* (trans. K. Grobel; London: SCM, 1952), 254–59.

¹⁴⁸ Adams, *World*, 241.

¹⁴⁹ Adams, *World*, 242.

has now been replaced for believers by the birth of another cosmos, the new creation.¹⁵⁰

Adams proposes that Paul is suggesting that the ‘church *belongs* to the new creation. . . . Judaism (cf. 1:13-14), as a social, cultural and religious entity, belongs along with paganism to the dying κόσμος. To assimilate to Judaism, therefore, is to alienate oneself from the new creation’.¹⁵¹

Unlike Gal 6, which juxtaposes the former cosmos with the new creation, Paul has a slightly different meaning for κόσμος in 2 Cor 5:19. After declaring that through Christ the new creation has arrived, Paul then states that Christ has reconciled believers to himself and in turn given to the church the τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς (2 Cor 5:18). In the next six verses, Paul further elaborates on the effects of the Christ event, explaining that ‘God was in Christ reconciling the κόσμος to himself, not counting their trespasses against them’ (2 Cor 5:19). Here, Paul uses the term κόσμος to describe humanity as the personal recipients of God’s reconciling work in Christ. What is particularly striking, however, about the broader context is the repeated emphasis Paul places on the function of those already within the renewed order. They are to represent, proclaim, and work with God to enact the message of reconciliation to those outside this realm (2 Cor 5:19-6:2). Paul brings this section to a climax by declaring that the apocalyptic expectation of the ‘day of salvation’ (Isa 49:8) has been realized in Christ: ‘Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation’ (2 Cor 6:2).

Thus, it can be concluded that Paul’s use of κόσμος is highly dependent on the context in which it is located. Paul has a clear sense that God has created the entire world and that the world can be a basis for knowledge of God (e.g., Rom 1:20, 25). He also states that this form of the world is passing away (e.g., 1 Cor 2:6; 7:31). In some contexts, Paul uses the term in a strongly negative sense (e.g., 2 Cor 4:45; Gal 4:3, 9) and in a strongly positive sense (e.g., Rom 4:13). He uses it to refer to the inhabited world (e.g., Rom 1:8, 1 Cor 14:10), humanity (2 Cor 5:19), and the entire cosmos (Rom 1:20; 1 Cor 4:13; Phil 2:15). E. Adams has also demonstrated that Paul’s employment of the phrase *this world* comports with the dualism of

¹⁵⁰ Martyn, *Galatians*, 564.

¹⁵¹ Adams, *World*, 228.

Second Temple Jewish apocalypticism.¹⁵² The sheer number of references Paul makes to the κόσμος in its varied forms and dimensions attests to the complexity of its use in his letters. His usage also attests to his understanding of the interrelatedness that exists between God, humanity, and the world.

(f) κτίσις/κτίζω¹⁵³

The terms κτίσις or κτίζω occurs more frequently within the Pauline corpus than in any other selection of NT literature. Within the NT corpus, the verbal form occurs fourteen times and the noun form occurs nineteen times, and the majority of these occurrences are within the Pauline corpus.¹⁵⁴ It typically refers collectively to the sum total of all things (Mk 10:6; 13:19; Rom 8:39; Col 1:15; Heb 9:11; 2 Pet 3:4; Rev 3:14; cf. Wis 2:6; 16:24; 19:6; Sir 43:25; Tob 8:5; 15:3; Macc 2:2, 7) or, more narrowly, to any type of created being (Rom 8:39; Col 1:23; cf. Heb 4:13). On occasion, it refers to an individual human or non-human creature (Rom 1:25; cf. Sir 43:25; 49:16). The noun form can also have a verbal sense such as ‘the act of creation’ (Rom 1:20).¹⁵⁵ In keeping with OT teaching, yet within a christological framework, Paul states that ‘all things’ have their origin in the one creator God and that the created realm allows humans to perceive the nature of the Creator (Rom 1:18-32; cf. 1 Kgs 17:15; Isa 44:9; Jer 2:5; Wis 13:1). The final two instances of the noun form occur with the descriptor καινή in 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15 and these usages have been the focus of this chapter. Indeed, one strong linguistic link between the new creation texts and Romans is the concentration of the terms κτίσις and κτίζω in Romans.

It is often noted that Rom 1 and 8 include a number of allusions to the first creation narrative.¹⁵⁶ Creative activity is attributed to God (Rom 1:20; cf. Gen 1:1); animal

¹⁵² This discussion is dispersed throughout the book, Adams, *World*.

¹⁵³ Elsewhere, Paul uses related terms indicating both the creative act of God (e.g., καλέω; Rom 4:17, cf. Isa 41:4; 48:13) and the created realm (e.g., τά πάντα; Rom 9:5; 11:36; 1 Cor 3:20-22; 15:27-29).

¹⁵⁴ The verb form of this term is used in Rom 1:25; 1 Cor 11:9, cf. Eph 2:10, 15; 3:9; 4:24 and Col 3:10. The noun form is used in Rom 1:20; 8:19, 20, 21, 22, 39; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; cf. Col 1:15, 23, and 1 Tim 4:4.

¹⁵⁵ See Adams, *World*, 77–80, 175–78 and J. Moo, “Romans 8.19–22 and Isaiah’s Cosmic Covenant,” *NTS* 54, no. 1 (2008): 74–89 (74–75).

¹⁵⁶ For a more developed analysis of these parallels, see Adams, *World*, 152–55. Also see C. Hoegen-Rohls, “Κτίσις and καινή κτίσις in Paul’s Letters,” in *Paul, Luke and the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Alexander J. M. Wedderburn* (A. Christophersen, et al.; LNTS; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 102–22.

terminology from the Genesis narrative is present (Rom 1:23; cf. Gen 1:20-25); and the terms θῆλυς, ἄρση, and εἰκὼν from the first creation narrative are present (Rom 1:26-27; cf. Gen 1:23, 27). Additionally, Rom 8:20 likely refers to the curse placed upon creation in Gen 3:17.

It has also been observed by S. Kraftchick that in an uncharacteristic way within Romans, ‘Paul, contrary to his habit, opens a letter’s argumentation by grounding it cosmically, rather than ecclesially or theologically’.¹⁵⁷ In Rom 1:18-23, Paul affirms that the creation was intended from the beginning to reflect the nature, power, and deity of the invisible God. Although there are no explicit christological references in these verses, Paul affirms and distinguishes the relationship between Creator and creation. He particularly focuses on the symbiotic relationship between human actions and non-personal creation. Adams correctly notes, ‘The context [Rom 1] makes clear that the κτίσις is not inherently ambiguous. It is not the κτίσις which seduces and tempts human beings away from God. If human beings stand in an ambiguous relation to creation, it is due to *their* character’.¹⁵⁸ In tandem with OT legislation, Paul outright rejects idolatrous worship of creation (Rom 1:18-32; cf. 1 Cor 8:1-6) as contrary to God’s design which alternatively should be characterized by a posture of thanksgiving and glory to God (Rom 1:21); this posture toward God is linked to a proper relationship to the non-personal creation.¹⁵⁹

Romans 8 includes the highest concentration of the term κτίσις in the NT with five occurrences within twenty verses (Rom 8:19, 20, 21, 22, 39), and unlike Rom 1 it is christocentric. This text also has the highest concentration of references to the Spirit (πνεῦμα) in the Pauline letters, and within modern scholarship it is overwhelmingly viewed as a text with a cosmic horizon and apocalyptic features.¹⁶⁰ The main historical disagreement has been on whether the interpretation of κτίσις should be limited to non-Christian humanity in Rom 8:19-21.¹⁶¹ In light of the strength of the linguistic evidence linking κτίσις to the broader non-human creation as in ‘material creation’, virtually all scholars today affirm this reading.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ S. Kraftchick, “Paul’s Use of Creation Themes: A Test of Romans 1–8,” *ExAud* 3 (1987): 72–87 (83).

¹⁵⁸ Adams, *World*, 158.

¹⁵⁹ See the helpful commentary on these themes by Jewett, *Romans*, 156–59.

¹⁶⁰ Articulated in great detail with reference to scholarship in H. A. Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation. Nature in Romans 8.19–22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (LNTS; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2006).

¹⁶¹ Adams, *World*, 176–84.

Throughout this section creation is placed in a dynamic relationship with believers who have *already* received the first fruits of the Spirit; this relationship is characterized by a solidarity and interrelatedness. In Rom 8:19, the longing (ἀποκαταδοκία) of creation is linked to the ‘revealing of the sons of God’. Additionally, most scholars believe 8:20 is a clear allusion to the first creation narrative in which the disobedience of humanity (here not specific to believers) has negative consequences for the ground, which is cursed (Gen 3:17) and here said to be subjected to ‘futility’ (ματαιότης).¹⁶³ This term meaning ‘purposelessness’ or ‘emptiness’ infers that the created realm has been inhibited by human action from meeting its full capacity. Yet in Rom 8 a promise is given that creation ‘will be set free from its bondage to decay’ and will join with the children of God in their liberty (8:21). Romans 8:21-23 continues this dynamic interrelationship between all creation (πάντα ἢ κτίσις) and believers (ἡμεῖς καὶ αὐτοί) by acknowledging the common groaning in travail (συστενάζει καὶ συνωδίνει) that both currently experience. Here κτίσις is limited to the non-personal creation, because it is those individuals who ‘have the first fruits of the Spirit’ — those in the image of Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 8:28-30) — who in the present proleptically embody hope for full redemption.¹⁶⁴ Believers will not effect the freedom and release from bondage of the creation, for that ultimately comes through the lordship of Christ.¹⁶⁵ As Gibbs concludes, ‘To be sure, Paul stresses the extent of redeemed humanity’s influence on the creation, but that extent is due to the cosmic lordship of the Lord of the redeemed, which lordship he graciously chooses to exercise through them for all mankind and all the creation’.¹⁶⁶

2.2.3 Preliminary Conclusions

Although not comprehensive, this overview of some key terms and concepts in Paul’s letters establishes a basis from which to draw preliminary conclusions about the extent to which the

¹⁶² J. G. Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption. a Study in Pauline Theology* (NovTSup, Vol 27; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 39–41. For a comprehensive list of scholars who affirm this reading, see Moo, “2008,” 77 (fn 11).

¹⁶³ See discussions in Jewett, *Romans*, 513; Adams, *World*, 178–80 and Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption*, 40. BAGD, 621. Note that the term ματαιότης has a sense of purposelessness or frustration and it is the word that is typically translated in Ecclesiastes as *vanity*.

¹⁶⁴ See Hoegen-Rohls, “Κτίσις,” 114; Adams, *World*, 178–79. Braaten suggests an alternative rendering here that the “groaning and in travail” refers to the sinfulness of humanity against creation, not to Gen 3, see L. J. Braaten, “All Creation Groans: Romans 8:22 in Light of Biblical Sources,” *HBT* 28 (2006): 131–59.

¹⁶⁵ I address the resurrection of the body in chapters three and four. See for example, Jackson, *New Creation*, 164–65; White, “Cosmology,” 102–3.

¹⁶⁶ Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption*, 42.

Jewish apocalyptic categories shape Paul's theology. In agreement with Beker, Martyn, and others, and on the basis of the evaluation I have conducted here, I assert that Paul's theological framework is deeply indebted to Jewish apocalyptic themes that are characteristic of the Second Temple milieu. These concepts are woven into his letters both implicitly and explicitly. He bases the authority of his apostolic ministry and his Gentile mission on direct, divine revelation and then re-conceptualizes traditional apocalyptic categories based on his conviction that the eschatological plan of God had been inaugurated in history through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This, he believes, is confirmed by the presence of the Spirit, a presence that testifies to the shifting of the ages where the old is partially eclipsed by the new. This modified eschatological shift disrupts Paul's former theological paradigm and becomes the basis for his innovative reinterpretation of Scripture.

Paul does not, however, use apocalyptic categories to speculate about the end-times or to tantalize readers with imagery and symbols. Rather, he responds to his readers' current plight, interpreting the Christ event as the decisive redemptive act whereby their present and future realities have been altered. Nor does Paul confine his eschatology to temporal categories that are focused exclusively on the ultimate hope and future expectation found in God's final cosmic victory through Christ: the Christ event within history becomes for Paul the basis for understanding present reality anew. The Christ event stirs Paul to describe an inclusive notion of the people of God, a life shaped by the freedom of the Spirit instead of the law, and a new understanding of one's relationship to the creation in the present. This thesis comports with de Boer who argues that Paul's anthropological soteriological references are only fully comprehended within the broader 'cosmological-apocalyptic disclosure of God's righteousness', which ultimately brings liberation to the entire cosmos.¹⁶⁷ Paul understands that those in Christ *are the righteousness of God* (2 Cor 5:21) within the created realm and that they thereby reflect, anticipate, and activate through their lives this act of God. This participation 'in Christ' actualizes the anticipated eschatological 'day of salvation' within the cosmos (2 Cor 6:2; cf. Isa 49:8).

¹⁶⁷ de Boer, "Paul," 184.

Having established that apocalyptic categories provide a cosmic framework from which Paul comes to understand and articulate the Christ event, this now becomes the basis from which I will evaluate more carefully the scholarly approaches presented earlier. The critique I present here particularly challenges the conclusions of Hubbard, whose research is predicated on reading Paul nearly exclusively outside of an apocalyptic framework.

2.3 Conclusion: The Scope of the New Creation — Humanity, Community, and/or Cosmos?

I affirm an apocalyptic framework as the appropriate lens for interpreting Paul's new creation concept. This affirmation is supported by a reading of 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15 that envisions new creation as inclusive of individual, community, and the entire cosmos. It is also a reading that comports with the use of *καινή κτίσις* in Second Temple Jewish literature and within the prophetic eschatological expectations of the Judaism of Paul's time. Certainly, within the broader context of each text, Paul places humanity at the center, yet not to the exclusion of the community and creation; components that Schmid, Jackson, and others have demonstrated are *interrelated* within apocalyptic literary traditions. A translation of 2 Cor 5:17b should follow closely the original Greek: 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is new creation. Everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!' Individual conversion should be construed within the broader eschatological vision effected by the Christ event; this view aligns with the majority of Pauline scholars today. For example, White suggests, 'He [Paul] views conversion itself as inaugural participation in the new creation. . . [which] seems to mean, quite literally, that when someone turns to Christ, this marks the beginning of his or her participation in the promised Isaianic renewal of the cosmos'.¹⁶⁸

The difference between Martyn's, Hubbard's, and Jackson's readings is not regarding anthropological salvation; all three scholars converge on this point. The difference is in how each understands the connections within the Pauline corpus between human salvation (either

¹⁶⁸ White, "Cosmology," 105. See also Mell, *Neue Schöpfung*, 368–69.

individual or community) and the broader horizon of an eschatological renewal of the creation. Through a careful consideration of the apocalyptic language and motifs present throughout the Pauline letters and with attention to the corresponding motifs in Isaiah and the literary contexts within Second Temple Jewish texts (where the phrase new creation actually occurs), Martyn and Jackson convincingly interpret the new creation texts as encapsulating a key Pauline theological framework. The framework they see in Paul is one where the elements of this present evil age, inclusive of *both* circumcision and non-circumcision (which are symbolic of former law/not law; cf. Gal 3:28), have been declared inoperative in light of the Christ event. In relationship to the ethical imperatives required of this new community, R. Hays states, ‘Paul’s moral vision is intelligible only when his apocalyptic perspective is kept clearly in mind: the church is to find its identity and vocation by recognizing its role within the cosmic drama of God’s reconciliation of the world to himself (2 Cor 5:14-18)’.¹⁶⁹ Mell’s exhaustive study, which is essentially dismissed by Hubbard, demonstrates convincingly that within Second Temple Judaism, the phrase καινὴ κτίσις functions most often as a semi-technical term and is often equated with a ‘new heaven and earth’ or a ‘renewed world’.¹⁷⁰

Important to how one understands new creation is how one interprets the term creation (κτίσις); one’s reading of κτίσις in these texts directly corresponds to how one understands the scope of the Christ event. As I have attempted to demonstrate, these interpretive decisions are directly related to whether an apocalyptic framework is considered. One thesis of this chapter is that for Paul the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the presence of the Spirit are to be interpreted within this apocalyptic and cosmic reality.¹⁷¹

Acknowledging the apocalyptic framework of Paul’s theology, as well as identifying the linguistic and thematic overlap of Rom 8 with the new creation texts, leads naturally to reading these texts as complementary and interrelated. Romans 8, a text that does not feature prominently in the study of Hubbard, has a high concentration of creation and apocalyptic

¹⁶⁹ R. B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 19.

¹⁷⁰ Mell, *Neue Schöpfung*, 47–247.

¹⁷¹ See e.g., Morales, *Restoration*, 13–77.

motifs and would perhaps be the clearest evidence that Paul believes that the Christ event has implications for the individual, the community, and the natural world. This claim has been affirmed by scholars for over fifty years, beginning with E. Schweizer who suggested that Rom 8 is a paradigmatic text that succinctly summarizes a key element in the theology of Romans: ‘Paul is not mainly interested in the individual’s salvation, but in the redemption of the cosmos including all creatures, in which God himself gains his ends’.¹⁷² Romans 8 outlines the interrelatedness of non-personal creation with humanity and the Spirit. Although the phrase new creation does not occur, R. Jewett anticipates the work of Jackson by suggesting that Romans 8:18-25 should be placed within the broader theology of new creation: ‘The “new creation” of 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15 is clearly in view here. . . . Paul’s purpose is to encourage the Roman believers to begin enacting their sonship and daughtership right now, in refusing to conform to the fallen age, and resolutely acting rightly toward the groaning creation, of which their bodies are a part’.¹⁷³

The linguistic resonance between these three texts provides a strong indication of their intertextual connection. This strong linguistic link is developed in Jackson’s analysis of Paul’s use of κτίσις/κτίζω and κόσμος, which further strengthens his conclusions. Jackson’s analysis comports with the majority of Pauline scholars and functions to challenge Hubbard’s anthropological interpretation of κτίσις. For example, V. Furnish concludes that Paul rarely uses the term κτίσις to refer to an individual human: ‘In Paul’s letters *ktisis* virtually always refers to the creation in its entirety (Rom 1:20, 25; 8:19, 20, 21, 22); the one exception is Rom 8:39’.¹⁷⁴

Based on the clear Isaianic influences, the presence of key apocalyptic themes, and the linguistic considerations I have catalogued here, I concur with Jewett, Jackson, and others, by affirming that Rom 8 should be considered an important text for ascertaining the scope of

¹⁷² E. Schweizer, “The Church as the Missionary Body of Christ,” *Neotestamentica* (1963): 317–29 (320)*Neotestamentica*Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1963.

¹⁷³ Jewett, *Romans*, 519. See also Jackson, *New Creation*, 150–69. For a comprehensive work outlining the apocalyptic framework for Romans 8, see especially Hahne, 2006.

¹⁷⁴ V. P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 314. See also the discussion of κτίσις in Romans by Jackson, *New Creation*, 150–69 and Hoegen-Rohls, “Κτίσις”.

what Paul means by new creation in 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15. In light of these factors and in keeping with Mell, Adams, Martyn, Hays, and a host of other NT scholars, I argue that the phrase new creation is a comprehensive theological term intended to communicate the universal dimension of the Christ event. Hubbard's work, which *exclusively* links new creation to anthropological conversion, hinges on the misguided presupposition that apocalyptic categories are virtually absent from Paul's theological framework and that they certainly do not apply to new creation. For this reason, his reading does not capture the true depth and range of Pauline theology; a theology which has clear implications for the human relationship to the creation and by extension to ecotheology.

Chapter Three

Christ of The Beginning and End

3.1 Christ and the Creation of All Things (1 Corinthians 8:6 and 1 Cor 10:26)

3.1.1 Introduction

Having outlined the apocalyptic worldview as the broadest possible framework for understanding the Pauline theology of new creation, I now shift my attention to specific passages where Paul articulates the relationship of Christ to protology and eschatology — the beginning and end of all things. If, as I have suggested here, Paul views all reality as altered in light of the apocalyptic in-breaking of God in Christ, then *how does Paul understand and articulate the relationship of Christ to the origination of the creation and to the telos of his own creation?* Scholars have provided some possible responses to such questions. For example in his work on creation and the NT, McDonough concludes, ‘The same Messiah who willingly brought back the creation was the one who had brought it into being in the first place’.¹ J. Gibbs suggests, ‘Redemption presupposes creation because redemption is no threat to the creation, but rather, carries to fulfillment what was provided as possibility in the creation’.² In this chapter, I will explore these kinds of responses as I consider Pauline teaching on the mediatorial role of Christ in the first creation (§3.1.3 and §3.1.4) as well as his teaching on the sovereign reign of Christ over creation at the *telos* (§3.2).

Here I enter into a broader scholarly discussion of cosmic Christologies for which 1 Cor 8:6 and Col 1:15-20 are central texts. The primacy of Col 1:15-20 for NT cosmic Christology has long been recognized, studied, and discussed, and this abundance of scholarly work has resulting in a consensus that Colossians presents Christ as the divine mediator of creation and redemption.³ Whether written by Paul or a pseudonymous author, Col 1:15-20,

¹ S. M. McDonough, *Christ as Creator: Origins of a New Testament Doctrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 236.

² J. G. Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption. a Study in Pauline Theology* (NovTSup, Vol 27; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 142.

³ Most commentaries discuss the cosmological focus of this letter. Specialized works abound; see for example, L. L. Helyer, “Cosmic Christology and Col 1:15–20,” *JETS* 37 (1994): 235–46; G. H. Van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School* (WUNT, Vol 171; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); J. T. Pennington and S. M. McDonough, eds, *Cosmology and New Testament Theology* (Library of New Testament Studies; London, New York: T & T Clark, 2008).

along with other NT texts (e.g. Heb 1:1-4; John 1:1-4), affirms that by the end of the first century the belief in the pre-existent Christ who mediated both creation and redemption was embedded within the worship and theology of the early church.⁴ Yet the disputed authorship of Colossians has meant that this feature of Pauline Christology has at times not been emphasized, particularly because many scholars have likewise concluded that a cosmic Christology is not clearly presented in the undisputed letters. More recently, because of its Christology, cosmology, and eschatology, Col 1:15-20 has become a central NT text for ecotheology.⁵ Reflecting this scholarly trajectory, John Barclay suggests that this text has contemporary ethical implications: ‘the scope of its claim that Christ is “all in all” serves as a powerful incentive for Christian engagement with the world, not least in a concern for “the integrity of creation”’.⁶

Because of the extensive scholarly discussion and consensus on the cosmic scope of Col 1:15-20, I neither rehearse that scholarship here nor add anything substantive to it. I will, however, consider the passage more carefully in chapter four, where my attention turns to Paul’s use of the phrase *image of God* (εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ), and in chapter seven I affirm its ongoing significance for ecotheological studies. In this chapter, I am primarily interested in examining 1 Cor 8:6 and the corresponding text of 1 Cor 10:26. Because 1 Cor 8:6 is the earliest extant NT text purporting a mediating role between Christ and the original creation, and was certainly written by Paul, it is important to revisit it here.

One intent of this chapter is to argue that 1 Cor 8:6 presents a more developed cosmic Christology than is typically acknowledged and that it was likely the seed theology for what is more fully articulated in Colossians. Certainly, its placement within a three-chapter discourse (1 Cor 8-10) grounded in a complex historical situation and seasoned with all types of interesting exegetical and grammatical challenges has led scholars to focus on other

⁴ See for example, R. N. Longenecker, *Studies in Hermeneutics, Christology, and Discipleship* (NTM; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2004), 159–67. For development in the patristic era, see the succinct presentation by A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans/Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), 658–61, and more thoroughly J. R. Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius* (OTM; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). For scholarly discussions about authorship, see §1.1.2.

⁵ D. Horrell, C. Hunt, and C. Southgate, *Greening Paul: Rereading the Apostle in a Time of Ecological Crisis* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 87–116.

⁶ J. M. G. Barclay, *Colossians and Philemon* (T and T Clark Study Guides; London/New York: T & T Clark, 1997), 95.

components of these chapters. Nevertheless, I aim to demonstrate that precisely because it occurs in such a text, one that gives it direct significance for the real-life context that Paul addresses, this passage makes Pauline Christology come into sharper focus. Indeed, placing 1 Cor 8:6 within its larger context is especially *apropos* for my research. First, unlike Col 1, which presents Christ's cosmic role in theological abstraction, 1 Cor 8-10 links Paul's christological claims to the praxis of a pressing practical question: to eat or not to eat?⁷ Second, the importance of these chapters in 1 Corinthians for ecotheological readings is that they are the only Pauline texts that comment directly, and at length, on the relationship of believers to elements of the non-personal created realm, in this case to food/meat formerly offered in cultic sacrifice. Finally, I argue that because Paul frames his entire discussion of whether to eat or not eat within the parameters of Christ as both the mediator of the original creation (1 Cor 8:6) and sovereign Lord over creation (1 Cor 10:26), he closely links Christology with ethical praxis.⁸ In part, Paul grounds his new ethical directives, which depart significantly from the correlative OT directives, on Christ as the eschatological turning point of the ages (10:11).

Because of scholarly interest in the historical, cultural, and practical nature of Paul's ethical directives in 1 Cor 8-10, past attention has focused almost entirely on these considerations. Ethical studies focus on the relationship between the 'knowledgeable' believer and the 'weak' believer, so for example, David Horrell convincingly develops the notion of 'other-regard' as the driving ethical motif of this text.⁹ I contend, however, that there are other relationships at play here — take, for example, Christ's relationship with creation and believers' relationship to meat/food, the latter being integrally linked to the former. One central feature of this study is to probe more conscientiously these relationships. Specifically, I consider how Paul's statements about Christ in 1 Cor 8:6 and 10:26 (Ps 24:1 [LXX 23:1]) provide insight into his view of the centrality of Jesus Christ's relationship to all

⁷ Many scholars suggest that Col 1:15-20 is a response to a Colossian heresy that relates the hymn/creed to particular historical issues. The particular practical issues are, however, not as easy to determine as the issues that attend 1 Cor 8-10. See the discussion for example in F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 17-26, 54-75.

⁸ For a strong case arguing that ethics and theology are directly related, see R. B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 16-59.

⁹ D. Horrell, "Theological Principle or Christological Praxis? Pauline Ethics in 1 Corinthians 8.1-11.1," *JSNT* 67 (1997): 83-114.

of creation, and I consider how such a theological claim shapes ethical imperatives for those ‘in Christ’ who live in the new eschatological age.¹⁰ To that end, the following question guides this chapter: *What do 1 Cor 8:6 and 1 Cor 10:26 articulate about the relationship between Christ (Χριστός), God (Θεός), all things (τὰ πάντα), and us (ἡμεῖς), and what implications might be drawn from that formulation?*

In order to place these key verses within their appropriate literary and historical context, I will provide a succinct introduction to 1 Cor 8:1-11:1, explore 1 Cor 8:6 and, more briefly, 1 Cor 10:26, and then conclude with reflections on how these theological claims undergird and inform the specific ethical directives given by Paul throughout these chapters.

3.1.2 Background and Context

(a) Background Issues (1 Cor 8:1-11:1)

In 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 Paul takes up an extended deliberation on a new set of questions from the Corinthians on food sacrificed to idols.¹¹ The sheer amount of attention Paul allots to this topic indicates its critical importance within his *oeuvre*. And as the abundance of scholarly works attest, these chapters are brimming with interesting exegetical, historical, literary, and grammatical points for reflection. However, because apparent inconsistencies have been identified within the literary composition, some scholars have concluded that these chapters lack literary integrity. This is perhaps articulated most elaborately by Kkiok-Khing Yeo.¹² Although I do not delve into these matters here, my study affirms the scholarship that has identified 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 as a cohesive literary unit with consistent syntactical, semantic, and pragmatic connections throughout.¹³

¹⁰ One recent study that attempts to draw ecotheological implications from this text and complements what I present here is J. M. G. Barclay, “Food, Christian Identity and Global Warming: A Pauline Call for a Christian Food Taboo,” *ET* 121, no. 12 (2010): 585–93.

¹¹ Περὶ δὲ likely indicates that Paul now takes up another topic from former correspondence with Corinth (cf. 7:1, 25; 12:1; 16:1, 12). This is challenged by M. M. Mitchell, “Concerning ΠΕΠΙ ΔΕ in 1 Corinthians,” *NovT* 31 (1989): 229–56.

¹² Kkiok-khing Yeo, *Rhetorical Interaction in 1 Cor 8 and 10: A Formal Analysis with Preliminary Suggestions for a Chinese Cross-Cultural Hermeneutic* (BibInt; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 5–15, 76–221.

¹³ For an outline of apparent inconsistencies, see J. Fotopoulos, “Arguments Concerning Food Offered to Idols: Corinthians Quotations and Pauline Refutations in a Rhetorical *Partitio* (1 Corinthians 8:1–9),” *CBQ* 67 (2005): 611–31. Fotopoulos suggests that 1 Cor 8:1-9 is a rhetorical *partitio* presenting a dialogue between the Corinthians and Paul with 8:6 as a quote of the Corinthians. For linguistic considerations, see J. F. M. Smit, “*About the Idol Offerings*” *Rhetoric, Social Context and Theology of Paul’s Discourse in First Corinthians 8:1–11:1* (CBET; Leuven/Paris/Virginia: Peeters, 2000), 29–32.

In these chapters, Paul is primarily concerned with one question: *Should believers eat food/meat (in a variety of settings and circumstances) that has been offered in pagan ritual sacrifice* (Περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων. . . . Περὶ τῆς βρώσεως¹⁴ οὖν τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, 8:1a, 4a)? In response, he neither crafts a brief directive nor appeals to OT halakah; rather, he formulates some of the lengthiest and most complex guidelines of the entire Pauline corpus.¹⁵ Paul begins with a cautionary parenthetical note on the different outcomes of knowledge and love (8:1), juxtaposing epistemology and ethics and suggesting that *knowing correctly* (in this case, even knowing correctly about God) is not the same as knowing God or as exercising one's legitimate freedom to eat meat/food (8:2-3; 9:24-27).¹⁶ This contrast demarcates one of the major themes of these chapters and provides the context from which Paul amends the Corinthian 'knowledge', namely that 'God is one and there is no other' (8:6). In subsequent chapters, Paul's response to the question of eating ritualistic meat carefully weaves together relevant sub-themes: the interplay between knowledge and conscience, the use and misuse of rights and freedoms, the danger of temptation toward idol worship, and the principles of a life shaped by doxology. In the final words of this section of Scripture, Paul's praxis of Christian freedom is succinctly summarized in a way that extends it beyond the question of acceptable eating to all of Christian living.

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please all humans in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. (1 Cor 10:32-11:1)

(b) The Historical and Social Setting (1 Cor 8:1-11:1)

The socio-religious and socio-economic setting of Corinth is well documented and need not be rehearsed in detail here, except to affirm that both religious pluralism and ritual temple

¹⁴ Paul narrows his focus here to τῆς βρώσεως τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων which particularly signifies that which is eaten/offered to pagan gods. In this context, he is most likely referring to meat (cf. 8:13 κρέας, 10:25-29; also Rom 14:15, 17, 20; 1 Cor 3:2; 8:8, 13; 10:3; 2 Cor 9:10 [Isa 55:10]).

¹⁵ Paul does not cite the guidelines from the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:19-20; 29). Scholarly opinion on the absence of this event in the Pauline corpus differs.

¹⁶ Paul's specific concern was that knowledge "puffed up" φυσίω (cf. 1 Cor 4:6, 8, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4).

sacrifice were common practices in Corinth.¹⁷ Believers had regular opportunities to participate in pagan ritual food/meals in a variety of settings, and affluent believers likely had social invitations for religious feasts where meat specifically was served.¹⁸ Such a religiously diverse environment would naturally prompt questions, discussions, and a variety of perspectives about what might constitute appropriate levels of participation for believers at such events, and more specifically, what to do with sacrificial food.

Nearly all scholars agree that Paul begins this section of Scripture by citing Corinthian statements and then inserts counter-responses (8:1, 4). Later in his discussion, he incorporates additional Corinthian presumptions to further clarify his directives for a related social context (10:23).¹⁹

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ‘we all possess knowledge’ | πάντες γινῶσιν ἔχομεν (8:1) |
| ‘there exists no idol in the world’ | οὐδέν εἶδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ (8:4b) |
| ‘there exists no god, except one’ | οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς (8:4c) |
| ‘all things are permitted’ | πάντα ἔξεστιν (10:23) |

These statements form the foundational propositions used by some Corinthians to justify eating food offered to idols, apparently in any setting. Unlike other situations where Paul more directly disagrees with the Corinthians (e.g., 5:1-2; 6:1-8; 11:17-34), here Paul affirms the monotheism presented by the Corinthians (8:4) and affirms the theoretical implication that believers therefore have freedom (ἐλευθερία) and authority (ἐξουσία) to eat any type of food. This understanding is grounded for Paul in the belief that all creation is from God and that nothing in and of itself is unclean (1 Cor 8:6, 8; 9:4; 10:19-20, 25-27, 31; cf. 6:12-13; Rom 14:14, 20; cf. 1 Tim 4:4).

¹⁷ See for example, Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece*, 4:6; C. K. Barrett, “Things Sacrificed to Idols,” *NTS* 11 (1968): 138–53 (144); W. L. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (SBLDS; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 7–64; N. Richardson, *Paul’s Language About God* (JSNTSS; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 323–29; B. W. Winter, “Theological and Ethical Responses to Religious Pluralism - 1 Corinthians 8–10,” *TynBul* 41 (1990): 209–26.

¹⁸ Possible socio-economic situations of this kind have been suggested by Theissen. See, G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (Philadelphia/Edinburgh: Fortress Press/T. & T. Clark, 1982). Theissen’s thesis has been challenged by J. J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (SNTSU; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 97–154.

¹⁹ Some scholars view at least a portion of 8:4-6 as the Corinthian position, see for example, Willis, *Idol Meat*, 83–88. Willis argues that except for a qualifying remark of Paul in 8.5b, verses 4-6 represent the strong Corinthian view. This reading of the passage, brings into sharper focus Paul’s main concern for the weak in conscience for whom the existence of gods/lords is real (strong adversative, ἀλλά, v.7). Although this is a possible rendering, the overall structure and argument suggests that even if verses 4-6 represent a Corinthian quote, Paul agrees with their knowledge and cites it here for his own purpose.

Although Paul agrees in principle with the Corinthian theology, he disagrees at one critical point, saying ‘not all have this knowledge’ (8:7).²⁰ This lack of knowledge on the part of some becomes the pivotal basis from which Paul argues for a nuanced view on how one’s legitimate freedom corresponds to one’s relationship to Christ and to the eating of food.²¹ Although the immediate context is specific to food consumption, Paul concludes these chapters by extending his directives to all things that a believer does, providing a trajectory from which to apply these principles to other situations and contexts.²² Within his extended response, Paul interjects a lengthy personal testimony, including vignettes from his life, to illustrate his point (see especially, 9:12b, 19-23). While discussing weak believers, Paul reminds the Corinthians that Christ died even for the weak (8:11). This reference certainly functions as a reminder that the Corinthians need to place their legitimate right to eat food into a broader, christocentric paradigm. Additionally, Paul uses an example of the Israelite failure to resist the temptation of idol worship as a warning against self-confidence, and Paul’s christological gloss heightens his concern for potential spiritual arrogance (καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα ἔπινον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας, ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός, 10:4).²³ After addressing Christian freedom from several angles, Paul

²⁰ Grammatically, the strong adversative ἀλλά responds to the original Corinthian slogan, οἶδαμεν ὅτι πάντες γινῶσιν ἔχομεν (8:1), whereas 8:1b-6 develops and establishes the content of the knowledge. In verse 7, Paul adds a corrective.

²¹ First Corinthians 10:23-30 likely has non-believers in mind, not only in terms of the invitation but also in respect to their conscience. The term ἱερόθυτος was used by non-Jews to indicate that which was “consecrated or sacrificed to deity.” See G. Schrenk, “ἱερόθυτος,” in *TDNT*, 3: 252–53. This term only appears here in the NT further supporting the notion that within this hypothetical situation, Paul had non-believers in mind. Thus τίς in 10:28 refers back to εἴ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἀπίστων (10:27). Another linguistic indicator is Paul’s directive to seek the good of τοῦ ἐτέρου (10:24, 29). This is in contrast to the earlier reference to community members ὁ ἀσθενῶν . . . ὁ ἀδελφὸς δι’ ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν (8:7-13). Additionally, Paul concludes this section with a directive for believers to offend no one, either within or outside of the community (10:31). This reading fits well with the scholarly discussions about social relationships in Corinth, see for example, J. M. G. Barclay, “Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity,” *JSNT* 47 (1992): 48–74.

²² See also, 8:9-13; 9:12, 19-23, 27; 10:31-33.

²³ The description of Christ as the “rock” and the later reference to the Israelites “testing Christ” (10:9) are interpreted by some as affirmations in Pauline theology of the pre-existence of Christ. See for example, G. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 94–95; E. Ellis, *Christ and the Future in New Testament History* (SupNT; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 89–94. Contra, J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM, 1970), 125. Philo identified the rock as Wisdom, *Leg. All.* 2.86. See further discussion of ancient parallels in H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. (trans. J. W. Leitch; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 167.

concludes with a sweeping exhortation to the Corinthians: ‘You become imitators of me, just as I am of Christ’ (11:1).²⁴

3.1.3 First Corinthians 8:6: Introduction and Guiding Questions

Now that I have established the larger historical and social contexts, my focus now turns more narrowly to 1 Cor 8:5-6. This inquiry is shaped by the following questions: *What does 1 Cor 8:6 articulate about the relationship between Christ and creation, both in cosmological origins and in the ongoing creative process? What is the relationship between Christ (Χριστός), God (Θεός), all things (τὰ πάντα), and us (ἡμεῖς)?* To demonstrate the literary construction and clausal parallelism present in these verses more easily, the following grammatical outline is provided:

- (4) Περὶ τῆς βρώσεως οὖν τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων,
οἶδαμεν
καὶ ὅτι οὐδὲν εἰδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ
καὶ ὅτι οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς.
- (5) καὶ γὰρ εἶπερ
εἰσὶν λεγόμενοι θεοὶ εἴτε ἐν οὐρανῷ εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς
ὥσπερ
εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί,
- (6) ἀλλ’ ἡμῶν
εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ
ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα
καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν,
καὶ
εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς
δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα
καὶ ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ

(a) Semantic Sphere of Reference

Central to the pursuit of these questions is determining what ‘sphere of reality’ Paul intends in these verses. As I argued in chapter two, the Jewish apocalyptic framework provides the broadest context for ascertaining how Paul comes to understand the centrality of Christ in his theology. A number of internal indicators suggest that Paul has this broader purview in mind as he constructs his specific directives in this text.

²⁴ See further suggestions by M. M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (Tübingen/Louisville: Mohr/Westminster/Knox, 1992), 128–38.

Constructing the World, a work by E. Adams, is useful for identifying a likely semantic field of reference that Paul intends in this text.²⁵ Drawing upon sociological studies pertaining to the function of language, Adams concludes, ‘Social worlds and symbolic universes are constructed largely by *linguistic* machinery. A study of Paul’s language-use is therefore highly pertinent to the subject of world-construction in Pauline Christianity’.²⁶ In his study of κόσμος and κτίσις, Adams identifies prominent words that, when joined together, provide Paul with his semantic domain for creating conceptual ‘universes’.²⁷ These terms are common within apocalyptic texts and an accumulation of them can be identified within 1 Cor 8:4-6. *World* (κόσμος) in 8:4 clearly references the cosmos and correlates to *heaven and earth* in verse 5 (ἐν οὐρανῷ εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς), which Adams suggests is ‘contextually equivalent to the phrase τὰ πάντα in v. 6’.²⁸ Additionally, although not in the immediate literary context of 8:5-6, Paul addresses the Corinthians as those who live in the new αἰὼν (εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντηκεν, 1 Cor 10:11), distinctively positioning his directives within the broader apocalyptic category of two ages.²⁹ The implications of such semantic identifiers are discussed below.

(b) *Syntactical, Linguistic, and Contextual Issues*

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| θεοὶ πολλοὶ | κύριοι πολλοί, |
| εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ | εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς |
| ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα | δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα |
| ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν | ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ |

As an isolated text, 1 Cor 8:6, and particularly the parallel phrases εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ . . . εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς, have received a great deal of scholarly attention, especially from a

²⁵ E. Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul’s Cosmological Language* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁷ Adams, *World*, 7, see fn. 25. According to studies on preposition usage in cosmological formulas (see §3.1.3.b.ii), it may be justified to add key prepositions (e.g., ἐκ, διά, ἀπό) into the semantic field suggested by Adams.

²⁸ Adams, *World*, 140. The combination of οὐρανός and γῆ is regularly used in ancient literature to reference the cosmos. See for example, Gen 1:1; Ps.-Aristot., *Mund* 2 (391b, line 9).

²⁹ Note the discussion of Paul’s apocalyptic notion of the overlap of the ages in §2.2.2.b. This text is cited as one of the Pauline texts.

history-of-religions approach.³⁰ This verse stands in stark contrast to the prose of the larger literary unit and such features as ellipsis of verbs, anacoluthon, terse prepositional phrases, and structural parallelism have led many scholars to suggest that this is a pre-Pauline confession, creed, or acclamation.³¹ Some have recognized parallels with Stoic cosmological texts and/or Jewish philosophical and sapiential literature;³² a few suggest that Paul created this creedal-like text himself.³³ Without oversimplifying the issues related to source critical theories or diminishing their significant contributions, the salient reality is that we cannot know with certainty the history of this text prior to its occurrence in this letter. What is clear is that the author intentionally reconfigured the monotheistic *Shema* (Deut 6:4) by incorporating a distinct christological component.³⁴ Paul's strategic placement of the modified *Shema* at this point in the letter confirms that it serves a theological function: to juxtapose the one God/one Lord with the ancient view of many gods/many lords,³⁵ *as well as* to establish a christological framework from which to probe the believer's relationship to God and the creation. In order to ascertain how the *Shema* has been modified, I will carefully assess each set of parallel clauses.

³⁰ See the bibliography referenced throughout this section. Also, for a comprehensive bibliography and succinct summary of the interpretive options, see Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 613–38.

³¹ See for example, R. A. Horsley, “The Background of the Confessional Formula in 1 Kor 8.6,” *ZNTW* 69 (1978): 130–35.

³² The classic work of Norden suggests Stoic influence. See E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), 241, 253, 347. J. Weiss suggested Jewish Wisdom or the Philonic *logos* concept, see J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 226. For a concise history of scholarly theories, see Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption*, 67–73.

³³ See G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 374; J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry Into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM Press, 1980), 179–80.

³⁴ This view has been widely affirmed. See for example, D. R. De Lacey, “‘One Lord’ in Pauline Christology,” in *Christ the Lord: Studies in Christology Presented to D. Guthrie* (ed. H. H. Rowdon; Leicester: InterVarsity, 1982), 191–203; L. W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 97; D. A. Hagner, “Paul’s Christology and Jewish Monotheism,” in *Perspectives on Christology* (eds M. Shuster and R. Muller; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 19–38 (28–29); B. Witherington, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 316; R. N. Longenecker, ed., *Contours of Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005). Other texts in the Pauline corpus that specifically identify God as one include Rom 3:29–20 and Gal 3:20 (cf. 1 Tim 2:5).

³⁵ For a text with similar themes and theology, see Deut 10:14, 17 (LXX), Ἴδὸν Κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἡ γῆ καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτῇ. . . . Ὁ γὰρ Κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν, οὗτος Θεὸς τῶν θεῶν, καὶ Κύριος τῶν κυρίων.

(i) *First Pair of Clauses*: ἡμῖν εἶς Θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ . . . καὶ εἶς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός

Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν Κύριος εἶς ἐστι (Deut 6:4)³⁶
ἡμῖν εἶς Θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ . . . καὶ εἶς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (1 Cor 8:6)

As can be identified by comparing the *Shema* with the altered form, the author has slightly modified the *Shema* with profound results. By affixing the descriptors *Father/Jesus Christ* to the existing titles *God/Lord* and by extending *one* to both, a monotheistic rendering is maintained while simultaneously associating Jesus Christ with God in the closest possible way. First Corinthians 8:6, as a modified form of the *Shema*, affirms the author's attribution of *divine identity* to Jesus Christ,³⁷ thus making it the earliest and most explicit extant text to do so. This remarkable refashioning of the monotheistic doctrine places Jesus Christ within the central tenet of the Jewish faith.

(ii) *Second Pair of Clauses*: ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα . . . δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα

Yet equally stunning when considering christological formulations, as well as when ascertaining ecotheological implications, is the inclusion of new motifs in the subsequent four clauses. These clauses have received considerably less scholarly attention. Within Judaism, establishing the divine uniqueness of Yahweh, especially in relationship to other gods, was often supported through an argument based on creation (e.g., Rom 1:18-32; Isa 44:24; Sir 42:21; 4 Ezra 3:4; 6:6; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2:192; Philo, *Opif.* 23; especially present throughout Isa 40-55).³⁸ As demonstrated in the second set of clauses, Paul draws upon this tradition by placing God and Christ in parallel relationship to τὰ πάντα, while simultaneously distinguishing their relatedness to 'all things' by the terse use of ἐκ and διὰ. My discussion of these formulations first centers on the meaning of τὰ πάντα and then shifts to Paul's use of ἐκ and διὰ in these clauses.

³⁶ Other representative texts include, for example, Deut 4:35, 39; Isa 44:6; 45:5, 6, 14; Wis 12:13; 2 Enoch 47:3; Mark 12:32.

³⁷ The phrase *divine identity* is drawn from the work of R. Bauckham. See R. Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

³⁸ Bauckham, *God of Israel*, 213. See also T. E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 184–87. The affirmation of one creator God was a common Second Temple Jewish designation. See for example, *Sirach* 18:1; *Jubilees* 2:1-16; *Wisdom of Solomon* 2:23; 9:1-4; 13:1-9; Philo, *Fug* 177; *Quis Rerum* 106; 133-160; 4Q216 Col. V-VII, 1 QH Col. V 13-20, *Psalms of Solomon* 18:11-2; *Sibylline Oracles* 1:5-37, etc.

τὰ πάντα

Establishing the semantic scope of the term τὰ πάντα is critical in order to ascertain what theological significance Paul ascribes to Christ in this text. Unanimous agreement exists among scholars that in this passage τὰ πάντα refers to the entire cosmos when applied to God. Thus, God is understood as the source from which all things are created. Disagreement arises in the second clause when ‘all things’ is linked to the one Lord Jesus Christ via διὰ. In the early and mid-twentieth century, most scholars rejected a cosmological rendering of τὰ πάντα when aligned with Jesus Christ. E. Barnikol, K. J. Kuschel, and more recently, J. Murphy-O’Connor and N. Richardson all concur that the inclusion of Christ in this formulation indicates a strictly soteriological reference, limiting ‘all things’ to humankind.³⁹ Recent scholarly consensus has virtually eclipsed those former readings in favor of the more inclusive rendering of τὰ πάντα as a reference to the cosmos in its entirety.⁴⁰ Murphy-O’Connor’s work is presented here as representative of the minority view and as a point from which to argue an alternative reading.

Murphy-O’Connor offers three primary reasons for the view that τὰ πάντα should be limited to a soteriological reading in 1 Cor 8:6. Central to his thesis is his assertion that this passage was originally a baptismal acclamation with a focus on the ‘salvific action of God in Christ’ for humanity.⁴¹ He also considers the common scholarly comparison of this passage with Rom 11:36, Col 1:15-20, and Eph 4:5 to be unfounded, arguing further that even these texts have been read as limited to salvation-history.⁴² He then supports this point by identifying other Pauline texts where, according to his interpretation, τὰ πάντα is limited to

³⁹ E. Barnikol, *Mensch und Messias: der nichtpaulinische Ursprung der präexistenz-Christologie* (Kiel, 1932), 76–79; J. Murphy-O’Connor, “1 Cor. 8.6: Cosmology or Soteriology?” *RB* 85 (1978): 253–67; K.-J. Kuschel, *Born Before All Time? the Dispute Over Christ’s Origin* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1982), 285–91. Richardson, *God*, 297, 306. For an overview of these arguments, see M. Barth, “Christ and All Things,” in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett* (ed. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson; London: SPCK, 1982), 160–72.

⁴⁰ As a representative work, see Bauckham who argues for a cosmic rendering of τὰ πάντα, R. Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 143. He suggest that τὰ πάντα is cosmic in the following texts: Matt 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 3:35; 13:3; 16:15; Acts 10:36; Heb 1:2, 28; Rom 9:5; 10:12; 11.36; 1 Cor 3:21-22; 4:13; 8:6; 11:12; 15:27-29; Phil 3:21; cf. Eph 1:22; Col 1:15-20.

⁴¹ Murphy-O’Connor, “Cosmology,” 258–59.

⁴² Murphy-O’Connor, “Cosmology,” 262–63.

soteriology (e.g., Rom 8:28, 31-32; 1 Cor 2:10-13; 12:4-6; 2 Cor 4:14-15, 18). Murphy-O'Connor's final argument is that the broader context does not support a cosmological reading: 'The idea of God and Christ as united in the creation of the universe goes far beyond the needs of the situation'.⁴³ On each of these points there has been lengthy scholarly rebuttal, and this debate has contributed toward a scholarly reassessment of these clauses. What follows is a succinct response to further support a rendering of τὰ πάντα as *the cosmic all* in reference to Christ in 1 Cor 8:6.⁴⁴

Murphy-O'Connor's final argument concerning the incongruence of a cosmic rendering with the historical context is the most puzzling of his conclusions. As already developed at length, the context of this passage relates to important questions concerning eating food/meat offered to idols. Within Paul's historical milieu, the domain of the gods was connected to all realms of the cosmos, and thus Paul's association of the one Lord Christ with the one God was essential to counter views that promoted a plethora of gods. According to R. Bauckham, one distinctive of Second Temple Jewish monotheism was its faith affirmation that *one God was the Creator of all things and distinct from all things*:

God alone created all things; all other things, including beings worshipped as gods by Gentiles, are created by him. . . . However diverse Judaism may have been in many other respects, this was common: only the God of Israel is worthy of worship because he is sole Creator of all things and sole Ruler of all things.⁴⁵

If Bauckham's analysis is correct, then the attribution of the one God as Creator of all things must equally apply to the Lord Jesus Christ. Otherwise, this formula would effectively be reduced to a ditheism, undermining one of the purposes for which Paul is citing this text: to establish one Lord/one God as the Creator of the entire cosmos.

As previously mentioned, the immediate and larger semantic field strongly supports a reading of this text that views it as extending Christ's salvific role beyond humanity. The use

⁴³ Murphy-O'Connor, "Cosmology," 265.

⁴⁴ Murphy-O'Connor has recently published a revised interpretation that modifies his earlier reading. He now affirms the cosmological significance of τὰ πάντα, yet suggests that the context is primarily focused on the present reality of believers. In agreement with Dunn, his nuanced reading suggests that Paul does not attribute divinity or pre-existence to Christ in this passage. See, J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 70–75; J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI/ Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998), 271.

⁴⁵ R. Bauckham, "Paul's Christology of Divine Identity," 3, [Http://www.forananswer.org/Top_JW/Richard_Bauckham.pdf](http://www.forananswer.org/Top_JW/Richard_Bauckham.pdf).

of such key terms as κόσμος, αἰών (10:11), ὁ οὐρανός καὶ ἡ γῆ, and τὰ πάντα alongside the terse use of ἐκ and διὰ (discussed below) collectively suggests that a cosmological sphere is intended. More typical terms associated with Pauline soteriology are noticeably absent (e.g., πίστις, δικαιοσύνη, ἐν Χριστῷ, ἁμαρτία, βαπτίζω). It is also of note that there are numerous examples of texts in the NT and within Paul where τὰ πάντα almost certainly references the universal sphere.⁴⁶

Additionally, Murphy-O'Connor's reconstruction of this verse as a 'baptismal acclamation' is unconvincing. Even if his theory could be demonstrated, the context in which Paul is using the formula here is clearly *not* baptismal. One dynamic of the immediate context is its urgency in establishing that the one Lord/one God exceeds any conception of the so-called many gods/many lords. The specific referent of the *heavens and earth* also highlights the thematic sphere of this passage as universal (κόσμῳ . . . ἐν οὐρανῷ εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς). My attention now turns to one of the most distinguishing features of these clauses, the terse use of ἐκ and διὰ.

ἐκ and διὰ

One of the often-discussed features of this text is its deft use of prepositions, which indicates intentionality in both literary construction and theological significance. It is now firmly established that ancient philosophical cosmologies, both Greek and Jewish, used specific prepositions to articulate metaphysical concepts of cosmic realities, though some variations existed.⁴⁷ The more difficult matter for the purposes of this inquiry is to determine the degree to which the contemporary metaphysical use of such prepositions influenced NT authors.

The specific employment of agency prepositions in reference to God did not go unnoticed by Hellenistic Jewish authors. In particular, examples from Philo are instructive. On several occasions, Philo interjects that the septuagintal authors' use of through (διὰ) with

⁴⁶ See note 40 above.

⁴⁷ One commonly cited parallel is M. Aurelius, *Medit.* 4.23: ἐκ σοῦ πάντα, ἐν σοὶ πάντα, εἰς σὲ πάντα, "All things come from thee, subsist in thee, go back to thee." For secondary discussions, see Norden, *Theos*; R. Cox, *By the Same Word: Creation and Salvation in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity* (BZNTW; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007); G. E. Sterling, "Prepositional Metaphysics in Jewish Wisdom Speculation and Early Christian Liturgical Texts," *SPhilo* 9 (1997): 219–38. See also R. M. Grant, "Causation and 'The Ancient Worldview'," *JBL* 83 (1964): 34–40.

reference to God (τοῦ Θεοῦ) was incorrect: ‘God is the cause (αἴτιον), not the instrument (ὄργανον), and that which comes into being is brought into being through (διὰ) an instrument (ὄργανον) but *by* a cause (ὑπὸ . . . αἰτίου)’.⁴⁸ There are also many examples in sapiential texts that employ these prepositions when referencing the mediatorial role of Sophia in creation.

Beginning at least as early as the fourth-century CE, Christian leaders debated the implications of certain prepositional uses in key NT cosmological texts, in particular Rom 11:36 and 1 Cor 8:6.⁴⁹ In more recent years, H. Hegermann, H. Langhammer, and especially G. Sterling have identified important parallels from ancient literature to inform the following nuanced reading of 1 Cor 8:6: God as the *ultimate cause from whom* (ἐξ οὗ) all things exist and the Lord Jesus Christ as the *instrumental mediator through whom* (δι’ οὗ) all things exist.⁵⁰ G. Sterling observes that a metaphysical use of prepositions is ‘almost always signalled through the reference to “all things” (πάντα)’,⁵¹ providing additional support that these parallel phrases certainly have the cosmos in view. A correlative use of prepositions can also be observed elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. The closest parallel is the doxology of Rom 11:36 where each preposition is used in reference to God (ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα).⁵² In 1 Cor 11:2-16, while alluding to the creation account of Gen 2, Paul’s use of ἐκ and διὰ functions to differentiate the man’s point of origin from the woman’s point of origin. The man (an allusion to Adam) is the original source *out of which* the woman came into existence (ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός), and the woman is the vehicle *through whom* man’s ongoing existence is dependent (ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικός), and ‘all things’ have their origin in

⁴⁸ Philo, *Cher.* 124; also *Cher.* 128. For secondary discussions, see for example, G. E. Sterling, “Prepositional Metaphysics in Jewish Wisdom Speculation and Early Christian Liturgical Texts,” *SPhilo* 9 (1997): 226–28; T. H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* (CBQMS; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983).

⁴⁹ Sterling, “Prepositional Metaphysics,” 226–28. See also, L. North, “1 Cor. 8.6: From Confession to Paul to Creed to Paul” (NT Seminar Paper; University of Durham, 2009).

⁵⁰ H. Hegermann, *Die Vorstellung vom Schöpfungsmittler im hellenistischen Judentum und Urchristentum* (TU; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961); P. H. Langhammer, “Literarische und Theologische Einzelstücke in 1 Kor VIII:6,” *NTS* 17 (1970–71): 193–97; Sterling, “Prepositional Metaphysics”. See also R. Bauckham, ed., *God Will Be All in All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 37–40; C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 71–72, which discusses the use of ἐκ in 1 Cor 1:30; 8:6 and 2 Cor 5:18; Richardson, *God*, 296–307.

⁵¹ Sterling, “Prepositional Metaphysics,” 232.

⁵² There has been some scholarly discussion about whether Paul intends here to apply these creative functions exclusively to Θεός or Κύριος as a reference to Christ (Rom 11:33-36). For example, Paul cites Isa 40:13 in 1 Cor 2:16 with clear reference to Christ. See also 1 Cor 1:29b-31.

God (τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ).⁵³ One interesting non-Pauline cosmological text appears in 2 Pet 3:5-6. Here the author describes the original creation as *out of* and *through* water (ὅτι οὐρανοὶ ἦσαν ἔκπαλαι καὶ γῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος).⁵⁴ Such literary examples strongly suggest that within Greco-Roman, Jewish, and early Christian literature, specialized use of prepositions in cosmological texts functioned to differentiate the agents of creation.

The final literary/grammatical feature of this text to further support a cosmological reading is the literary construction and deliberate use of parallelism. The triple parallel occurrence of εἷς, τὰ πάντα, and ἡμεῖς in reference to God and the Lord remains constant in meaning: 'one' means the same in reference to both one God and the one Lord Jesus Christ, as do the terms 'all things' and 'we'.⁵⁵ The distinctive feature within this monotheistic schema is found in the insertion of *different terms*, specifically, the titles as well as the distinct prepositions found in each parallel clause.

(iii) *Third Pair of Clauses: ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν . . . ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ*

The final parallel clauses stand as perhaps the most unique facet of this cosmological formulation. With a personal twist, Paul incorporates himself and the Corinthians into the schema, which results in a distinctive *ecclesial* dimension to this text (ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν . . . ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ).⁵⁶ According to G. Sterling, the inclusion of humanity within a cosmological formulation is truly 'a distinctive Christian contribution'.⁵⁷ The clause 'we through him' is typically interpreted soteriologically, meaning that 'we have been saved through Christ'. Certainly within this formula, such a feature cannot be denied. Nevertheless, within the broader context of these chapters, Paul is *not* concerned with establishing the redemptive function of Jesus Christ; that function of Jesus Christ is presupposed throughout. Rather, he is

⁵³ οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός. . . ὡσπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικός τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ (1 Cor 11:7, 12).

⁵⁴ E. Adams, "Creation 'Out Of' and 'Through' Water in 2 Peter 3:5," in *The Creation of Heaven and Earth: Re-Interpretations of Genesis I in the Context of Judaism, Ancient Philosophy, Christianity, and Modern Physics* (ed. G. H. van Kooten; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005), 195–210.

⁵⁵ For a similar conclusion, see Fee, *Christology*, 90–91.

⁵⁶ With the preposition ἡμεῖς, Paul is addressing believers exclusively.

⁵⁷ Although he makes this comment in relationship to Col 1:15-20, the statement is equally applicable to 1 Cor 8:6. See Sterling, "Prepositional Metaphysics," 235. According to R. Cox, such is "without parallel . . . outside the NT." R. Cox, *By the Same Word: Creation and Salvation in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity* (BZBW; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 148.

concerned with expressing how believers are to relate to the created realm *in light of* their new creation status in Christ.

What drives Paul's directives throughout these chapters is his concern for the proper *orientation* of believers with/toward 'all things'. R. Bauckham identifies this relational dynamic in the text: 'The variation between "all things" and "we" in 1 Cor 8:6 results from Paul's desire to situate himself and his readers within the "all things" who are thus related to the Creator. . . . All three prepositions, as in Romans 11:36, describe the unique divine relationship to the whole created reality'.⁵⁸ In agreement with Bauckham, I suggest that this text implies that one's redeemed status in Christ has implications for one's *ethical telos* — the imperative of how one is to live redemptively within the realm of 'all things'. Likewise, G. Fee highlights this trajectory:

The emphasis is on the "we," which is the unique feature of this present expression of the creed. The preposition here has a kind of built-in ambiguity to it. Ordinarily in such a creedal formula it [ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν] is an eschatological term, expressing the fact that God stands at the beginning and end of all things. but *precisely because the creed has been personalized*, that goal has a very strongly telic (purpose) force to it. God is not only the one to whom we are ultimately heading, along with the whole created order, but our very existence is *for his purposes*. Thus Paul's concern is not with philosophical theology, but with its practical implications for the matter at hand. . . . Here is an example of Christian ethics being grounded in proper Christian theology.⁵⁹

Paul's strategic placement of the modified *Shema* at this prominent point of his directives confirms that it serves a theological function not only to juxtapose the one God/one Lord with the ancient view of many gods/many lords but also to establish a christological framework from which to probe the believer's new orientation to creation. Before further examining how this theological formula relates to Paul's specific guidance in these chapters, I will briefly analyze 1 Cor 10:26.

3.1.4 First Corinthians 10:26: Psalm 24:1 (LXX, Ps 23:1)

Towards the conclusion of this lengthy text, Paul cites Ps 24:1 (LXX 23:1) as a scriptural proof for ethical behaviour. In the context of that citation, Paul affirms that believers have

⁵⁸ Bauckham, *God of Israel*, 215. Note the parallel terminology in 2 Cor 5:17-6:2 where Paul develops further the implications of a new creation for those in Christ (τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ δόντος ἡμῖν τῆς διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς, v.18; συνεργοῦντες, 6:1). Believers "become the very righteousness of God"(v. 21) in the present new creation, in the day of salvation (6:2).

⁵⁹ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 375–76.

freedom in the public market to purchase any type of food/meat — not because, as the Corinthians conclude, ‘all things are permitted’, but rather because the ‘earth is the Lord’s and everything in it’. In this context, Paul argues that partaking is allowed because of the ultimate sovereignty of Jesus Christ over creation, not because of inherent human authority or freedom.

Generally, this text has received little scholarly attention.⁶⁰ However, one point of scholarly debate has been the determination of the referent for κύριος. In Ps 24:1 κύριος obviously refers to God. The extensive use of the title κύριος for Christ in the NT has been studied at length both from the Hellenistic and Jewish historical perspectives, and differences of opinion exist about its referent in this passage.⁶¹ Paul uses the title more frequently than other NT authors, and he typically uses it as an appellation for Christ, or less frequently in reference to God.⁶² The latter usage occurs exclusively in OT citations where the Hebrew *Yahweh* has been translated into *Lord*, as was customary in the Septuagint.⁶³ There are also instances where Paul cites an OT passage yet applies the title to Christ. In agreement with Fee, Bauckham, and others, Larry Hurtado asserts that in this text, Paul ‘clearly applies the OT citation to Christ’.⁶⁴ This judgment is supported, in part, because of Paul’s explicit application of κύριος to Jesus Christ in the modified *Shema* and because of the high concentration of the title *Lord* as applied to Christ throughout these chapters (1 Cor 9:1, 2, 5, 14; 10:21 (2x), 22).

The other point of some scholarly discussion is the possibility that Ps 24:1 was a common table prayer within Judaism. According to Barrett, this text was ‘used as an

⁶⁰ For example, in the massive commentary by Thiselton, which comprises over 1,350 pages of scholarship on 1 Corinthians, this citation receives the equivalent of half a page of discussion. See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 785–86.

⁶¹ For succinct overviews, see De Lacey, “One Lord”; L. W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003), 108–18.

⁶² See De Lacey, “One Lord” L. W. Hurtado, “Lord,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (eds G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993), 560–69; L. W. Hurtado, “Paul’s Christology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul* (ed. J. D. G. Dunn; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 185–98.

⁶³ J. A. Fitzmyer, “Der semitische Hintergrund des neutestamentlichen Kyriostitels,” in *Jesus Christus in Historie und Theologie: Festschrift für Hans Conzelmann zum 60* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1975), 267–98 (267–268).

⁶⁴ Hurtado, “Lord,” 563. Cf. D. B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul’s Christology* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1992), 140–45; Bauckham, “Divine Identity”.

argument for table grace, although there is no literary evidence that the actual practice of table grace was common within Jewish communities at this time.⁶⁵ Certainly as Thiselton suggests, its occurrence here hints at the possibility that Paul may have been aware of the larger discussions around this text.⁶⁶ Its proximity to 10:30-31, which connects eating with gratitude, thankfulness, and giving glory toward God, positions the human relationship to food within a broader theocentric horizon where the dynamics of one's relationship to food are intertwined with one's acknowledgment of and submission to the sovereignty of God.

These two succinct texts, 1 Cor 8:6 and 10:26, function in three important ways in these chapters. Structurally, their placement near the beginning and end of the most lengthy sustained pericope in the Pauline corpus provides a distinct christological framework for Paul's directives. Theologically, these texts are weighty as they represent the earliest extant redrawing of monotheism, making the closest possible connection of the one Lord Jesus Christ to the one God while simultaneously establishing Jesus Christ as the creative agent of the creation. The final way that these texts function is the focus of the remainder of this chapter. As I have already suggested, these christological developments, which establish Christ as the mediator of primal creation (8:6) and as sovereign Lord over all creation (10:26), are not peripheral features of this text. Rather, they represent the theological heart of the matter for Paul, precisely because they allow him to redraw the ethical map of the Corinthians. This final component of how the christological claims function in these chapters is developed further here.

3.1.5 Ethical Imperative: Life in the Law of Christ

Having significantly expanded the Corinthian knowledge by incorporating Jesus Christ into the cosmic framework, Paul works out an ethical paradigm that addresses the proper relatedness of Christ (Χριστός), God (Θεός), all things (τὰ πάντα), and us (ἡμεῖς). As already noted in the introduction to this chapter, Col 1:15-20 is a critical text for understanding the expansive work of God in Christ -- from the beginning of all things to the final eschatological reconciliation of all things. Yet 1 Cor 8-10 offers a different perspective than Col 1:15-20

⁶⁵ C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), 240.

⁶⁶ Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 785-86.

precisely because in the letter to the Corinthians we see Paul beginning to tease out how his sweeping theological claims might be applicable to concrete situations. Paul's nuanced directives suggest that he perceives believers as being in a symbiotic relationship with God/Christ, with other humans, and with the non-personal created realm. This simply means that within the cosmic matrix, one's actions affect other participants in the web of relationships.

In this passage, Paul moves from affirming that their shared knowledge *theoretically* allows for freedom (ἐλευθερία) in regard to eating to a carefully nuanced position concerning the meaning of freedom for those who live within the law of Christ (9:21). Paul's lengthy personal testimony in 1 Cor 9, often seen as a digression, illustrates that freedom is not defined by one's legitimate rights (even if, as Paul states, this position is supported by Scripture or taught by Jesus himself! 9:8-14). This *directly* counters the Corinthian libertarian view that 'all things are permitted'. At two key points near the end of this text about eating food/meat, Paul cites this Corinthian slogan (πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν, 6:12; πάντα ἔξεστιν, 10:23) with pointed qualifications clarifying that all things, even consuming meat, are contingent upon whether the outcome of these acts is beneficial to all and builds up the community. Paul implies that freedom is never an absolute but is instead exercised only in one's relatedness to others. Paradoxically, this 'law of Christ' significantly curtails how one exercises freedom, because it is *precisely the misguided relatedness of humans with elements of creation that causes destructive outcomes* (8:9-13; 10:1-10, 14-22, 24).

Thus, the *proper relatedness of believers with elements of creation* becomes one of the main concerns informing Paul's directives. For example, Paul suggests that in a public setting where a knowledgeable believer eats idol food in the presence of a believer whose conscience is weak, the weak one might be encouraged to eat food *as if* it were offered to an idol. In this scenario, eating might result in the conscience of the weak one becoming μολύνω, a strong verb meaning defiled or soiled (8:7).⁶⁷ The eating of such food by the

⁶⁷ The verbal form occurs only here in Paul (the noun form occurs in 2 Cor 7:1). The only other occurrences in the NT are Rev 3:4 and 14:4. See W. Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3rd; revised by Frederick William Danker; Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 657. Also see Moulton & Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament Illustrated from Papyri and Other Nonliterary Sources* (London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1914–29), 416.

knowledgeable believer ultimately leads to the destruction of the believer with a weak conscience, which Paul sternly catalogues as a ‘sin against Christ’ (8:12).⁶⁸ In this situation, Paul directs the knowledgeable one, grounded in the self-sacrificial love of God in Jesus Christ for a fellow Christian to give up the right to eat (8:11); thus, an *imitation-of-Christ* ethic emerges (11:1). In each scenario, the test of legitimate freedom is extended beyond the believer’s rights, beyond one’s personal advantage, and even beyond what is legally permissible. Within the economy of Christ, Paul redefines freedom as enslavement to others (9:19f), self-control in all things (9:25), and not seeking self-advantage (10:30), and all of these characteristics are shaped by a vision of the eschaton (9:25-27) where the ultimate goal of all behaviour is that God be glorified (10:31). One’s legitimate right for consumption — here, of food — is qualified by concerns that shape the broader web of relationships in which believers exist. Paul’s christocentric theology leads him to urge the Corinthians to embrace a paradigmatic shift in how they view their relationship to God, to other humans, and to the whole created realm.

In terms of the non-personal realm, Paul addresses the ontological nature of food within cultic sacrifice in two texts. In 1 Cor 8:8 Paul states, ‘Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do’. Later, in 10:19-20, Paul warns the Corinthians to flee from worship of idols. In that context Paul rhetorically asks, ‘What do I imply then? That food offered to an idol is anything? that an idol is anything?’ His strong response is ‘No . . . but *those who sacrifice* offer to demons (δαίμόνια) and not to God’ (10:20).⁶⁹ Whereas food, as part of the created order, has no generative power to orient a person to God, here Paul teaches that humans have the power to orient food away from God instead of for/toward God. The social construct of the ‘one offering’ seems to contribute toward making food no longer completely innocuous. In those religious contexts, Paul strongly directs believers to flee from participation, for such behaviour flirts with

⁶⁸ This is the only occurrence of such a charge in the Pauline letters and it serves here as an indicator of Paul’s notion of the interrelatedness between God, Christ, believers, and the created element.

⁶⁹ Similar views are represented in other Jewish texts, see for example, *Jub.* 11:46; 22:1-22; *1 Enoch* 10; 99:6-10; and *T. Naph.* 3.3-4.

idolatry, which inevitably results in a distortion of relationships: creation is oriented away from God, God is dishonored, fellowship with Christ is broken, and one's own actions may lead to self-destruction (e.g., 10:1-22).

In each of these scenarios, the human participant and the elements of creation are in a distorted relationship with the sole Creator of the universe; both are directed away from God, being offered rather for the purposes of εἰδωλολατρία. In such circumstances, Paul directs believers to abstain from participation. Yet when one partakes of the elements of the creation with thanks to God (χάρις, εὐχαριστῶ, 1 Cor 10:30-31; cf. Rom 14:5-9), creation is redirected back toward God as its originating source. In that scenario, Paul affirms the freedom to partake. C. Gunton describes an eschatological view of the relationship between creation and redemption that may inform a reading of Paul at this point:

Creation . . . is made to go somewhere — but by virtue of the fall can reach that end only by a redemption which involves a radical redirection from the movement it takes backwards whenever sin and evil shape its direction. . . . I shall call the eschatological consequent upon this view one of completion, because it suggests that the end of redemption is not simply a return to a primal perfection, but a movement towards an end that is greater than the beginning. On such an account, redemption involves not only the defeat of evil, but its removal in such a way that the original direction or directedness of the created order is restored.⁷⁰

What Gunton terms the 'directedness of the created order' seems to be the crux of the matter for Paul in this text. Meat, as meat, is ontologically neutral and does not have generative power to direct itself or anything else to God. It is only through its relationship with humanity that the *dynamics of directedness* take shape. The ontological *neutrality* of meat in no way negates the inherent goodness of creation; for all things, human and non-human, have intrinsic value because of their origin as created by God through Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, this text reflects an anthropocentric prejudice that is shaped by theocentric convictions. Meat/food can be directed away from God if humans disregard the Creator. This distinction is outlined most clearly in Rom 1:18-31, where Paul states that those who fail to acknowledge the Creator, by way of creation, neither honor nor give thanks to God and that their misconstrued understanding of God results in a distortion of relationships with God, other

⁷⁰ C. E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (ESCT; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 12.

humans, and the broader created order.⁷¹ In 1 Cor 8-10, Paul clearly suggests that believers, as people who are uniquely related to God through Jesus Christ, are endowed with the responsibility to appropriate the created order toward/for God with an orientation of thanks and gratitude (χάρις, εὐχαριστῶ, 1 Cor 10:30-31; cf. Rom 14:5-9) and with the ultimate theocentric purpose of glorifying God.

Paul's teaching on food parts rather significantly from Judaism, where the boundaries between profane and holy were made explicit in the written law; unclean or sacrificial food was not considered evil, *per se*, it was simply not in proper proximity to God or God's people. In tandem with other Jews of his day, Paul thus begins to reshape contemporary thinking on purity laws. His directives here eclipse former legal distinctions of clean and unclean by insisting that all things (even food formerly offered to idol gods) have the *potential* to be in a proper relatedness to God; yet this potential is organically dependent on the people of God who now are guided by the *law of Christ* (cf. 2 Cor 3:4-18; Gal 6:1-10). By making Jesus Christ central to the cosmic structure, Paul's assessment of the boundaries of the law radically changes. He provides directives that blur those former boundaries and translate the believer's relationship to all things in the creation into theoretical freedom. Paul weds redemption with creation, which means in part that those who are redeemed in Christ have a new relationship with and new orientation toward creation — from the very beginning of 'all things' (1 Cor 8:4-6), within the history of 'all things' (1 Cor 8:11; 9:1; 10:1-11), and toward the eschatological fulfillment of 'all things'. This final point, although not present in this text, is especially developed for example in Rom 8:18-30, 1 Cor 15:24-28 and Col 1:18-20 (see §2.2.2.f, §3.2, and §4.3.3.b).

One final feature of this text is Paul's insistence that common fellowship at the 'table of the Lord' is an authentic participation in the body and blood of Christ (10:16-18) and an event that unites those present into 'one body'. As he approaches the end of a three-chapter

⁷¹ Paul may have in mind here Deut 4:19f where it is indicated that the created order is not to be worshiped, which was interpreted by Jewish sources as a way to regulate the worship of the one God. See for example, 1QS 1:13-15; *1 En* 82:7-10; *Jub* 2:8-10. See J. C. VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time* (London: Routledge, 1998), 3-4; also J. White, "Paul's Cosmology: The Witness of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians," in *Cosmology And New Testament Theology* (ed. J. T. Pennington and S. M. McDonough; LNTS; New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 90-106 (97-98).

discourse, Paul presents a new scenario for consideration. Many individuals in the Corinthian congregation were evidently accepting invitations to dine at temple meals where ‘what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God’ (10:20). Presumably, based on their knowledge that there are ‘no other gods’ and on the pretext that ‘all things are lawful’, these Corinthians judged such participation as *adiaphoron*. Paul disagrees. Yet in this context, rather than basing his disagreement on the harm that can come to another individual’s conscience, he highlights the negative partnership that such shared meals bring with God/demons and with other participants: to partake at the table where food is offered to demons is to partake in the worship of idols, and Paul therefore commands the Corinthians to flee (10:14). The sacrificial food of the meal is being offered to either demons *or* God. Paul insists that in the latter context bread and wine become the means whereby the Christian community has fellowship (κοινωνία, 1 Cor 10:16) with the body and blood of Christ and with one another.

3.2 Christ and the Telos:

Subjection and Reconciliation of All Things (1 Cor 15:20-28)

I now turn my attention to the eschatological completion of ‘all things’. The mediatorial role of Jesus Christ in the original creation corresponds to his role in the final culmination of the new creation. This link between Christ and creation within categories of *Urzeit* and *Endzeit* decidedly places Paul’s thinking within the Jewish apocalyptic framework of the first century milieu, which is confirmed by his use of apocalyptic terms and motifs in key texts (e.g., Rom 8:18-30; 1 Cor 15:51-57; 1 Thess 4:16-17). Paul appropriates the designated roles of ‘sovereign ruler’ and ‘cosmic reconciler’ for Jesus Christ. In keeping with other Second Temple Jewish expectations, Paul also writes of a climactic Messianic return where the inaugurated ‘new creation’ is fully realized (e.g, Rom 13:11; 1 Cor 1:7; 4:5; 15:23; 16:22b; 2 Cor 11:2).

When discussing the end times, Paul posits a process toward the *telos* whereby believers enlivened by the eschatological Spirit have already been ‘brought from death to life’ (Rom 6:13). The incarnate Jesus Christ, as one who lived, died, and rose from death, becomes the pivotal interpretive key for understanding the shape of life for humanity and for the created realm. Paul applies the designation ‘first fruits’ (ἀπαρχή) to both Christ and the Spirit

(Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 15:20, 23) as a way of designating the connection of future redemption with present reality. Each of these themes emerges in 1 Cor 15, Paul's most lengthy discussion of the resurrection and end times.

The main text for consideration here is 1 Cor 15:20-28⁷² which occurs within the broader and more complex discussion of the nature of the future resurrection and its relationship to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In order to place these verses within their literary and historical context I now examine a few contextual considerations.⁷³ First Corinthians 15 is organized around distinct units with breaks at verses 11, 34, and 49; each unit addresses themes that are related to the Corinthian misunderstanding of resurrection.⁷⁴ Paul's response to these misunderstandings includes citation from Psalms (Ps 8:7; 110:1; cf. 1 Cor 15:20-28; 42-50), Isaiah (Is 25:8; cf. 1 Cor 15:54), and Gen 1-3.

Within the first unit (15:1-11), Paul outlines the shared tradition of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What is implied in these early verses is that the Corinthians did not deny the concept of resurrection *per se*, nor the resurrection of Christ in particular. Paul's inclusion of specific questions more clearly outlines the nuance of their misunderstanding, 'How can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead [ones]?' (1 Cor 15:12); 'But one may ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' (15:35). These questions indicate confusion over both the modality of resurrection (πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί) and the corporeal dimensions of the resurrection (ποιῶ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται). Built into Paul's response is a dense eschatological portrayal of Christ as the mediator who hands back to God 'all things' (15:20-28); this text is the focus of my attention here.

⁷² Later, in chapter four, I will return to 1 Cor 15 with special reference to 15:42-50 (§4.3.4.b)

⁷³ Scholarship is voluminous on this particular chapter. See for example, K. Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead* (trans. H. J. Stenning; New York: Revell, 1933); R. H. 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* (eds J. G. Green and M. Turner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 1994), 204–19; M. E. Dahl, *The Resurrection of the Body: A Study of 1 Corinthians 15* (London: SCM, 1962); B. A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1973).

⁷⁴ There exists scholarly disagreement on this point. Hays and Thiselton suggest divisions at v. 11 and 34; see R. B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Interpretation; Louisville: Knox Publishing, 1997), 269–77; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1257–58; whereas Conzelmann suggests the threefold division; see Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 279.

Paul's initial response to the opposing viewpoints at Corinth is to present a logical proof constructed by 'if-then' clauses. The fact of Christ's resurrection becomes the *basis* for the believer's hope for a future resurrection (15:13-19). Of note is the rhetorical twist that places the discussion within a reverse logic: 'for if the dead are not raised, then neither was Christ raised' (εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται, 15:16; cf. 15:13). Several interesting features of this text inform our understanding of Pauline theology. First, Paul uses the term νεκρός in this chapter, six times and always in the plural. Thus, Paul has a sense of a corporate bodily resurrection for those 'in Christ' (15:18). According to Beker and White, this fits with the Jewish apocalyptic belief that envisioned resurrection as a unified concept: 'In early Judaism there is only "the resurrection", not many resurrections. . . . Therefore the resurrection of Jesus could not be viewed as an isolated event; rather, it was the beginning of *the* eschatological resurrection of the dead'.⁷⁵ Second, the mode of resurrection implied by this text is certainly the same mode that Paul has extensively outlined in 1 Cor 15:3-8, a resurrection with form and substance. And finally, Paul's logic implies an ontological link between the resurrection of Christ and the general resurrection of those who are 'in Christ'. This becomes explicit in verse 21 when he introduces a parallel between Adam and Christ, giving the title ἄνθρωπος to both. It is through an ἄνθρωπος that the resurrection of the dead is made possible (15:21).

After making an argument for future resurrection based on the ontological connection of Christ with humanity, Paul then states the primary thesis of this chapter: 'But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep' (Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων, 1 Cor 15:20). Using this thesis as a springboard, I now discuss the importance of ἀπαρχή in Paul's teaching on resurrection and new creation. Many scholars have noted the relevance of this term for understanding Pauline eschatology and its prominence here as a prelude to one of the most densely constructed eschatological texts in the Pauline corpus (15:23-28).⁷⁶ Its placement here, immediately after

⁷⁵ White, "Cosmology", 103. See also J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 135-81; D. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 104-8.

⁷⁶ See Paul's usage of this term in Rom 8:23 and 11:16, which parallels the use of ἀραβόν as applied to the Spirit for example in 2 Cor 1:22 and 5:5. For a discussion on the centrality of this passages, see the very important work of Beker, *Triumph*, 135-81.

a discussion of the resurrection of ‘dead ones’, supports an alignment between Paul’s notion of resurrection and prevailing Jewish concepts that envisioned ‘one’ corporate resurrection. The work of M. C. de Boer coheres with White and Beker as he outlines the rich Jewish cultic symbolism of ἀπαρχή: ‘[It] is an image derived from the Old Testament where it denotes the first portion of the crop (or flock) which is offered in thanksgiving to God. As such, the term signifies the pledge of the remainder and, concomitantly, the assurance of a full harvest. . . . [It] symbolizes the first instalment and that part which includes, as by synecdoche, the whole’.⁷⁷ Jewish notions of resurrection were also linked with a renewed outpouring of the Spirit and restored creation (e.g., Ezek 36:16-35; 37:12-14; cf. Matt 27:52; James 5:7).⁷⁸ In Paul’s writings both of these themes likewise occur together (e.g. Rom 4:17; Rom 8:23).

First Corinthians 15:23-28, called by Lindemann ‘a little apocalyptic drama’, succinctly encapsulates the orderly unfolding of God’s new work in Christ as it relates to the cosmos. This passage includes the unfolding of Christ (οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ), the Kingdom (ἡ βασιλεία), the powers that enslave (ἀρχή, ἐξουσία, δύναμις, θάνατος), and ultimately all things (τὰ πάντα).⁷⁹ Drawing upon key OT texts (Ps 8:7; 110:1; Isa 25:8), Paul envisages the current reign of the resurrected Christ as the unifying matrix from which unfolds the apocalyptic plan of God.

This striking eschatological passage includes several elements which inform the questions guiding this study. First, the intermediate reign of Christ and the conditions set out for the *telos* indicate the necessity (δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν) of the present ongoing work of Christ in the world and in the consummation of a future reality that presupposes the ongoing existence of the old reality (ὅταν παραδιδῶ τὴν βασιλείαν). Second, the passage indicates that there will be an apocalyptic destruction of sorts, yet one that is limited in scope. As I suggest in chapter two, καταργέω denotes ‘to render inoperative’ or ‘to cease efficacy’.⁸⁰ That which is to be rendered inoperative is, however, limited to those principalities in the world that

⁷⁷ M. C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death. Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (JSNTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 109.

⁷⁸ W. Schrage, “Schöpfung und Neuschöpfung in Kontinuität und Diskontinuität bei Paulus,” *Evangelische Theologie* 65, no. 4 (2005): 245–59; McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 41–45; White, “Cosmology,” 103.

⁷⁹ A. Lindemann, “Paulus und die korinthische Eschatologie. Zur These von einer ‘Entwicklung’ im paulinischen Denken,” *NTS* 37 (1991): 373–89 (383).

⁸⁰ *BAGD*, 525-26.

oppose the purposes of God (ἀρχή, ἐξουσία, δύναμις, θάνατος, cf. Eph 1:20-23; 6:12).⁸¹

Thiselton nicely asserts the implications of this Pauline teaching:

Since Christ **died and has been raised**, it remains part of his entailed exaltation to “see through” the consequences of his saving, atoning, and victorious work for the crumbling away not only of individual sin and guilt, but of the hugely serious structural and corporate evil which holds the alienated world under its sway as a consequence of its turning away from God the source of love, justice, and life in illusory self-sufficiency. It is important, however, to recognize that since God and Christ as Lord are “One,” this emphasis is not upon a “discontinuation” of Christ’s Lordship as such, but upon its culmination within the terms of its purpose for this world and Christ’s kingdom here.⁸²

The rendering inoperative of the powers that enslave the creation and thwart the intention and goal of God is a precondition for the *telos* when Christ will hand over the kingdom to God (εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ). The intermediate reign of Christ extends until this goal is complete: ‘when all things (τὰ πάντα) will be subjected to Christ . . . so that God may be all in all (ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν παῶσιν)’, 15:28). The fact that the kingdom is to be handed back to God coupled with the emphatic repetition of ‘all things’ (τὰ πάντα; cf. Phil 3:21) in these verses together eliminates any notion of an apocalyptic cosmic destruction of the world that limits the restoration to only humanity. According to M. de Boer’s study on Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, this text fits precisely within the broader Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, which was not fundamentally concerned with anthropological salvation (which was taken for granted) but with how God was going to deal with the realm of evil within the cosmos: ‘Anthropological motifs find expression only in relation to this saving action [God’s sovereignty over a world that has become the realm of evil on a cosmic scale]’.⁸³ The passage from 1 Corinthians thus comports with Rom 8:19-25 in that both affirm that the enslaved creation will in some form experience restoration and liberation through Jesus Christ, the reigning sovereign Lord of all (1 Cor 10:26).⁸⁴

⁸¹ Eph 1:20-23 especially includes a high ecclesiology: καὶ πάντα ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοῦς πόδας αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ.

⁸² Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1,231. Thiselton’s emphasis.

⁸³ M. C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death. Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (JSNTSup, Vol 22; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 39–91 (esp 39).

⁸⁴ The apocalyptic notion of two ages is discussed in §2.2.2.b. See for example, Isa 65:17-19; Rev 21:1-8; also 2 *Esdras* 7:50; 112-115; 8.1; 2 *Enoch* 66:6; 2 *Baruch* 15:7-8; 44:8-15. See also J. Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology* (London: SCM, 1996), 259–320.

3.3 Implications & Conclusion

This chapter concludes by reflecting on a primary question of this chapter: *What are the principles of relatedness that Paul draws between Christ, believers, and creation how might those principles be extended to Christian ecotheological questions?* The cumulative result of this theological, historical, literary, linguistic, and semantic inquiry into 1 Cor 8:6 and 10:26 is the revelation of at least three distinct ways that Paul's Christology has direct or indirect implications for ethics and, by way of extension, ecotheology (which I will discuss more fully in chapter six): Paul's inclusion of Jesus Christ within the *Shema*, his reinterpretation of Jewish cosmology, and his establishment of the law of Christ by which new ethical judgments are to be made.

Structurally, the placement of 1 Cor 8:6 and 10:26 near the beginning and end of the most lengthy sustained pericope in the Pauline corpus provides a distinct christological framework for Paul's theological and ethical formulations. As the earliest redrawing of Jewish monotheism, 1 Cor 8:6 unfolds the closest possible identification of the one Lord Jesus Christ with the one God. Yet just as this text demonstrates a redrawing of the theological teaching of the *Shema*, it also demonstrates a redrawing of the cosmological matrix. By asserting that Jesus Christ is the mediator of originating creation, a conceptual redrawing of the Jewish cosmological framework occurs. As I have already suggested, this is *not* a peripheral feature of this text but, rather, it forms the heart of Pauline Christology. Not only is 1 Cor 8:6 the first NT text to make this claim -- this alone makes it extraordinarily noteworthy -- but it enables Paul to redraw the conceptual *ethical map* of the Corinthians, *who themselves have remarkably been subsumed within this cosmological formulation*. By establishing that God has created all things through Jesus Christ, which is affirmed by his citation of Ps 24:1 'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it', Paul places himself and his readers within a broader matrix of relationships where the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over 'all things' trumps any notion of the independent nature or neutrality of believers' independent actions. This is the final and critical christological development of this text. Having originally come from God through Christ, and now through Christ back to God, the church is grafted into a new eschatological relationship with God *and the world*.

In regard to this theme in the OT, T. Fretheim states, 'This relational perspective means that God's sovereignty is understood, not in terms of absolute divine control, but as a

sovereignty that gives power over to the created for the sake of a relationship of integrity. . . . [thus] what creatures do with the gifts they have been given will *make a difference to God*.⁸⁵ The sovereignty of Christ thus becomes the theological foundation from which Paul articulates the interrelatedness of ‘all things’ and the consequential ethical imperatives that result from this interrelatedness. Paul places considerable responsibility on believers to reflect carefully on how their actions impact other participants within this cosmic web, strongly implying that the ordering of human life within the creation is important.

This text also more particularly binds one’s knowledge of the creative agency and sovereign lordship of Jesus Christ with the calling of redeemed humanity, the church, to participate in the restoration of the creation back towards its proper direction: the glorification of God. This theocentric climax is where Paul concludes his three-chapter discourse. His final word to the Corinthians is an exhortation to a life shaped by doxology: ‘So, whether you eat or drink, or *whatever you do*, do all to the glory of God’ (10:31-11.1). Such a sweeping exhortation should both facilitate the community’s awareness of their own interrelatedness with all things and cultivate a humility and appreciation for creation as an expression of divine grace and gift.

Just as 1 Cor 8:6 and 10:26 affirm Christ as the central mediator of the original creation and the ongoing lordship of Christ over creation, 1 Cor 15:20-28 likewise places Christ as the mediator of the eschatological climax of creation. The lordship of Jesus Christ is the means whereby the entire created order will be directed toward God in the eschaton. Paul introduces this eschatological text by going back to the first creation narrative (1 Cor 15:21-22), thus binding the first creation with the new life that Christ has inaugurated through his death and resurrection. This connection between redemption and creation presupposes that God’s purposes in Christ were already evident prior to the act of creation, an act in which Christ was actively involved. Ultimately, the new creation will be fully manifest when ‘all things are subjected’ to the Son of God, Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:27-28); then all of creation will reach the intended goal and ‘God will be all in all’. What appears central to Paul’s theology here is that the restoration and redemption of creation is dependent on the lordship of Jesus Christ. These chapters have insight to inform ecological reflection.

Chapter Four

Christ as Image of God and as Adam

4.1 Introduction

As I have demonstrated, Paul identifies Christ as the mediator of the original creation (1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15) and as the one who in the *telos* will hand over all things to God (1 Cor 15:20-28); indeed, for Paul Jesus Christ is the mediator of the creative and redemptive work of God. I have also shown that Paul's use of new creation terminology (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:16) embeds the Christ event within an apocalyptic framework whereby he claims that God in Christ has inaugurated an entirely new era to which the Spirit and church attest. Paul, however, adds more nuance to the relationship between Christ, creation, and the church by making other important intertextual connections. In this chapter, I outline two signature motifs Paul draws from Gen 1 and 2: *the image of God* and the figure of *Adam*.¹ The following question guides my study in this chapter: *How does Paul interpret and apply the first creation in light of the framework of the new creation in Christ?*

Paul is the only NT author to incorporate these particular image of God and Adam creation motifs into his theology and a careful study of how he develops these connections is important for several reasons.² First, Paul weaves these themes within key christological texts, underscoring the fact that he interprets the Christ event with the aid of primal creation categories. Second, a study of these texts provides a fascinating window into Paul's intertextual hermeneutic. And third, in these texts Paul links Christ with creation in a unique way that strongly suggests an incarnational theology. These three things collectively become central to Pauline ecclesiology as M. Hooker notes: 'The idea of Christ's incarnation is always linked with the destiny of believers'.³

⁸⁵ Fretheim, *World*, 272.

¹ By "signature," I simply mean that Paul is the only NT author to use these creation motifs.

² James 3:9 uses the phrase ὁμοίωσις θεοῦ in reference to humanity and Hebrews 1:3 uses the term *χαρακτήρ* in reference to Christ. The latter may infer more of an exact likeness or outward appearance. See for example, D. Steenburg, "The Worship of Adam and Christ as the Image of God," *JSNT* 39 (1990): 95–109 (99); W. Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3rd; revised by Frederick William Danker; Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1077–78.

³ M. Hooker, "Adam Redivivus: Philippians 2 Once More," in *The Old Testament in the New Testament* (ed. S. Moyise; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 220–34 (223).

I have organized this chapter into three main sections. The first section provides a brief overview of image of God language in the OT (§4.2). This then leads into the second major section, which outlines the four ways that Paul appropriates image of God language from Gen 1:26-27 for his Christology and ecclesiology (§4.3). The chapter concludes with an analysis of Paul's juxtaposition of Adam with Christ in which I focus my attention on 1 Cor 15:20-21 and 15:42-49 rather than Rom 5:12-21 (§4.4).⁴ A study of these texts further helps clarify and support my thesis that creation categories are woven into Paul's theology and that recognition of this allows for creative application to ecotheology.

4.2 Image of God in Primal Creation:

Divine Likeness in the Creation Narrative (Gen 1:26-28)

The OT provides a rather modest treatment of what has become the theologically weighty concept of humanity's creation according to the image and likeness of God.⁵ Furthermore, the OT passages that reference this concept (Gen 1:27; 5:1-2; 9:6, εἰκὼν, צֶלֶם; ὁμοίωσις, דְמוּת) do not develop at length what specific anthropological implications might be drawn from this designation. Nevertheless, from at least the Second Temple Period to the modern day, Jewish and Christian theologians have been fascinated with the *imago Dei* concept and have deemed it a central basis for biblical anthropology. The prominent canonical placement of the principal text Gen 1:26-28 near the climax of the Priestly creation narrative has prompted a scholarly interest that has resulted in an enormous corpus of secondary literature which spans two millennia and crosses two major world religions.⁶

⁴ This methodological decision was made for two reasons, one practical and the other theological. Within the limitations of a dissertation of this nature, every relevant text cannot be adequately incorporated, and I therefore made the judgment that the Adam-Christ typology of 1 Cor 15 was more fruitful than the typology in Rom 5 for the purposes of this study. This decision was based on the more explicit and complicated weaving of primal creation themes and scriptural citations into the logic and theology of Paul which is to be found in 1 Cor 15.

⁵ Because my primary focus for this study is on the NT usage of the phrase *imago Dei* and because the LXX appears to be the text from which Paul cites, I include only the Greek references within the body of this study. I discuss the significance of Hebrew words when applicable. Throughout this chapter, I will reference the concept with the theological phrase *imago Dei*.

⁶ For a review of interpretive options, see for example, G. A. Jónsson, *The Image of God: Genesis 1:26–28 in a Century of Old Testament Research* (trans. L. Svendsen; ConBot; Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1988); W. S. Towner, "Clones of God: Genesis 1:26–28 and the Image of God in the Hebrew Bible," *Interpretation*, October 2005, 341–56; Schuele A., "Made in the Image of God," *ZAW* 117 (2005): 1–20; P. Niskanen, "The Poetics of Adam: The Creation of אָדָם In the Image of אֱלֹהִים," *JBL* 128, no. 3 (2009): 417–36; G. H. Van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and*

Within the broader narrative, the creative impulse of God is described in various *modes* of operation. Creation is brought forth through the spoken word (λέγω, Gen 1:1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28; cf. Ps 33:9, 148:5) and through the creative act (ποιέω, Gen 1:1, 7, 21, 25, 27), whereas order is established through separation (διαχωρίζω, Gen 1:4, 6b; cf. Ps 33:6, 9; 147:15-18; 148:3-5; Is 48:13; 55:10-11). Also, a variety of common features parallel the creation of humans and animals. They are both created on the sixth day, and both are given vegetation for food. Using identical terminology, God blesses humanity and the animals, commanding them to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth (1:22; cf. 1:28).

However, in spite of these common features, the creation of humans in Gen 1:26-28 is set apart through specific vocabulary, structure, and grammar, all of which converge to alert the reader to the distinctiveness of humanity within the created order. Only here is God's spoken word (εἶπεν ὁ θεός, 1:26) joined with a plural subject (ποιήσωμεν, 1:26) and this union is further elaborated through a threefold repetition of God's creation of humanity (ἐποίησεν, 1:27 [3x]). In further distinction from the animal realm, we read that humanity is uniquely created according to the image and likeness of God (καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν, Gen 1:26-27), directly addressed by God (καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ὑμῖν, 1:29), and given dominion over the rest of creation (1:29-30; cf. 2:15). These creative acts precipitate the culminating declaration, 'God saw all things that he had made, and behold, it was very good' (1:31).⁷

Although a variety of interpretive options have been suggested for the phrase *imago Dei*, the text itself directly outlines two correlative and related possibilities. First, a functional interpretation is inherent within the command for humans to 'rule' (ἄρχω, אָרַך) and 'to have dominion' (κατακυριεύω, שָׁרַף); and second, there is a focus on the relational aspect of humanity as beings created for community with God, other humans, and the rest of creation. Without excluding other interpretations, the strength of these two renderings of *imago Dei* is that both are prominent in Gen 1:26-28 and both comport with the features of the broader narrative.

Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity (WUNT, Vol 232; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); J. R. Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005).

⁷ The Yahwist counterpart to this narrative utilizes different terminology. In that account, Adam has his origin

Much has already been written to affirm these readings,⁸ and although I have not included a comprehensive over-view of the relevant grammatical, lexical, historical, and contextual issues here, the major strengths of each reading are presented. The importance of this material becomes especially relevant as I turn to the NT references to the *imago Dei*, references that also seem to align with, and further develop, these interpretations. The first theme, often referred to as the kingly or dominion interpretation, is grounded on the repeated command to ‘rule over’ (1:26, 28) and ‘subdue’ (1:28) the earth. The close proximity of these verbs with the designation of humans in the image and likeness of God provides a clear literary referent in support of this interpretation. The verb *רָדָה* is often linked with kingship and royal functions in the OT (e.g., 1 Kgs 4:24; Psa 72:8; 110:2; Isa 14:6; Eze 34:4), reflecting the historical and culture milieu of ancient Israel. For these reasons, this reading is overwhelmingly supported among OT biblical scholars today.⁹ For example, W. Towner concludes: ‘Clearly it [Gen 1:26-28] means that God is conferring a kingly status upon ‘*ādām* and invites humankind to rule over the rest of the living creatures as God’s viceroy. “God is a power-sharing, not a power-hoarding God”’.¹⁰

This view has come under scrutiny given that *רָדָה* can have negative connotations, such as exploitation and domination. Unfortunately, within the history of the church, Gen 1:26-28 has been read in ways that have resulted in abusive domination, particularly in the relationship between humanity and the earth.¹¹ Nevertheless, James Limburg, among others, highlights texts like Psa 72, which portray ideal kingship, to challenge such abusive interpretations as distortions of the text.¹² Here, the kingly rule results in prosperity (72:3),

from the soil and divine breath, drawing attention to the dual source of human life (Gen 2:7).

⁸ The relational interpretation is articulated persuasively by T. E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), and the dominion interpretation is summarized by Middleton, *Image*, 50–55.

⁹ The following are representative works that support this reading, Middleton, *Image*, 50–55; J. Limburg, “The Responsibility of Royalty: Genesis 1–11 and the Care of the Earth,” *Word and World* 11 (1991): 14–30; G. M. Landes, *Creation in the Old Testament* (ed. B. W. Anderson; IRT; Philadelphia/London: Fortress/SPCK, 1984), 135–51. Adam’s kingship over the creation was also a topic within Second Temple Jewish literature; see for example *2 Enoch* 31.3: “I wished to create another world, so that everything could be subjected to Adam on earth, to rule and reign over it.”

¹⁰ Towner, “Clones,” 347. Internally citing T. E. Fretheim, “Creator, Creature, and Co-Creation in Genesis 1–2,” *WW, SupS I* (1992): 11–20, esp. 15.

¹¹ Poignantly identified by White among others. See J. L. White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–7.

¹² Limburg, “Royalty”. See Second Temple Jewish texts that affirm this basic reading of the text, for example, *4 Ezra* 3:6; 6:46, 54; *Sibylline Oracles*, frag 3; 4Q381, frag 1:6-7.

righteousness, and peace (72:7), and it is further characterized by a concern for the poor, needy, and disadvantaged (72:12-13). This ideal reign seems more consonant with the tone and contours of Gen 1, where violence and abusive rulership is foreign to the narrative.¹³ The verb כָּבַשׁ is more general and less specific to royal functions and occurs in OT contexts where defeat and enslavement of enemies, human beings, and/or land are in view (e.g., 2 Sam 8:11; Esther 7:8; Jer 34:11, 16; Neh 5:5; Josh 18:1).¹⁴ Middleton helpfully identifies the context of Gen 1:26-28 as reflective of an agrarian setting, and this observation suggests that כָּבַשׁ in the OT generally has a more neutral sense, particularly in Gen 1:26-28:

In Genesis 1:28 *kābaš* refers, minimally, to the right of humanity to spread over the earth and make it their home. Since the earth has already sprouted with vegetation in 1:12 and plants for human consumption are mentioned in 1:29, *kābaš* may even anticipate human cultivation of the earth by agriculture. Indeed, both the domestication of animals (represented by *rādā*) and cultivation of the earth (represented by *kābaš*) are fundamental human functions that become quite explicit later in the primeval history. The use of the verbs *rādā* and *kābaš* thus suggests that the characteristic human task or role vis-à-vis both the animal kingdom and the earth requires a significant exercise of communal power, and the primacy of *rādā* paints the human vocation with a distinctly royal hue.¹⁵

T. Fretheim likewise acknowledges the implication that *imago Dei* may serve to indicate a kingly role for humanity, yet he describes this usage more as a subsidiary or complementary feature to the broader overtones of the relationality between God, humanity, and the creation; he identifies that these interrelationships are inherent within the rulership motif.¹⁶ This leads Fretheim to suggest that God's initiative obligates humans to participate fully in the continuation of God's creative process:

God certainly takes the initiative in distributing this power to the creatures and God is the one who invites their participation in the use of power. . . . Human beings are not only created *in* the image of God (this is who they are); they are also created to *be* the image of God (this is their role in the world). The latter means that God really does give over the care of the world to the one created in the divine image; come what may. . . .¹⁷

Avoiding the use of dominion language, Fretheim prefers *vocation* and *co-creative* terminology, noting that an implication of the divine blessing 'is a word of empowerment, of

¹³ This is even reflected in the vegetarian state of human existence.

¹⁴ Middleton, *Image*, 51–52; Fretheim, *World*, 51–53.

¹⁵ Middleton, *Image*, 52.

¹⁶ Fretheim, *World*, 19–60. Trinitarian theology tends to identify this with the communal nature of God as three persons. See for example, F. Watson, *Text, Church and World: Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 144–50.

divine power-sharing with the creature'.¹⁸ Fretheim likewise highlights various dimensions of the relationships present in the text. Humanity as 'male and female' are relational, social beings, and they thereby correspond to the social nature of God.¹⁹ As Watson suggests, 'Gen. 1 does not present the world as the simple production of the divine speech-act, but employs a much more complex, incipiently trinitarian conceptuality'.²⁰

In keeping with these interpretative trajectories, I propose that central to the *imago Dei* designation is the relational capacity that humanity has with God, with the human race, and with creation. These relationships are best understood within the conceptual framework of the kingly rulership idea of ancient Israel. Any abusive or domineering connotations of rulership are thus to be rejected because the context of the narrative favors a rendering of 'ideal' kingship, as seen in such texts as Ps 72. As beings created in the image of God, all humanity is given a unique participatory function to care for the creation; through this exercise of rulership, humans visibly reflect the creator God who is otherwise beyond all visible images.²¹ This uniquely establishes humanity as an extension of the Creator yet, as created beings, also maintains a close symbiosis between humanity and the rest of creation. As suggested by C. Gunton, 'the human creature is created in *continuity* with the other creatures, yet is in some way, under God, also above and responsible for them'.²² In the following pages, I will demonstrate how these themes become especially pertinent to Paul's application of image of God language to Jesus Christ.

Another feature of the creation narrative is that the creation of humanity immediately *precedes* God's third and final blessing. For the first time in the narrative God blesses *and sanctifies* a part of creation that is neither breathing nor living, namely the seventh day (καὶ ἠλόγησεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἑβδόμην καὶ ἡγίασεν αὐτήν, 2:3). Whereas the creation of human beings on day six functions as the climax of God's creative act in the material realm,

¹⁷ Fretheim, *World*, 49. Italics in the original.

¹⁸ Fretheim, *World*, 50.

¹⁹ This relationality is especially present in the plural form "let us. . ." (Gen 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; cf. 9:6). Fretheim, *World*, 55.

²⁰ Watson, *Text*, 151.

²¹ See for example, Fretheim, *World*, 29–67. This reading does not however rule out other possibilities inherent in this designation (e.g., the human ability to worship God).

²² C. E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (ESCT; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 19; Watson, *Text*, 148–49.

the narrative culminates with ‘God *finishing* his work’ through the incorporation of Sabbath — sacred time — into the very order of creation (cf. Ex 16:23; 20:8-11; 31:17).²³

There are at least two theological possibilities suggested by the inclusion of the Sabbath within the creation account in this way, and both have implications for my study.²⁴ First, as Michael Fishbane proposes, ‘The completed work of creation becomes the new context for all that will follow in the biblical narrative. The Sabbath, at the end of the work of creation, also stands at the beginning of all new and future creations’.²⁵ On a slightly different trajectory, Paul Santmire points out the importance of Sabbath within Judaism and suggests that its placement here in the creation narrative presupposes that all of creation, especially human beings, is directed toward the worship of God: ‘The human creature, in turn, appears to be called to a special vocation of worship, among all other creatures, which also praise God, although they are, in a certain sense, mute’.²⁶ Both authors suggest that there exists within the order of creation an eschatological directedness driven by a theocentric goal: all creation is to glorify God.

Apart from the two restatements of Gen 1:26-27 in Gen 5:1-2 and 9:6, the phrase *image of God* does not appear elsewhere in the OT as a descriptor of human beings. Psalm 8, which affirms that humans have a unique relationship within and toward the creation, is perhaps the closest parallel.²⁷ The LXX translation of this passage describes humans as having been endowed with δόξα καὶ τιμή (Ps 8:6). The translation of כבוד with δόξα heightens the divine connection with humanity given that in the Hebrew Bible כבוד is almost exclusively reserved for Yahweh.²⁸ Psalm 8 also reflects the symbolic and conceptual world of Gen 1 in that both appear to apply royal terminology to humanity.

²³ See the very important discussion of this sacred time in J. Moltmann, *God in Creation: The Gifford Lectures 1984–1985: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (trans. M. Kohl; England: SCM, 1985), 276–90.

²⁴ This theme will be particularly incorporated into the conclusion of this study in chapter six.

²⁵ M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Select Texts* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1988), 9; Fretheim, *World*, 62; Moltmann, *God*, 279.

²⁶ H. P. Santmire, *Nature Reborn: The Ecological and Cosmic Promise of Christian Theology* (Theology and the Sciences; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 38.

²⁷ Paul alludes to Ps 8:6 in at least two passages, 1 Cor 15:27 and Phil 3:21; cf. Eph 1:22. Other texts with semantic resonance include Ezek 1:26, 28.

²⁸ The Septuagint translation provides a clear example of how the classic Greek usage of a term was transformed by theological interests. See L.H. Brockington, “The Septuagintal Background to the New Testament Use of Doxa,” in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (ed. D.E. Nineham; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), 1–8. See Kittel, “δόξα,” *TDNT* 2:232-255, esp. 239-247.

Just as the OT does not develop the *imago Dei* theme further, it also does not suggest that the image of God in humanity was somehow lost as a result of the so-called fall narrative of Gen 3. The restatement of Gen 1:26-27 in Gen 5:1-2 and 9:6 implies that the author assumes that human beings maintain the image of God designation.²⁹ However, speculation that the *imago Dei* has been lost emerges within Second Temple Jewish literature where extended commentary is given to the creation and fall narratives. Several scholarly works have studied the Second Temple reflections on the creation narrative at length, and when these works are pertinent to the Pauline texts studied here, I incorporate them into this study.³⁰ What particularly sets Paul apart from all of his Second Temple Jewish contemporaries is his rendering of these motifs within a decidedly christocentric framework.

4.3 Image of God in Paul: Introduction to Paul's Reading of Gen 1:26-28

As noted throughout this study, Paul alludes to, incorporates, and directly cites creation themes significantly more frequently than any other NT author. This especially becomes apparent with the study of the image of God and Adam motifs; these texts provide excellent examples of how Paul's Christology is shaped by his reading of the Genesis creation narrative. In relation to the phrase image of God, no NT author directly quotes Gen 1:26-27 nor specifies what the *imago Dei* designation means. It is of interest that Paul and James are the only NT authors who draw upon this tradition — with Paul exclusively citing εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ in three texts (1 Cor 11:7; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15³¹).³² In addition to these texts, Paul extends image language into other texts, resulting in a re-appropriation of this first creation concept. These references can be organized into four categories: man as image of God (1 Cor

²⁹ For a summary of various options in this inquiry, see Moltmann, *God*, 229–34; Also see J. F. Kilner, “Humanity in God’s Image: Is the Image Really Damaged?” *JETS* 53, no. 3 (September 2010): 601–17.

³⁰ Representative scholarly works include J. R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (JSP; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988); Van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology*; J. Jervell, *Imago Dei. Gen. 1, 26f. im Spätjudentum, im der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (FRLANT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1960).

³¹ As I have already noted in chapter one, even though Colossians may be the product of a later Pauline school, it is included here because of its importance for this study. Within the scholarship conducted on Col 1:15-20, it is widely believed to be an early creed and/or hymn. See §1.1.2.

³² In the three texts cited here, Paul makes slight modifications to the original phrasing that are outlined below. In the Pauline corpus, εἰκόων and its cognate forms appear in Rom 1:23, 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18, 4:4; 1 Cor 11:7, 15:49 (2x); Col 1:15, 3:10.

11:7), universal humanity in the image of the first-born earthy man (1 Cor 15:47-49), Christ as the image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15), and the church as the image of Christ (Rom 8:28-30; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:9-10). In each case, though to different degrees, *imago Dei* is enveloped into a new christological framework. Exploration of these four approaches is the primary focus of this chapter.³³

Regarding NT references to Adam, outside of isolated cases in Luke and Jude (Lk 3:38; Jude 1:14), Paul is the only NT writer to refer to Adam. In each instance, Paul carefully weaves Adam motifs into extended theological discussions in order to explain the implications of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:42-50; cf. 1 Tim 2:13-14).³⁴ Although Romans and 1 Corinthians have differing emphases, both develop a typology between Adam and Jesus Christ that sharpens both the distinctions and the similarities between Christ and humanity.³⁵ Although scholarly work on the *imago Dei* has been expansive, there has been comparatively less written specifically on the Pauline theology of divine image as it correlates to Gen 1:26-27. This is due in part to the fact that scholars have primarily used a history-of-religions approach in studying these passages, and that approach has grounding Paul's εἰκών language within the Hellenistic wisdom tradition, particularly in the traditions of Philo and Wisdom. Scholars regularly correlate Philo's description of wisdom as the 'beginning', 'image', and 'vision of God' (ἀρχὴν καὶ εἰκόνα καὶ ὄρασιν θεοῦ κέκληκε, *Leg. All.* 1.43) with image references in Paul.³⁶ Similarly, Wisdom 7:26 speaks of wisdom as the 'image of his [God's] goodness'. An alternate source for Paul's

³³ In addition to these texts, Phil 2:6 likely carries a similar semantic meaning, with the phrase ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων applied to Christ. Space limitations prevent me from discussing this text here but the insightful work of Hooker affirms its semantic and theological affinities with 2 Cor 4:4 and Col 1:15. I selected these texts because of their use of the specific term εἰκών. BAGD, 659; Behn, "εἰκών," TDNT 4:750-752; M. Hooker, "Adam"; D. Steenburg, "The Case Against the Synonymy of MORPHE and EIKON," JSNT 34 (1988): 77-86.

³⁴ Eve receives only one reference in Paul (2 Cor 11:3; cf. 1 Tim 2:13).

³⁵ Secondary works on these texts are substantial. Early works include, K. Barth, *Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5* (trans. T. A. Smail; Edinburgh, London: Oliver & Boyd Ltd., 1956); E. Brandenburger, *Adam und Christus: Exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Römer 5, 12-21* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1962); 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 America, 1927); N. A. Dahl, "Christ, Creation and the Church," in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (eds W. D. Davies and D. Daube; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 422-43.

³⁶ According to Philo, it is wisdom "through whom the universe came into existence," *Fug.* 109. Cf. *1 Enoch* 42.1f; Sir 24.7, 11. See also Steenburg, "Image," 101-2.

εἰκόν language has been proposed by Seyoon Kim who argues that Paul has the Damascus Road encounter in view.³⁷ Although not as prevalent today, some scholars suggest that the ‘Gnostic’ notion of *Urmensch*-redeemer underlies the Pauline texts.³⁸

In recent years, the salience of these readings has been countered by the work of Colin Gunton, Francis Watson, Stanley Grenz, and, most recently, Gordon Fee, Ian McFarland, Douglas Moo, and Sean M. McDonough.³⁹ For example, in relation to the image language in Col 1:15-20, McDonough calls into question the long-held assumption that Wisdom motifs influence the author of this hymn: ‘The description of Christ as the “image of the invisible God” is also a dubious path to Wisdom. . . . Creation imagery pervades the letter and arguably forms one of the most important strands in Paul’s argument’.⁴⁰ While affirming that Wisdom may be one of the traditions underlying Paul, Moo suggests, ‘The language of “image of God” naturally draws our attention to the foundational text of Gen 1:26-28 and “image of God” language in both the Old Testament and Judaism was more often related to humans than to anything else’.⁴¹ Each scholar convincingly demonstrates that Gen 1:26-28 is the *most likely* passage shaping Paul’s use of image language and that the creation narrative is in the foreground of the corresponding Pauline texts.⁴² It should be further added that even if one could demonstrate that Paul was aware of or dependent on Philo or Wisdom, these authors are themselves essentially reflecting on the *primary* text of Gen 1:26-27.⁴³ If this assessment

³⁷ S. Kim, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (WUNT, Vol 24; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1981), 193–268.

³⁸ See for example, F. W. Eltester, *Eikon im Neuen Testament* (BZNW; Berlin: A. Topelmann, 1958), 130–40.

³⁹ C. E. Gunton, *Christ and Creation* (The Didsbury Lectures 1990; Carlisle/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Eerdmans, 1992); F. Watson, *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 137–53; S. J. Grenz, “Jesus as the Imago Dei: Image-of-God Christology and the Non-Linear Linearity of Theology,” *JETS* 47, no. 4 (2004): 617–28; G. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 317–25; I. A. McFarland, *The Divine Image: Envisioning the Invisible God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005); D. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (The Pillar New Testament Commentary; Nottingham: Apollos, 2008), 113–20; S. M. McDonough, *Christ as Creator: Origins of a New Testament Doctrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 172–91.

⁴⁰ McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 178, 180. See also the convincing counter to Wisdom as the source behind these texts in Fee, *Christology*, 317–25; Steenburg, “Image”.

⁴¹ Moo, *Colossians*, 113.

⁴² The scholarly shift toward emphasizing Gen 1:26-28 has emerged from two related developments: a resurgence of theological readings of Scripture coupled with a growing recognition of the intertextuality between the OT Scripture and the Pauline corpus. Additionally, εἰκόν occurs in texts where creation themes are addressed, with 2 Cor 3:18 and 4:4 having the weakest direct link to the creation narrative. See my discussion of these matters in §4.3.3.a.

⁴³ Steenburg suggests that Gen 1:26-28 and Wisdom should likely not be read as two distinct traditions. See Steenburg, “Image,” 101.

is accurate, then the Pauline texts where the image of God occurs become exceedingly important. Not only does Paul cite and/or allude to Gen 1:26 more than *all other biblical authors put together*, but his reflections stand as the first post-resurrection interpretation of this seminal text. In agreement with a growing number of scholars, I concur with Watson who proposes that a biblical theology of the *imago Dei* is incomplete without full consideration of the Pauline corpus.⁴⁴

4.3.1 Man as Image and Glory of God (1 Cor 11:2-16)

This inquiry begins with the one text in Paul that most directly applies Gen 1:26-27 to humanity yet curiously limits the designation to male persons. The difficulties of 1 Cor 11:2-16 are well known among scholars and arise from numerous exegetical, historical, and grammatical issues, which for the most part are set aside here.⁴⁵ The focus in this study is more narrowly to understand Paul's statement 'For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man' (1 Cor 11:7) within the broader literary and theological contours of this text. I propose that Paul's reading of the first creation narrative points to a new reality 'in the Lord' that alters what can be said on the basis of Gen 1 alone. I further suggest that the meaning of this cryptic text comes to sharper focus when read within the broader theological categories of creation and new creation as understood within an apocalyptic framework of old and new age.

Within a larger discussion of issues related to head-covering practices in worship (1 Cor 11:2-16), Paul includes a didactic unit (11:3b-12) that juxtaposes motifs from the first creation account (11:7-9) with motifs of being 'in the Lord' (11:11-12), which I consider short-hand for existence within the new creation. This central didactic portion contrasts with the introduction (11:2-3a) and conclusion (11:13-16) by virtue of its exclusive use of third-

⁴⁴ Watson, *Text and Truth*, 282.

⁴⁵ Scholarly works on this text are prolific. Included here is a small selection of books and articles, see especially, A. C. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction Through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); J. Okland, *Women in Their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space* (JSNTSup, Vol 269; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2004); M. J. Lakey, *Image and Glory of God: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 as a Case Study in Bible, Gender and Hermeneutics* (LNTS, Vol 418; New York: T & T Clark, 2010); J. Gundry-Volf, "Gender and Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16: A Study in Paul's Theological Method," in *Evangelium. Schriftauslegung. Kirche. Festschrift für Peter Stuhlmacher* (eds J. Adno, S. Hafemann, and O. J. Hofius; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 151-71; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 482-500; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "1 Corinthians 11.2-16 Once Again," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 265-74.

person pronouns. Conversely, both the introduction and conclusion abound in first- and second-person pronouns. These internal grammatical markers suggest that 11:2-3a and 11:13-16 function as personal commendations that bracket the primary theological didactic unit (outlined below). My attention is limited here to this central unit that when carefully studied helps clarify how Paul reads Gen 1-2 in light of the Christ event.⁴⁶

- v. 7 Ἄνθρωπος μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν
εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων (Gen 1:26)
ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστίν
- v. 8 οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γυναικὸς ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός (Gen 2:18-23)
- v. 9 γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα (Gen 2:8, 21)
- v. 10 διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς
διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους
- v. 11 πλὴν οὔτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρός οὔτε ἄνθρωπος χωρὶς γυναικὸς ἐν κυρίῳ
- v. 12a ὡςπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος διὰ τῆς γυναικὸς
- v. 12b τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

The introductory thesis, that ‘man ought not to cover his head’ (11:7), is supported by a modified reading of Gen 1:26 which states that man exists as the image and glory/reflection of God.⁴⁷

In the related δέ clause, Paul relates woman to the man as ‘his glory/reflection’; this latter point is the thesis developed in the next three verses. First Corinthians 11:8-9 further grounds the woman’s connection with man through the lens of Gen 2:18-23 by first drawing

⁴⁶ This organization is based on the relationship of clauses within the logic of the text. It may reflect a chiasmic pattern, yet such a pattern is not necessarily present. The literary structure presented here closely follows that suggested by G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 493–94. See also W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1 Korinther 6,12–11,16)* (EKK; Benziger: Neukirchener, 1995), 490; Lakey, *Image*, 107–8.

⁴⁷ It is difficult to know the source of this modified citation of Gen 1:26. Of course, the omission of a specific reference to women being created in the image of God does not necessarily mean that Paul did not believe this; it simply means that one cannot demonstrate that Paul believed this from this text. This omission was a point of discussion for some early church authors, see for example, Ambrosiaster, *Liber quaestionum ueteris et noui testamenti* 21 (CSEL 50:47-48), 45.2-3 (CSEL 50:82-83). For further explanation of early Christian discussion of this text see, K. E. Borresen, “God’s Image, Man’s Image? Patristic Interpretation of Gen. 1,27 and 1 Cor. 11,7,” in *The Image of God: Gender Models in Judaeo-Christian Tradition* (ed. K. E. Borresen; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 187–209. See also Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 512–24; A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans/Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), 834–37. The focus here is an analysis of Paul’s juxtaposition of Gen 1-2 with being “in the Lord.”

out the features of the woman’s original ontological connection to him: ‘for man is not derived from woman, but woman out of man’ (11:8). Then Paul identifies man’s incompleteness without the woman: ‘man was not created on account of the woman but the woman on account of man’ (11:9).⁴⁸ Verses 8-9 likely function bilaterally to establish Paul’s earlier thesis that ‘the woman is the glory/reflection of man’ as well as the thesis of verse 10, that ‘the woman ought to have authority upon/on her head on account of the angels’.⁴⁹ In both instances, Paul’s emphasis is on the woman and her connection to her two ‘heads’ — man as her originating ontological κεφαλή (11:3) and her autonomy over her own anatomical κεφαλή. As Hooker, Fee, and others have noted, verse 10 is literarily and theologically central to Paul’s argument.⁵⁰

Establishing the woman’s active authority on/upon her own head leads into three clauses (11:11-12) that through a literary parallelism juxtapose Gen 1-2 (11:8-9) with being ‘in the Lord’ (11:11-12): the former (old) is effectively relativized by the latter (new). The adversative conjunction πλὴν at the beginning of verse 11 (translated as *nevertheless* or *however*) often functions grammatically to signal the most important part of an argument, an

⁴⁸ This antithetical series begins on both accounts by establishing what man is not and then, through contrast, affirming what woman is. These grounds are articulated especially at her point of material and ontological connection to the man (Gen 2:18-23).

⁴⁹ Although a difficult allusion to angels, *Joseph and Aseneth* 15.1-2 may help clarify Paul’s usage in this text and his complicated use of κεφαλή. In the presence of the heavenly man, Aseneth is directed to *remove the veil* because her head is like that of a man (15.1-2). Thus, in this Jewish text, the unveiled head is necessary to receive the blessing of the heavenly messenger. This aligns with how Paul depicts veil coverings in 2 Cor 3:12-18 and 1 Cor 11:7. As G. Theissen observes, “in both cases, he [Paul] starts from the same premises: the uncovered head symbolizes an immediate relationship to God. In both cases, the veil is placed in relationship to the divine glory and image. The man is the glory and image of God and must therefore wear no veil (1 Cor. 11:7). The unveiled Christian sees the glory and image of God (2 Cor. 3:18).” See G. Theissen, *Psychological Aspect of Pauline Theology* (trans. J. Galvin; Philadelphia: T. & T. Clark, 1987), 158. In 1 Cor 11:3-16, most scholars conclude that Paul is directing women to cover their heads with a veil based on some form of social/cultural modesty or alternatively he is concerned with a woman’s hair length. See for example, C. L. Thompson, “Hairstyles Head-Coverings, and St. Paul: Portraits from Roman Corinth,” *BA* 51 (1988): 99–115; Murphy-O’Connor, “Sex”; Schrage, *Korinther*, 492–94; J. Gundry-Volf, “Gender”. Although it is not absolutely clear what directive Paul is giving to the woman, ultimately, Paul teaches that “in the Lord” all things come from God. To conclude, he places the question back to the Corinthians to decide, perhaps suggesting that Paul ultimately considered the matter *adiaphoron*, with the one caveat, that whatever practice was decided upon did not result in contention (11:16).

⁵⁰ The classic work of Hooker has drawn attention to this feature of the text. See M. Hooker, “Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor. XI.10,” *NTS* 10 (1963–64): 410–16. See also Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 518–22; J. Gundry-Volf, “Gender”. For a discussion of the possible chiasmic structure that may heighten the importance of verse 10, see T. P. Shoemaker, “Unveiling of Equality: 1 Corinthians 11:2–16,” *BTB* 17 (1987): 60–63.

exception or ‘something that is contrastingly added for consideration’.⁵¹ By way of comparison (‘*neither is woman without man nor man without woman . . . in the Lord*’) and parallel (‘*just as the woman is out of man so also the man now comes through woman*’), these grammatical addenda function to clarify one’s first creation ordering (11:8-9; Gen 2) in light of one’s new creation standing ‘in the Lord’ (11:11). The final clause subordinates any temporal ordering between man and woman to a theocentric framework where ‘all things have their origin in God’ (11:12b).

By any scholarly judgment, the text remains obscure, without enough background for the modern reader to conclude definitively what underlies Paul’s use of the creation narrative here. Thus, it is difficult to know precisely why Paul adds his cryptic modified version of Gen 1:26 at this juncture of his argument. What is more conclusive, however, is that the literary structure and theological logic of this passage gives priority to the new creation reality of being ‘in the Lord’. Paul’s citation of the original ordering of the man and woman in primordial creation (11:8-9) is eclipsed by a new ordering of the man and woman with a focus on their interdependence, their new standing in Christ, and their ultimate origin in God (11:11-12). Literarily placed between these two readings of creation is the assertion that woman has authority over her head (11:10). This declaration, immediately followed by Paul’s qualifiers, becomes the basis for *how* a woman ought to cover her head. Women are to be covered (11:5), yet their hair, being their δόξα, functions as that covering ‘instead of/in place of an external cloth covering’ (γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν κομᾶ δόξα αὐτῆ ἔστιν; ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται [αὐτῆ] 11:15).⁵²

This same hermeneutic is likely in play in Galatians where Paul states that for those in Christ Jesus, ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male *and* female’ (Gal 3:28). The abrupt break from the neither/nor pattern with ‘male *and* female’ signifies that this is likely a direct quotation from Gen 1:26. If so, then both texts demonstrate that Paul reads Gen 1:26 as a designation pointing forward to an eschatological state in Christ where

⁵¹ BAGD, 826.

⁵² The grammatical construction is *straight forward*, the woman’s hair is given “instead of/in place of an external cloth covering.” See BAGD, 800. See Lakey who interprets Paul in this passage as requiring veils for women. He struggles to fit verse 15 logically into such a reading. Lakey, *Image*, 119–21.

even one's created sexuality is 'no longer'. This does not mean, as some 'Gnostic' interpreters concluded, that an asexual humanity results. Rather, as Judith Gundry clarifies, '[Paul in Galatians 3:28] refers to the adiaphorization of sex difference in a new creation where being male or female is no advantage or disadvantage in relation to God and others'.⁵³

As elsewhere in this letter and in keeping with the first creation narrative (Gen 1:31), Paul concludes this unit by affirming that 'all things have their origin in God' (1 Cor 11:12b; cf. 1 Cor 1:30; 3:21b-23; 8:6; 10:10-26). These observations confirm that origins matter deeply to Paul. Yet as these texts suggest, the epicenter of origins has shifted from 'in the beginning' to 'in the new beginning, in Christ'.⁵⁴

4.3.2 Humanity as Bearing the Image of the Earthy First-Born Man (1 Cor 15:47-49)

This shift of epicenter whereby the Christ event redefines the present and future is demonstrated in Paul's use of Adam as a template to inform his Christology, anthropology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. In 1 Cor 15, Paul addresses a Corinthian misunderstanding related to the corporeal dimension of the resurrection by asking, 'With what kind of body do they come?' (15:35) and then responding by way of an Adam/Christ typology, juxtaposing the bearing of 'the image of the one of dust' with the bearing of 'the image of the one of heaven'. I examine these texts more precisely within the section on Adam Christology below (§4.4), yet here I primarily concentrate on Paul's use of creation motifs in 1 Cor 15:47-49, particularly his parallel use of εικόν.

A clausal outline of 1 Cor 15:47-49 is included for reference:

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 47. | ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος | ἐκ γῆς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. | χοϊκός, |
| 48. | οἶος ὁ χοϊκός, καὶ οἶος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, | τοιούτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, τοιούτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι | |
| 49. καὶ καὶ | καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν φορέσομεν ⁵⁵ | τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ. | |

⁵³ J. M. Gundry-Volf, "Christ and Gender: A Study of Difference and Equality in Gal 3.28," in *Jesus Christus als die Mitte der Schrift* (ed. C. Landmesser, H. J. Eckstein, and H. Lichtenberger; Studien Zur Hermeneutik Des Evangelinaria; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997), 439. See also D. Scholer, "Galatians 3:28 and the Ministry of Women in the Church," *CQ* 56, no. 3 (August 1998): 2-18.

⁵⁴ For development see §4.5 and §7.4.

⁵⁵ The textual variant is discussed in §4.3.4.b.

These verses occur within a broader discussion in which Paul is progressively developing an analogy first introduced in 15:20-28. The main thesis for this chapter (15:20) is that because Christ has been raised from death, he is therefore the firstfruits of those who are dead. Paul's use of ἀπαρχή to describe the relationship of the dead with the risen Christ confirms that believers eschatologically participate in the resurrection. Picking up on this theme, D. Martin states, 'Due to their existence "in Christ," they *must* experience the resurrection'.⁵⁶

The following verses (15:21-22) begin with an analogy between two representative ἄνθρωποι, further identified as Adam and Christ: 'For as through man came death, also through man has come resurrection of the dead, for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ, all will be made alive'. F. F. Bruce identifies both the representative and corporate function of each in this text: 'Paul now draws an analogy between two uniquely representative men: Adam, head of the old creation, in whom all die, and Christ, head of the new creation, "the first-born from the dead" (Col 1:18; cf. Rev 1:8) in whom all are to be *made alive* in resurrection'.⁵⁷

In the third major unit (15:35-50), Paul redirects his discussion to address the Corinthian questions 'How are the dead raised? With what type of body do they come?'⁵⁸ In response, Paul draws in first creation motifs and language to distinguish between 'types' of bodies. He begins with a list of different types of bodies and glories that God created (15:37-44); the list has a striking resonance with the list in Gen 1.⁵⁹ He then revisits the former Adam/Christ typology (15:21-22), yet here he shifts the titles to 'the first man Adam' and 'the last Adam' (15:45). By way of an allusion to Gen 2:7, Paul more precisely describes the nature/composition of the 'first man' as 'of the earth' (ἐκ γῆς, v. 47); then he includes the nominative adjective χοϊκός,⁶⁰ which is correlated with the composition of the 'physical

⁵⁶ D. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 131, italic in original. See especially 104-136.

⁵⁷ F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (NCBC; London: Oliphants, 1971), 145, italics in original.

⁵⁸ For the purposes of this study, it is unnecessary to elaborate on exactly what Paul has in mind for the constitution of the "spiritual body." For alternative readings see T. Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), esp. 26-38. For an apposite review of this work, see J. M. G. Barclay, "Stoic Physics and the Christ-Event: A Review of Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul*," *JSNT* 33, no. 4 (2011): 406-14.

⁵⁹ See a discussion of the resonance between these two texts in P. S. Minear, *Christians and the New Creation: Genesis Motifs in the New Testament* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), xiii.

⁶⁰ Χοϊκός is a slight modification from the LXX use of χοῦς in Gen 2:7. Given that this adjectival use has no other parallels, its use here has led some scholars to suggest that Paul coined the term. See for example,

body' that he mentioned in 15:44 (σῶμα ψυχικόν). Likewise, the 'second man', described here as 'of heaven' (ἐξ οὐρανοῦ), provides a further description of the 'spiritual body' (σῶμα πνευματικόν). These descriptors, ὁ χοϊκός and ὁ ἐπουράνιος represent different modes of existence. Paul immediately extends this analogy to all of humanity who together share with the 'first man' an earthy composition whereas, more particularly, those in Christ will share his heavenly composition.

Scroggs, Fee, Martin, and others provide helpful correctives to interpretations that read ἐκ with the force of 'source' rather than as having a 'qualitative' sense.⁶¹ As Fee states, 'these prepositions, which have come about by way of Gen. 2, are intended to be synonyms of *psychikos* and *pneumatikos* and are thus intended to be qualitative, having to do with *human* life that is characterized by being either "of earth" or "of heaven"'.⁶² It is of note that nowhere in this unit does the title *Christ* appear (e.g., in contrast to 15:20-28), but rather Paul shifts from the Adam/Christ typology to ἄνθρωπος. Fee concurs with R. Scroggs who suggests that this shift confirms that the reference is 'not to the heavenly origin of Christ, nor to the second coming, but to the nature of his *resurrected* body'.⁶³

Jesus Christ and Adam are both ἄνθρωποι and both are subject to death; hence one implied inference is that Christ in his incarnation *is* truly human. Yet as the thesis of 15:20 asserts, because Jesus Christ rose from the dead, he is also the 'firstfruits' of the resurrected body for those who belong to Christ.⁶⁴ This clarification seems important given that in the subsequent verse redeemed humanity is said to also 'bear the image of the man of heaven' (15:49). Scroggs concludes, 'The believer is identified specifically with the resurrected humanity of the Messiah . . . no question can arise as to a possible deification of the believer through his eschatological existence'.⁶⁵ This is likely the reasoning behind Paul's allusion to Gen 2:7 and his emphasis on Adam being constituted from the earth/dust. In this passage,

Schweizer, "χοϊκός," *TDNT* 9:472-79 (472). The connection between humanity and dust/earth is referenced throughout the OT. See for example, Gen 2:7, 3:19; Eccl 3:20; Ps 103:14; Job 4:19; Isa 45:9.

⁶¹ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 793–95; Martin, *Body*, 131–32; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1286–90. Engberg-Pedersen concludes, "Basically, then, Paul is relying on a single, straightforward contrast between an earthly kind of body connected with death and a heavenly kind of body connected with eternal life." See Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology*, 27.

⁶² Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 792.

⁶³ R. Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study of Pauline Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 88.

⁶⁴ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 752; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1,228–1,229.

⁶⁵ Scroggs, *Adam*, 88.

Paul does not mention that Adam received the divine breath (Gen 2:7) nor that he was created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). These omissions likely occur because neither detail serves Paul's overarching purpose of clarifying the nature of two types of bodies. Likewise, εἰκὼν is clearly used by Paul to emphasize and distinguish between two bodily forms.⁶⁶ Indeed Paul's use of body and image language enables him to teach that humanity maintains their status as creatures while also teaching that particular, individual persons are, and will be fully transformed into the *corporeal spiritual body* of Christ in the eschaton.

This text is striking in that when Paul articulates the radical newness of eschatological existence in Christ, he does so by way of allusions and language drawn from the first creation narrative; he describes the eschaton by way of protology. His purpose, however, is not to demonstrate that the Christ event results in a return to a primordial Edenic state nor that humans will become like the heavenly bodies or glories already present in the cosmos (15:37-41). Rather, Paul is teaching that Christ has inaugurated an entirely new creation characterized in part by a new eschatological, ontological existence, described in this text as a 'pneumatic body'.

4.3.3 Christ as Image of God (2 Cor 4:3-4; Col 1:15)

We now come to two key texts where Paul applies εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ particularly to Christ. In 2 Cor 4:3-4, the seemingly clear allusion to Gen 1:26-28 identifies Christ, not humanity, as the image of God. This is taken further in Col 1:15-20 where Christ is said to be the image of the invisible God who was not just present at creation but is active in it, the firstborn in it, and the head of his body, the church. Each of these texts employs the designation εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, which was originally applied to all humanity, yet in both of these texts, the phrase is applied exclusively and particularly to Jesus Christ. In discussing this material, I first consider features that are common to 2 Cor 4:3-4 and Col 1:15-20, and then I proceed by addressing each text separately.

To differing degrees and with different language, the broader context of both texts establishes Jesus Christ as the pivotal turning point between a former reality and a new

⁶⁶ I concur with Engberg-Pedersen's insightful discussion of Paul's omission of the reference to the "inbreathing" of God (2:7) as well as Paul's clarifying comment, "however, the pneumatic is not first" (1 Cor 15:46) in this text. See, Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology*, 29–30. See also Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 794.

reality. Second Corinthians 4:4 is positioned within the larger discussion of the surpassing splendor/glorious of the ministry of the *new* covenant in comparison to the *old* covenant (3:1-4:6), especially as it relates to the integrity of Paul’s apostolic ministry (2:14-6:10).⁶⁷ Using different language, Colossians also presents Christ as the defining hinge within history that demarcates two eras, here described as ‘the dominion of darkness’ and ‘the kingdom of his beloved Son’ (1:13). As in 2 Corinthians, the author of Colossians designates Christ as the εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, yet in Colossians he further describes the nature of God with the genitive clause τοῦ ἀοράτου.

The final observation that aligns Col 1:15-18 with 2 Cor 4:3-4 is demonstrated by studying Paul’s grammatical modification of the Genesis text when applying it to Christ.⁶⁸ Both the Hebrew and Greek versions of Gen 1:26-28 describe humanity as the *object* of the Creator’s activity.⁶⁹ The author of Genesis grammatically weaves together four verbs in two sentences to emphasize the distinction between God and humanity — there is no blurring of the lines between Creator and creature — but, within this distinction, the narrative clarifies that man and woman do stand in a unique relatedness to God, being created *according to* the image (εἰκὼν, צֶלֶם) and likeness (ὁμοίωσις, דְּמוּת) of God. Thus, the creation narrative both affirms the unique status of humans within creation while simultaneously affirming their creaturely status. The Pauline application of this designation to Christ is different. Christ is neither the object of God’s creative activity nor created *according to* the image of God; rather, Christ *is* the image of God.⁷⁰ This slight grammatical shift presents a qualitative chasm between the nature of Adam and Jesus Christ. Adam is a creature bearing the image of God,

⁶⁷ Paul’s defense runs throughout 2 Cor 2:14-6:13. For a summary of the motifs of former and new in these chapters, see J. L. Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (SNTW; New York: T & T Clark, 1997), 89–98.

⁶⁸ J. E. Fossum, *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (NTOA; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 15–16; J. T. Nielsen, *Adam and Christ in the Theology of Irenaeus of Lyons: An Examination of the Function of the Adam-Christ Typology in the Adversus Haereses of Irenaeus, Against the Background of the Gnosticism of His Time*. (Van Gorcum’s Theologische Bibliotheek; Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp. N. V., 1968), 22–23. Nielsen identifies that this distinction was noted by Irenaeus.

⁶⁹ This distinction between humanity and Creator is noted by Philo, *Opif.* 71. See discussion in Van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology*, 57–58.

⁷⁰ For a more focused discussion of Col 1:15 on this specific point, see C. Stettler, *Der Kolosserhymnus: Untersuchungen zu Form, Traditionsgeschichtlichem Hintergrund und Aussage von Kol 1,15–20* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 104–10.

whereas Christ is the image of God (cf. 1 Cor 15:45). *What implications can be drawn from this Pauline modulation?*

(a) 2 Cor 4:3-4

The designation of Christ as the image of God occurs within a much larger discussion where Paul contrasts the characteristics of the old covenant with the new covenant (2 Cor 3:7-4:6), in part as an appeal to the adequacy of his apostolic ministry (2:14-6:10).⁷¹ After drawing a correlation between ‘this [his] ministry’ (4:1) and the dispensation of the ‘new covenant’ (3:1-18; esp 4-6), Paul outlines how his behaviour aligns with the ethical imperatives of the Gospel (4:2).⁷² This discussion provides the entry point into the climactic christological text of this unit. While responding to the accusation that his proclaimed Gospel is *veiled* and thus not received by some (4:3-4), Paul offers the following retort:

ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ.

In the space below, I highlight three features of this text. First, the subject ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου occurs only here in the NT, and when it is coupled with the antithetical parallel between verses 4 and 6, this text establishes that Paul is informed by an apocalyptic framework of two ages. The eschatological dualism is obvious in Paul’s comparison between the work of God/Christ in the new age and the work of the ‘god of this age’.⁷³

Second, the reference in this passage to ‘seeing the light of the gospel’ incorporates light-imagery within the text, imagery that reoccurs in 4:6 with a scriptural citation: ‘For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ’. This citation, coupled with Paul’s image language, suggests that the creation account is certainly a plausible scriptural subtext. This citation has prompted considerable attention among scholars, with the majority

⁷¹ Second Corinthians 2:16 shifts in tone from praise to dialogue leading up to a central question of the section “who is sufficient for these things?”, see V. P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 190–201.

⁷² As with 1 Cor 8-10, ethics and theology are inseparable.

⁷³ This is a point made by Barnett and others. See P. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1997), 220; M. E. Thrall, *II Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 306.

of commentators affirming that it is an allusion to Gen 1:3a ‘Let there be light’ or, alternatively, Isa 9:2 (9:1, LXX), Ps 114:5, and/or Job 37:15. Richard Hays suggests that Paul merges both Gen 1:3-4 and Isa 9:2 (9:1 LXX) in order to ‘fuse Israel’s confession of God as creator with Israel’s hope of a messianic deliver’,⁷⁴ which effectively ‘allows both of these key scriptural passages to be enlisted together as witnesses of the “new creation” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17)’.⁷⁵ His conclusions identify the presence of many metaphorical dimensions, all of which draw upon the first creation narrative to illuminate the contours of the new creation, now visible exclusively in the glory and image of God as seen in the face of Christ (4:4-6). Margaret Thrall agrees that it is likely that the creation narrative undergirds this Pauline text by drawing attention to the inclusion of ‘face of Christ’ in this text: ‘It is interesting that in 2 Cor 4.6 it is in the face of Christ that the divine glory is revealed, for there could be some allusion here to the rabbinic idea that the face of Adam was so brilliant that it outshone the sun’.⁷⁶ The combination of glory and image in this text certainly may reflect Second Temple Jewish traditions which fused these two concepts of image and glory to describe Adam.⁷⁷

Third, Paul’s Christology, however, is inextricably linked to his ecclesiology. He writes that this light that radiates from the glory of Christ is now embodied in those who make up the church, those who no longer walk in darkness (see Isa 9:2; cf. 2 Cor 4:4). Paul contrast this imagery to the darkness in which unbelievers live, resulting in their inability to see or identify the presence of God in Christ (2 Cor 4:3-4). This imagery also links back to the veiling of Moses and the inability of those under the old covenant to see the reflected image and glory of God. The link becomes particularly clear when found in passages where Paul explains that those who turn to the Lord (3:16) can actually see the ‘glory of the Lord’ and are being transformed into ‘the same image’ (cf. Rom 8:28-30, see §4.3.4). In both instances there is a sense that the image takes on a visible form, whereas it was manifest in an incomplete form in the face of Moses.

⁷⁴ R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1989), 152–53.

⁷⁵ Hays, *Echoes*, 153. Similarly, see Fee, *Christology*, 519–20. For earlier scholars who support Genesis as the subtext for this passage, see for example, Scroggs who concludes, “Thus, whatever the source for the phrase, Paul relates it to Gen. 1 and intends it, I believe, to be understood within the general framework of the biblical passage.” See Scroggs, *Adam*, 97–98.

⁷⁶ Thrall, *II Corinthians*, 310.

⁷⁷ Van Kooten includes a particularly important discussion of how the “glory of Adam” concept is present in Jewish writings, particularly the DSS. See Van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology*, 15–22.

Related to the light imagery, scholars often identify the concept of δόξα as central to the larger context of 2 Cor 3-4, a text that includes the highest concentration of the noun δόξα in the NT. This text identifies the glory of the Lord (3:18) and the glory of God (4:6) with Christ, who embodies the *telos* of the knowledge of God's glory, a glory that is only foreshadowed in Moses (3:7-11).⁷⁸

Each of these points affirm that when Paul formulates his Christology in this text, he enlists formative scriptural texts (in this case, the creation and Moses narratives) to clarify the priority of Jesus Christ within the creation. As the true image of God, Jesus Christ embodies a distinctively new creative act of God; an act that reveals and illuminates the limitations and meaning of the old. As already noted, for Paul, this has implications not only for how one views God, but also for how one understands the new community of God, the church.

(b) Col 1:15 (Col 1:9-23)

Colossians 1:15-20 is one of the most thoroughly studied christological passages in the NT. Beginning in v. 15 and extending to v. 20, the author inserts an early hymnic unit that is characterized with repetition of key terms, and the placement of the hymn within a cosmic scope. It is regularly described as the most theologically dense unit within Colossians to celebrate the cosmic role of Christ in both creation and redemption. My main focus here is to explore how this text presents Christ in relation to creation and to explore what Paul intends when he states that Christ is the image of the *invisible* God (1:15). That inquiry is informed by several guiding questions: *What connections might be drawn between this text and the Genesis creation narrative? How does this hymn fit within the organization of the letter? What is the role of Christ within the two main strophes (1:15-16; 1:18b-20) and the transition (1:17-18a)? How and for what purpose is the church incorporated into this christological cosmic hymn?*

Prior to addressing these questions, I include an explanation of the possible relationship between Col 1:15-20 and 1 Cor 8:6. In agreement with a minority of Colossians

⁷⁸ See D. A. Renwick, *Paul, the Temple, and the Presence of God* (BJS; Atlanta: Scholars, 1991), 99–109.

scholars, I consider Col 1:15-20 a probable elaboration of 1 Cor 8:6.⁷⁹ Certainly the grammatical, literary, and theological resonance suggests a connection between these two passages, and this possibility should be considered. First, each passage attributes to the Lord/Son a role that is normally exclusively attributed to God and each presents these roles within a creation/redemption structure. Additionally, Paul draws upon a similar literary semantic field in the two passages so that his christological propositions are located within a cosmic sphere (e.g., κτίσις, ὁ οὐρανός καὶ ἡ γῆ, τὰ πάντα). Both texts also employ prepositions that are standard in Jewish and Greek cosmologies for differentiating the mediatorial and functional relationships between God, Christ, and the creation (διά, εἰς, ἐκ). And finally, each incorporates an ecclesiastical dimension into the cosmological formulation. As demonstrated in chapter three, this latter point remains the most distinct feature of both texts. However, with each of these parallels, Col 1:15-20 goes well beyond the cryptic references in 1 Cor 8:6. As Fee observes, ‘whether intentional or not, vv. 15-20 look very much like an elaboration of the two διά phrases attributed to Christ in that text [1 Cor 8:6]’.⁸⁰

1:15-16 **ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου,**⁸¹
πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως,⁸²
 ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα
 ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,
 τὰ ὄρατά καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα,
 εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες
 εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι·
 τὰ πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται

1:17-18a καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων
 καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν,
 καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας·

⁷⁹ For example, Pokorný states that 1 Cor 8:6 might be “the immediate ancestor” of Col 1:16: P. Pokorný, *Colossians: A Commentary* (trans. S. S. Schatzmann; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 78. See especially Fee, *Christology*, 299–303. As noted in the introduction, the majority of biblical scholars suggest that Wisdom Christology underlies this text; this position tends to diminish the discussion of a connection with 1 Cor 8:6.

⁸⁰ Fee, *Christology*, 299. For example the phrases, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα . . . δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα, (God and Christ respectively) are expanded into two verses (1:15-16) and the clauses ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν . . . ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ are fleshed out considerably in Col 1:18-20.

⁸¹ Note here that although scholars regularly parallel this passage with Wisdom as “created before all things” (Prov 8:22; Sir 1:4; Wis 9:9), this text is not stating that Christ *was created* before all things. Additionally each instance of Wisdom in Colossians is indicative of a quality that the author exhorts believers to have. Wisdom is only identified with Christ one time (Col 2:3), and again, it is as a quality of Christ.

⁸² Virtually all commentators identify the error of reading this genitive phrase as “firstborn of all creation,” an error that contributed toward Arius’s view. Rather, the context makes clear that this phrase means “firstborn over all creation” or “firstborn before all creation.” For discussion, see for example, F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (NCBC; London: Oliphants, 1971), 58–59; Moo, *Colossians*, 118–19.

1:18b-20 ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή,
 πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν,
 ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων,
 ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι
 καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν,
 εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ,
 [δι' αὐτοῦ] εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

Although this hymn is often studied in isolation from the surrounding verses, grammatically verse 15 continues a sentence that begins in verse 9 and that establishes Col 1:15-20 as part of the thanksgiving. Some scholars suggest that the καί of 1:21 could imply a continuation through to at least 1:23, if not 2:7.⁸³ J. Dunn considers 1:3-23 an extended thanksgiving, whereas J. Gibbs suggests, ‘The whole of section 1:3-2:7 thus constitutes a long circular movement of thought’.⁸⁴ Identifying this broader context of the hymn guards against treating verses 15-20 as an isolated theological statement. The hymn addresses the situation of the readers and links with the themes present in the broader context, which has as its primary goal to correct misguided christological teachings.

Leading up to this hymn in verses 12-14, Paul uses imagery of ‘light’ and ‘darkness’ to remind his readers that God has rescued them ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους⁸⁵ and transferred them to τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ.⁸⁶ Paul envisions two realms, with believers having already been transferred to the sovereign realm of Christ. At this point in the letter, Paul primarily directs his attention to explaining what it means for the Colossians to live within this ‘kingdom’ where the Son of God reigns ‘seated at the right hand of God’ (3:1). Except for Col 1:27, God is no longer the grammatical subject, and the high Christology of 1:15-20 pervades the entire letter.

⁸³ See J. G. Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption. a Study in Pauline Theology* (NovTSup, Vol 27; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 100–101; J. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 53. This was argued earlier by E. Käsemann, “Eine urchristliche Tauf liturgie,” in *Festschrift Rudolf Bultmann zum 65. Geburtstag überreicht* (ed. E. Wolf; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1949), 133–48 (140–42).

⁸⁴ Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption*, 101. Gibbs identifies another strong link between these verses through the repetition of various forms of εὐχαριστία in 1:3, 1:12, and 2:7; J. Dunn, *Colossians*, 53.

⁸⁵ The phrase τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους occurs in Luke 22:53, cf. Eph 6:10.

⁸⁶ See the helpful work of Moo who draws possible OT parallels with Col 1:12-14, Moo, *Colossians*, 102–6. Also see McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 176–88. The closest NT parallel τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ occurs in the baptism of Jesus, Mark 1:11. See Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption*, 96.

The relative pronoun ὃς which begins at Col 1:15 and reoccurs repeatedly throughout this hymn, has τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ (1:13) as its antecedent.⁸⁷ This is important to note because ὃς lodges the hymn within Paul’s messianic lordship theology, a theology in which the Son of God has sovereignty over all things. Colossians 1:13-14 is rich with OT imagery (e.g., inheritance, deliverance, redemption, beloved Son) and has semantic connections with 1 Cor 8:6, 1 Cor 15:23-28, and Rom 8:29.⁸⁸ Reading the hymn within its broader context also draws attention to believers’ place and role in God’s cosmic story. Believers have been transferred into the kingdom of God, and this relocation includes an ethical imperative (1:21-23; 3:1-4:6). As in 1 Cor 8:6, believers are also incorporated into the cosmic hymn; here Christ is said to be the head (κεφαλή) of his body, the church (1:18).

Most scholars identify two parallel strophes (1:15-16; 1:18b-20) in this passage; these strophes are linked by a transitional unit that incorporates an ecclesiological feature (1:17-18a) into the universal contours of this text.⁸⁹ The two main strophes do not correspond perfectly, yet there is ample thematic and verbal parallelism to confirm the coherence of this unit.⁹⁰ Theologically, Paul outlines Christ’s relationship to God (1:15a; 1:19; cf. 2:9; 3:1), to all of creation (1:15b-17), and to the church (1:18) in this passage, concluding with Christ’s role in the redemption of all things (1:18, 20). Succinctly summarizing these verses, F. F. Bruce states, ‘the first strophe celebrates the role of Christ in creation’, and the second strophe ‘celebrates the role of Christ in the new creation’.⁹¹ Paul’s use of a dense web of interconnected, resonate terms presents Christ as the one through whom both the creative and redemptive acts of God are accomplished.

⁸⁷ There are sixteen pronouns in 1:15-22 that have υἱός as their antecedent. Χριστός occurs twenty-five times in this letter and ὁ κύριος occurs fourteen times.

⁸⁸ Although these connections are not developed further here, Moo, McDonough, and Fee carefully outline how these verses are deeply rooted in OT kingship imagery. Their conclusions challenge the more common connections of this text to Wisdom literature. See Moo, *Colossians*, 100–107; McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 174–88; Fee, *Christology*, 292–303.

⁸⁹ For works that outline the literary structures of this text and use a history-of-religions approach see for example, E. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971). Also F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 54.

⁹⁰ There are numerous grammatical parallels that I do not include here because they are amply discussed in most commentaries and are ancillary to my main point. For example, the parallelism of ὃς ἐστίν, πρωτότοκος, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ, and the reoccurrence of τὰ πάντα. See, Bruce, *Epistle*, 54–76; McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 173.

⁹¹ Bruce, *Epistle*, 56.

The first clause of the hymn presents the striking claim that ‘Christ is the image of the invisible God’. The inclusion of the adjective ἀόρατος adds a new feature not present in 2 Cor 4:4. Whereas the scholarly perspectives differ on the exact meaning and referent here, several contextual clues support a link with Gen 1:26-28. First, the immediate context of Col 1:15-17 certainly has the original creation narrative in view, yet here it is Christ who is the creative agent. Additionally, the εἰκών reference in Col 1:15 is further clarified by Col 1:19, which states that in Christ ‘all the fullness [of God] was pleased to dwell’. Later, Paul makes explicit that the fullness of God dwells within the *bodily* form of Christ, ‘for in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily’ (2:9); again, he identifies Christ with God in the closest possible way. This intertextual link, which emphasizes the ‘bodily form’ of God in Christ with his designation as the ‘image of the invisible God’, not only guards against ‘Gnostic’ or platonic dualism but also maintains the distinct relatedness of Christ *with creation* through his incarnation.⁹² Here, as in 2 Cor 4:4, Paul asserts the revelatory function of Christ wherein he makes God known. C. Rowe suggests that the bodily form of Christ presents ‘the mystery of God’ which is visibly likened to the first humanity.⁹³

McDonough develops the final connection with Gen 1:26-27 by comparing the dominion mandate given to the first humans with the clear messianic lordship motifs of this text: ‘This is evidence that Jesus is providing the definitive fulfillment of the dominion Adam was to exercise over all creation (cf. 1:13, “the kingdom of his beloved Son,” and 1:23 “in all creation”: ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει)’.⁹⁴ This connection is strengthened through the parallel structure of verses 15 to 18, which centers on the term πρωτότοκος. This term is likely an echo of the messianic Psa 89 passage where the earthly king is called the πρωτότοκος who rules over all creation (κἀγὼ πρωτότοκον θήσομαι αὐτόν ὑψηλὸν παρὰ τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν τῆς γῆς, Psa 89:28; LXX 88:28); this title is used exclusively for Christ in the NT (Rom 8:29, Heb 1:6; Rev 1:15)⁹⁵ and aligns with Paul’s messianic ideal rulership described here as that ‘in everything

⁹² Bruce, *Epistle*, 58. This logic is likewise present in Watson, *Text and Truth*, 277-304.

⁹³ C. K. Rowe, “New Testament Iconography? Situating Paul in the Absence of Material Evidence,” in *Picturing the New Testament: Studies in Ancient Visual Images* (eds A. Weissenrieder, F. Wendt, and P. von Gemünden; Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 289–312 (300).

⁹⁴ McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 181. See also Moo, *Colossians*, 116–19.

⁹⁵ Moo, *Colossians*, 119–20. See Fee who points out that in Jewish literature πρωτότοκος is never used to reference Adam or Wisdom. See Fee, *Christology*, 520–21.

he [Christ] might be preeminent' (1:18). Identifying the messianic rulership theme in this text also supports the suggestion that the creation narrative is what Paul has in view here. Indeed, and in further support of this thesis, Steenberg provides the following observation: 'In contrast to Adam speculation, the idea of sovereign rule is almost wholly absent from Wisdom motifs'.⁹⁶

Thus, this dense text further illustrates these themes of Messianic lordship over creation by establishing Christ as the 'first born before all creation' (1:15), which correlates to Christ as the 'first born from the dead' (Col 1:18); these succinct claims identify Christ as the source and end of the totality of creation⁹⁷ Between the two main strophes, the transitional verse (1:17-18a) organically connects Christ with the church: καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας, (Col 1:18). This positions ecclesiology as central to the purposes of God in Christ. Theologically, this links back to 1:12-14 and anticipates 1:21-23 where the language of reconciliation is bound to the 'body of his [Christ's] flesh' as manifest in the church. Similar to 1 Cor 8:6, within the τὰ πάντα of the broader creation (1:17), the church is identified as uniquely related to Christ (see §3.1.3.b.iii).

These two texts provide salient examples of Paul's christocentric reading of creation themes and motifs. By stating that *Christ is the image of (the invisible) God*, Paul interprets the original designation for all humanity (Gen 1:26-27) as an embryonic form that comes to its fullest expression in Jesus Christ. In a particular and unique way, Jesus Christ enables humanity to have access to the *invisible* God — a relational component of the image of God. Likewise, in a particular and unique way, Jesus Christ fulfills the ideal dominion and kingly rule only foreshadowed through humanity — the kingly dominion component of the image of God. Although Paul does not use the specific language of incarnation, both of these trajectories imply an incarnational understanding of Jesus Christ that functions to provide genuine knowledge of the one true God to humanity. In relation to Paul's application of Gen 1:26-28 to Christ, I. MacFarland suggests 'that the image of God is none other than Jesus of Nazareth' and that this 'gives these rather abstract claims more definite shape'.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Steenburg, "Image," 103.

⁹⁷ S. J. Grenz, "Image of God", 620.

⁹⁸ McFarland, *Image*, 5.

4.3.4 Believers as in the Image of Christ (Rom 8:28-30; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:9-10)

The theology of Christ as the true and fullest image of God is closely linked to Paul's teaching concerning a new community of believers who are being transformed into the *imago Christi*. Thus, the new humanity, the church, uniquely shares in the divine image through *participation in Christ*. This distinguishes the community of believers from universal humanity, whom Paul presumably believes have been created according to the image and likeness of God.⁹⁹ Yet for Paul, just as Israel was set apart via the old covenant that was established by the promises and the law, the church is likewise set apart via the new covenant that is established by Jesus Christ and enlivened by the Spirit. Paul incorporates this ecclesiological designation into four texts: Rom 8:28-30, 1 Cor 15:49, 2 Cor 3:18, and Col 3:9-10.¹⁰⁰ Within the larger context of each text, Paul modifies and extends the *imago Dei* designation by maintaining that believers are being transformed into the *imago Christi*. These two designations, Christ as the image of God and believers as the image of Christ, are fused through literary and linguistic affinities that effectively link Paul's Christology with his ecclesiology. In both instances, Paul has developed a *signature* theological motif that is unique in the NT. In each of these texts, the theme is clear: those who have been incorporated into Christ by the Spirit are in the process of being collectively transformed into the image of Christ. This has present and eschatological implications.¹⁰¹

(a) Rom 8:28-30

Romans 8:28-30 occurs within a larger unit (8:18-30) that is considered by many scholars to be the climax to an extended discussion beginning at least in 5:1. Some scholars suggest that the strong semantic and theological coherence of creation themes in Rom 1 and 8 functions as a framework for all of Rom 1-8.¹⁰² One initial theme of Rom 8:1-17 is the comparison of the 'law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' with the 'law of sin and death' (Rom 8:2). Paul then develops the comparison between 'life in the Spirit' and 'life in the flesh' (8:3-17), with verse

⁹⁹ It is impossible to know whether Paul affirms this given that 1 Cor 11:7 is the only text that references Gen 1:26-28 in this way, albeit in a modified form of the original.

¹⁰⁰ Like Col 1:15-20, Col 3:9-10 is included here with the acknowledgement that it may have been written later by someone within the Pauline school.

¹⁰¹ Kittel, "εἰκὼν," *TDNT*, 2:392-397 (397).

¹⁰² See for example, Kraftchick who outlines all of the creation themes and motifs of Rom 1-8, S. Kraftchick, "Paul's Use of Creation Themes: A Test of Romans 1-8," *ExAud* 3 (1987): 72-87.

9 standing as a unique text as it is the only reference in Paul to the ‘Spirit of Christ’ (πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ; cf. 1 Pet 1:11). R. Jewett identifies two key features of this verse. First, it emphatically affirms that the possession of the Spirit is a precondition of belonging to Christ; and second it affirms that, in light of Paul’s use of a second-person plural address, a community is implied: ‘God’s Spirit dwells “among,” “within,” or “in the midst of” (ἐν) the congregation, rather than merely within the heart of individuals’.¹⁰³

Building toward the pneumatic high point of this text, Paul correlates the groaning of creation with the groaning of humanity: ‘We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies’ (8:22-23; cf. 2 Cor 5:4-5).¹⁰⁴ This text assures readers that even in the midst of suffering, they *have already* received the firstfruits of the Spirit; this down-payment becomes the hope of full ‘adoption as sons’ and ‘the redemption of our bodies’ (8:23).

Paul continues pursuing the theme of the Spirit and the church in the text of interest for this section, Rom 8:28-30:

²⁸ Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν. ²⁹ ὅτι οὐς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς. ³⁰ οὐς δὲ προώρισεν, τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν· καὶ οὐς ἐκάλεσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδικαίωσεν· οὐς δὲ ἐδικαίωσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδόξασεν (Rom 8:28-30).

After declaring the shared knowledge ‘that God works in everything for good for those who love them’ (8:28), Paul includes two resonant verses that rhetorically build to a climax via a string of eight aorist indicative verbs. The first three verbs include the suffix πρό indicating God’s predetermined divine plan (προγινώσκω, προορίζω (2x)),¹⁰⁵ whereas the following five verbs outline the historical acts of God in history (καλέω (2x), δικαίωω (2x), δοξάζω). The

¹⁰³ R. Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 489.

¹⁰⁴ For an analysis of these themes, see for example, Jewett, *Romans*, 474–503; R. N. Longenecker, “The Focus of Romans: The Central Role of 5:1–8:39 in the Argument of the Letter,” in *Romans & the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (S. K. Soderlund and Wright N. T.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 49–69; J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 479–502.

¹⁰⁵ Note the connection of these first three verbs with πρόθεσις in 8:28 and see the discussion of Paul’s broader use of this phrase in Jewett, *Romans*, 528.

language in these verses thus binds the church to the predetermined and eternal purposes of God *through* their conformity to the image of Christ.

Many features of this text could be investigated further, yet here my main inquiry concerns Paul's use of the phrase *καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνας τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ* in verse 29. By using an aorist verb in this way, Paul clearly points to a preordained plan of God that believers are to be transformed into the image of God's son and he conveys this by using the relatively rare term *σύμμορφος* which has its closest parallels in Phil 3:10 and 1 Cor 15:49. As an adjective followed by a genitive, this term takes on a more substantive force with the sense of a realized transformation into a nature that is similar in form to the Son and that is at least partially realized in the present.¹⁰⁶ The current presence of the Spirit as the firstfruits is the assurance of a future full transformation. It seems likely that in making this statement, Paul is drawing from the OT tradition, particularly Gen 1:26-27 and Ps 8:6-7 and as Jewett suggests extends 'the restoration of sovereignty and glory to all those conforming to Christ's image'.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, as McDonough observes, 'Romans 8:29 provides an interesting analogue to Col. 1:15, since here we also find *εἰκὼν* and *πρωτότοκος* together'.¹⁰⁸ Certainly, these terms parallel the language in Colossians (Col 1:13, 15, 18) and Ps 89:28 (LXX 88:28), yet the sovereign kingship motifs present in Col 1 are not as explicit in Rom 8.¹⁰⁹ In light of this, Colin Gunton's comment perhaps more accurately reflects the intent of Rom 8:29: 'First that Jesus represents God to the creation in the way that the first human beings were called, but failed, to do; and second that he enables other human beings to achieve the directedness to God of which their fallenness has deprived them'.¹¹⁰

In an analogous way to Col 1:15-20, the focus here is on Christ as the originating source (*πρωτότοκος*) of the new community.¹¹¹ The series of verbs (e.g., *predestined*, *called*, *set right*, and *glorified*) confirm the status of this community as being set apart and uniquely

¹⁰⁶ BAGD, 958.

¹⁰⁷ Jewett, *Romans*, 529.

¹⁰⁸ McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 183.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Gunton, *Christ*, 100.

¹¹¹ Jewett, *Romans*, 529. See also, L. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 333.

transformed into the image of Christ. S. Grenz suggests that this text ‘expresses the Christological intent of God’s foreordination, namely, the pre-eminence of Christ among those who participate in the eschatological resurrection. The designation of these as Christ’s *adelphoi* indicates the communal interest of the text, which makes Rom. 8.29 as the final exegesis of Gen. 1.26-27’.¹¹²

Romans 8:23 reflects the anticipation of the eschatological redemption of mortal bodies. Joel White nicely summarizes how Rom 8:23 fits into the realized eschatology of the remainder of chapter 8:

The point of Rom 8.23 would then be that, since believers have the Spirit who raised Christ from the dead (cf. Rom. 8.11; this explains the *genitivus auctoris*) and indeed have witnessed the beginning of *the* resurrection in Christ, they long for its completion, namely the ‘liberation’ of their own mortal bodies. Understood in this way, the implication of Paul’s argument in Rom. 8.19-23 is that the resurrection of Christ has set eschatological new creation in motion and that, as a result, both the cosmos and believers long to experience its ultimate fulfillment.¹¹³

This larger discussion in Romans 8 particularly helps to clarify the focus of 1 Cor 15:49 to which I now turn.

(b) 1 Cor 15:49

Given that I have already established the broader contours of this text (§3.2 and §4.3.2), here I am primarily interested in the textual variant for the verb φορέω in 1 Cor 15:49. Because of uncertainty over the mood of φορέω, there exists some question among scholars whether the status of ‘bearing the image of the one of heaven’ is reserved for the future or whether it might also be relevant to the present. The text is found in two forms: a future indicative or aorist subjunctive.¹¹⁴

As I have already noted (§4.3.2), Paul presents Christ and Adam here as representative figures with the titles ‘the first human’ and ‘the second human’. All humanity is said to bear

¹¹² S. Grenz, “The Social God and the Relational Self,” in *Trinitarian Soundings in Systematic Theology* (ed. P.L. Metzger; New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 87–100, (91).

¹¹³ J. White, “Paul’s Cosmology: The Witness of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians,” in *Cosmology And New Testament Theology* (ed. J. T. Pennington and S. M. McDonough; LNTS; New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 90–106 (104).

¹¹⁴ The future indicative φορέσομεν has a much weaker textual witness supported by B and a few minuscules (B I 6. 630. 945. syr^p cop^{sa}), than the subjunctive φορέσωμεν (P⁴⁶ & A C D F G Ψ 075. 0243. 33. 1739 latt bo; Ir^{lat} Cl).

‘the image of the man of dust’ and believers are identified as those ‘who will bear [or let us bear] the image of the man of heaven’. Although the textual witness supports the subjunctive rendering, virtually all translations have chosen the future indicative.¹¹⁵ Fee sharply disagrees with this translation decision on textual and contextual grounds: ‘They [the Corinthians] are being urged to conform to the life of the “man of heaven” as those who now share his character and behavior. . . . Thus, we have another expression of Paul’s “already/not yet” eschatological framework’.¹¹⁶ In a similar vein, Hays suggests that the subjunctive reading is an exhortation for Paul’s readers ‘to look to the coming one, Jesus Christ, as the source and hope of transformation, rather than looking to their own wisdom or to some alleged primal divine image within’.¹¹⁷

Both Hays and Fee present reasonable cases for a subjunctive reading, particularly because this reading is supported by the bulk of the textual witness; nevertheless, the context of the unit seems to suggest otherwise which aligns with the majority of scholars who identify the future indicative tense as the preferred reading. This interpretation is based on the broader context of the text, which indicates that Paul’s underlying question here is related to the nature of, and distinction between, the ‘earthly’ and ‘spiritual’ bodies. Paul’s concern with distinguishing between ‘types of bodies’ supports a future indicative reading, given that *spiritual bodies* will only be manifest in the future resurrection. A corresponding text is Phil 3:20-21 where Paul states, ‘But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself’. I concur with Thiselton on this point: ‘Humankind remains *human and fragile* prior to the resurrection of the last days. . . . It is in the future that “Christians are destined to become heavenly in the image of the heavenly Man,” i.e., the man *from heaven*’.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ See the UBS committee decision, which indicated that its translation opted for the future sense because “the context is didactic, not hortatory.” See B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Germany: German Bible Society, 1971), 569. For subjunctive readings, see Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 787, 794–95; R. B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Interpretation; Louisville: Knox Publishing, 1997), 273–74; Minear, *New Creation*, 62–81. For a discussion of the debate, see Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1288–90.

¹¹⁶ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 795.

¹¹⁷ Hays, *First Corinthians*, 274.

¹¹⁸ Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1288. Internal citation from J. Héring, *The First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (Heathcote; London: Epworth Press, 1962), 179.

Those scholars who reject the future reading, however, do so on the premise that such an interpretation constitutes a *de facto* denial of a present transformation among believers into the image of Christ. Texts such as Rom 8 and 2 Cor 3:18 (discussed below; cf. 2 Cor 1:22, 5:4-5) clearly counter such a conclusion, for Paul explicitly states in Rom 8 that the Spirit, as the ‘first fruits’, has already taken residence in those of Christ and certainly carries with it ethical implications.¹¹⁹ These motifs are virtually synonymous with 2 Cor 5:4-5, which states, ‘For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee’. First Corinthians 15:49 parallels 2 Cor 5:4-5 as well as Rom 8:23, which states that those ‘who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the *redemption of our bodies*’. This latter text demonstrates the already/not yet of Paul’s theology; believers *already* experience the new life in the Spirit while simultaneously anticipating the *not yet* future redemption of their bodies, what Paul calls ‘spiritual bodies’ in 1 Cor 15:49. Thus, the eschatological emphasis in 1 Cor 15 is on the ultimate and final culmination of the Spirit’s work in resurrected *bodies*, but this does not negate the present transformation taking place within the body of Christ, the church. I thus concur with D. Martin who highlights this dual reality for believers.

The current image (*eikōn*) of the earthly and earthy human body is due to its participation in the body of Adam (15:49). . . . Paul teaches that the different forms of the human body are composed of the elements appropriate to the realm in which they participate at any particular time. . . . Christians currently partake of two natures: because they possess pneuma, they share something with the heavenly natures; because they are also made up of sarx and psyche, they share something with the earth, Adam, animals, birds, fish, and even dirt (15:39-40, 47-49).¹²⁰

(c) 2 Cor 3:18

Within the broader textual context, Paul designates Christ as the image of God (2 Cor 4:4 in §4.3.3.a). However, a few verses earlier, when he is comparing those under the limitations of

¹¹⁹ Fee seems to make this distinction when he states that the Spirit has an immediate manifestation although the bodily resurrection is in the future, he speaks of “their living now in conformity to the One whose new kind of body they are in fact destined to bear.” See Fee, *Christology*, 119.

¹²⁰ Martin, *Body*, 132.

the old covenant (the Israelites and Moses) with the Corinthians and himself (3:7-11), Paul introduces εικῶν language. He explains that the Israelites have a veil hindering their minds (νόημα) and hearts (καρδία) from fully comprehending the glory of the new covenant (3:14-15) and that the new is no longer bound to a written code (ἐν γράμμασιν ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις, 2 Cor 3:7) but that it is inscribed in human hearts by the Spirit of the living God (οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος· τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτέννει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ. 2 Cor 3:6). Paul paraphrases Exodus 34:34 (cf. 34:29-35) here, declaring that ‘when one turns to the Lord the veil is removed’ (3:16). This leads into the ecclesiological climax of this unit:

17 ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν· οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία. 18 ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος. (2 Cor 3:17-18)

As I have already noted, many features of this text have prompted scholarly debate and disagreement,¹²¹ but most of that debate is tangential to my study of the ecclesiological claim made in 3:17-18 and Paul’s use of εικῶν. The context surrounding this passage indicates that the ‘image’ language likely does not originate from Genesis but rather functions as a metaphor for a mirror and its reflection.¹²² The language and imagery of this text harkens back to the example of Moses, who though unveiled did encounter the Lord, yet within the limitations of the old covenant this encounter was incomplete, temporary, and exclusive to Moses (3:7-15).¹²³ Paul now draws attention to the superiority of the *new covenant*, where through Christ and the Spirit the new community (no longer exclusive to Moses) not only beholds the glory of the Lord but is also ‘being transformed into the same [his] image’ (κατοπτριζόμενοι τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα). In this text, the phrase the ‘same image’ does not have an immediate referent, yet the careful exegetical work of R. Hays and others convincingly demonstrates that the referent is Jesus Christ, as described in 4:4-6.¹²⁴ Paul’s inclusion of *Spirit* three times, his repeated citation of *Lord*, and his present tense use of ‘transformation’ together point toward Christ as the one to whom the community is being transformed. The use of εικῶν here, as well as in 4:4, further clarifies this connection. Additionally, as Thrall

121 See for example, the discussion in Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 237–45. Also, Hays, *Echoes*, 122–53.

122 Fee, *Christology*, 519.

123 Van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology*, 323–24.

124 Hays, *Echoes*, 153; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 241.

indicates, the comparison that Paul draws with Moses indicates that the glory of the Lord in the Exodus account was ‘a visible phenomenon, and is visibly reflected on the face of Moses’.¹²⁵ Thus, Paul seems to indicate some type of visible equivalent in Christ who becomes reflected in the visible form of the church.

Paul’s use of μεταμορφώω semantically recalls the related adjectival use of σύμμορφος in Rom 8:28; both suggest a progressive dynamic change.¹²⁶ As R. Hays suggests, ‘The veiled telos is, if we must express it in a discursive proposition, the glory of God in Jesus Christ that makes itself visible in fleshy communities conformed to Christ’s image. . . . Christ is the glory-bearing *eikon* into which the community is being transformed’.¹²⁷ Christ as the *imago Dei* creates a new ontological possibility for the church to reflect as it embodies the knowledge and glory of God (cf. 2 Cor 2:14). Paul concludes this section by identifying the ultimate purpose for which this embodiment is directed: ‘as grace abounds more and more, it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God’ (4:15).

Victor Furnish draws a parallel between this imagery and other motifs in Paul: ‘For him [Paul], transformation means conformity to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29), “to be like his glorious body” (Phil 3:21). Expressed otherwise, it means Christ’s being “formed in” the believer (Gal 4:19), a transformative event which faith receives and affirms already in the present (Gal 2:20) as “a new creation” (2 Cor 5:17)’.¹²⁸ Likewise, Fee notes the integral connection between Paul’s use of εικόν for Christ and for the church: ‘Thus he [Christ] is the one who, because he is also fully divine, bears the perfect image of God — the image to which believers themselves are in the process of being conformed’.¹²⁹ The fact that Paul aligns believers with the image of Christ and not the image of God heightens the radical newness that Paul understands the Christ event has inaugurated for the church. As a community, the church now embodies Christ to the world.

(d) Col 3:9-10

Here again, the theme of the old is contrasted with the new, the life directed by the ‘old’ ἄνθρωπος contrasted to the ‘new’, which is ‘renewed in knowledge after the image of its

¹²⁵ Thrall, *II Corinthians*, 284.

¹²⁶ BAGD, 639-640; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 242.

¹²⁷ Hays, *Echoes*, 137, 146; see also his larger discussion of this text, 125-153.

¹²⁸ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 241.

¹²⁹ Fee, *Christology*, 530.

creator'. The inclusion of τοῦ κτίσαντος places the writer's image language within a creation context and this placement has resulted in many scholars interpreting the referent of τοῦ κτίσαντος as God the father.¹³⁰ However, I argue that the high Christology of the letter paired with its internal contextual markers together make this reading unlikely. For example, the creedal/hymn formulas laid out at the beginning of this letter establish Christ as the creative agent in both the primal creation and new creation (Col 1:15-20; cf. 2:9; 3:1).

Additionally, the explicit reference to 'old' and 'new' aligns with Paul's consistent juxtaposition of 'new' with the Christ event. In relationship to this observation, it is often noted that within Col 3:9-10 the themes of the 'old' and 'new' ἄνθρωπος echo the Adam-Christ typology of 1 Cor 15, where Christ is equated with the new Adam. In relation to these themes, Conzelmann provides a helpful discussion of the relationship between the various Greek terms used for *new*. He suggests that νέος is used here with a parallel meaning to καινός, which is the term used in the two new creation texts (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17). Conzelmann concludes that 'God's eschatological new creation is described here with reference to Gen 1:26f'.¹³¹ Another motif related to the old and new terminology in this passage is that of baptism, an event that establishes the inauguration of believers into the body of Christ (e.g., Rom 6:6; Gal 3:28; Col 2:11-13, 20; 3:1; Eph 4:22-24).¹³² In relation to this, Grenz writes, 'The declaration in Col. 3.9-11 that through conversion/baptism into Christ, believers have put off the "old human" and have put on the "new", evidences an underlying Adam-Christ typology. For Paul being "in Adam" and being "in Christ" not only designated two orders of existence, but also the way of living that characterizes each'.¹³³

Colossians 3:11, which immediately follows the designation τοῦ κτίσαντος, also suggests that the referent is Christ. This references those believers who have put on the new nature of the image of their creation, that 'there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all'. This parallels Gal 3:28 and 1 Cor 12:13, which both deal with the unity of those who have been

¹³⁰ For example, see Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 143; P. T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1982), 191; J. Dunn, *Colossians*, 222.

¹³¹ H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. (trans. J. W. Leitch; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 142.

¹³² Moo, *Colossians*, 268-69; Fee, *Christology*, 303-5.

¹³³ S. Grenz, "Social," 92.

baptized into Christ.¹³⁴ In terms of the overall thrust of verse 11, Fee concurs that τοῦ κτίσαντος is best understood as a referent to Christ, ‘It is hard to imagine that one should read “God,” whose last mention was in terms of his “wrath” (v. 6), into a sentence that concludes in such christocentric fashion’.¹³⁵

Additionally, the implication of this text is that the ‘new self’ is not so much a reference to individual believers as it is to a collective corporate whole — the body of Christ. That usage would also parallel language from Eph 2:15 where the author states that ‘His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace’.¹³⁶ Conzelmann suggests that when read in tandem with similar Pauline texts, this text implies that ‘the only thing that matters in the Christian community is the “new creation” in Christ’.¹³⁷

In summary then, Rom 8:28-20, 1 Cor 15:49, 2 Cor 3:18 and Col 3:9-10 each use image language, christocentrically appropriated to those who have become incorporated into the body of Christ, the church.

4.3.5 Preliminary Conclusions

By briefly studying these key Pauline texts, I hope to demonstrate that Paul was aware of the first creation narrative and that he borrows from the language used there to teach his readers about the radical and new reality that has begun with the Christ event. In the majority of these texts he explicitly cites and/or alludes to creation motifs, themes, or language. He does not, however, read this narrative as a Jewish bystander but as one who has explicit christological and ecclesiological interests. As James Barr insightfully observes, ‘Paul was not interpreting the story [creation narrative] in and for itself; he was really *interpreting Christ* through the use of images from this story’.¹³⁸ This observation becomes even more clear when assessing how Paul incorporates the Adam motif into his articulation of the new creation in Christ.

¹³⁴ Conzelmann, *I Corinthians*, 143–46; Moo, *Colossians*, 270–73. S. Grenz, “Social,” 92–93.

¹³⁵ Fee, *Christology*, 304; Bruce, *Epistle*, 146–48.

¹³⁶ Moo, *Colossians*, 267–68.

¹³⁷ Conzelmann, *I Corinthians*, 144.

¹³⁸ J. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 89. Italics in original.

4.4 Adam and Christ: The New Creation in Christ Illuminates
the First Creation in Adam (1 Cor 15:21-22; 1 Cor 15:42-49)¹³⁹

As I have already noted (see §3.2, §4.3.2, §4.3.4.b), 1 Cor 15 is Paul's most extensive discussion of the resurrection, and it is organized around three distinct and related sections (15:1-11; 12-34; 35-58; the final unit can be subdivided into 15:35-49 and 15:50-58). Its inclusion in 1 Cor 15 is particularly relevant because it is one of two texts where Paul juxtaposes Adam with Jesus Christ; in both instances Paul uses this typology to inform his readers about the implications of the Christ event (cf. Rom 5:12-21). Additionally, in 15:45, Paul cites a modified version of Gen 2:7, weaving several of the creation themes into his discourse (e.g., 'ground', 'earth', 'image'). What becomes clear is that for Paul the distinctives of the new creation inaugurated by Jesus Christ are further clarified by way of first creation themes and motifs.

The questions presented in 15:35, 'How are the dead raised?' and 'With what kind of body do they come?' indicate that the Corinthians were confused about the modality and the corporeal dimensions of the resurrection. The nature and source of their misunderstanding is unclear, yet scholars have suggested a number of possibilities. One proposal that is not as prevalent among scholars today is that some members of the Corinthian community, persuaded by spiritual enthusiasts, had adopted an over-realized eschatology which posited that the resurrection had already taken place. This view correlates to the situation in Ephesus as reflected by the teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim 2:16-18).¹⁴⁰ Another commonly proposed interpretive option is that some denied an embodied resurrection. This would be reflective of the Platonic philosophical traditions that were prevalent within such Hellenistic centers as Corinth; these traditions were characterized by a 'tempered dualism' that considered the material creation a 'copy' of the heavenly realm and denied outright the possibility of an embodied resurrection.¹⁴¹ Regardless of which proposed reading reflects the

¹³⁹ Although my analysis is here limited primarily to 1 Cor 15, many scholars suggest that Paul's Adam Christology expands into many other texts. For a brief discussion of the options, see Fee, *Christology*, 513–14. Also see M. Hooker, "Adam".

¹⁴⁰ See for example, Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 10–12.

¹⁴¹ The notion of a bodily resurrection would have been offensive and incomprehensible to those with this kind of dualistic view (cf. 6:12-20; Acts 17:32). A few representative presentations of this view include, C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), 374–75; B. A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1973); J. A. Davis, *Wisdom and Spirit: An Investigation of 1 Corinthians 1.18–3.2*

actual historical situation, Paul’s three-fold response (15:12-34; 35-49; 50-58) effectively counters both extremes by denying a *disembodied* future existence and by exhorting the Corinthians to a balanced eschatological realism in the present.¹⁴² Here I further explore the Adam/Christ typology that Paul develops in response to the Corinthians’ misunderstandings.

In the second major unit (15:12-34), Paul develops the implications of his antithetical presentation of ‘death’ and ‘resurrection of the dead’ (15:21) by way of a double parallelism of Adam and Christ (1 Cor 15:21-22):

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι’ ἀνθρώπου, καὶ δι’ ἀνθρώπου, | θάνατος, ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν. |
| ἐπειδὴ ὡσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ | πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. |

The first clause, ‘through a man comes death’, is most often considered a concise summary of Gen 3:17-19 and read in light of Rom 5:12, which states that ‘sin came through one man and death through sin’.¹⁴³ In these verses in 1 Corinthians, however, it more likely references the Gen 2:7 narrative of the creation of Adam. Paul’s point here is not to explain sin and/or disobedience (Gen 3:17-19; cf. Rom 5:12-21) but, rather, to distinguish between types of ‘bodies’.¹⁴⁴ This text is the entry point into the text he later develops in 1 Cor 15:42-50 where his reference to Gen 2:7 becomes explicit. In the creation narrative, the breath of God made Adam ‘a living being’ (15:45), but it did not make him immortal.¹⁴⁵ Thus, the emphasis

Against the Background of Jewish Sapiential Traditions in the Greco-Roman Period (Lanham/New York/London: University Press of America, 1984); Martin, *Body*, 104–36; Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology*, 8–74. For more general discussion of how cosmologies in the ancient world fueled speculations on the form of the afterlife, see E. Adams, “Graeco-Roman and Ancient Jewish Cosmology,” in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology* (LNTS; New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 5–27.

¹⁴² For a succinct yet thorough analysis of these interpretive options see, Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1,288.

¹⁴³ The motif of Adam as the culprit for death was a common theme in Jewish works. For example, *4 Ezra* 3:5-7, 20-21; 4:30-31; 7:118-119; *2 Baruch* 17:2-3; 23:4; 48:42-43; 53:14; 19; 56:6; *Jubilees* 3:17-25; 4:29-30; *Life of Adam and Eve* 13:8-9; Wis 10:11.

¹⁴⁴ Beker convincingly develops Paul’s discussion here as grounded in an apocalyptic framework of the two ages. See J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 100, 135–81.

¹⁴⁵ See a discussion of this in P. C. Bouteneff, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 43; W. P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 89. See also the insight of J. Barr, who correctly observes, “The story [Gen 1-3] nowhere says that Adam, before his disobedience, was immortal, was never going to die. . . . To die was human; only gods — generally speaking — lived for ever” (5). See Barr, *Garden*, 5–20.

throughout this chapter is on the mortality of Adam's body; it is physical, living, from the earth, and more graphically described as from the dust. In other words, it is perishable and subject to death. Paul's argument is that all humanity shares in death because Adam, as the first human, stands as the origin for the process of death.

Paul then juxtaposes another ἄνθρωπος to the representative first ἄνθρωπος. This human, however, reverses the process of death through resurrection, clearly alluding back to verse 20. The next set of parallel clauses (15:22) identifies each respectively as Adam and Christ and then further articulates the universal consequences of each: namely, 'all die' and 'all will be made alive'.¹⁴⁶ Of particular interest here are the implications of ζωοποιέω in the final clause. First, this verb both echoes the original creation account where God breathes life into humanity (ἐνεφύσησεν . . . πνοήν ζωῆς, Gen 2:7, LXX), and it anticipates 15:45 where Paul cites a modified form of the final clause of Gen 2:7 and then adds ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν. Semantically, ζωοποιέω is also closely related to ζωογονέω, which is regularly used in the LXX with God as the subject.¹⁴⁷ Thus, through semantic resonance, Paul draws a parallel between God breathing life into Adam in the first creation narrative and Christ serving as the life-giving source of life in the new creation.¹⁴⁸ C. Beker suggests that this typology 'operates not in terms of continuity but in terms of discontinuity. Here the last (eschatological) Adam reverses radically what the first Adam has initiated in world history (Rom 5:12-21; cf. 1 Cor 15:20-22) so that the dualistic apocalyptic thrust of the Adam typology underscores the radical newness of God's act in Christ'.¹⁴⁹

These verses establish Jesus Christ as the eschatological turning point of the ages with the resurrection as the inaugural event. As Fee concludes, these verses establish that as 'the "man" who stands at the beginning of the old creation brought death into the world, so also it is the "man" who stands at the beginning of the new creation who has brought bodily

¹⁴⁶ This is likely not a reference to a general or universal resurrection. In 15:18 and 15:23, Paul clearly has the church in view, and likewise, this text should be read within that ecclesiological framework. See the discussion by Beker, *Triumph*, 303–27. Also Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 749–50.

¹⁴⁷ For example, Neh 9:6; 2 Kgs 5:7; Ps 70:20; 2 Sam 2:6; Ezra 9:8-9; *Jos. Asen.* 8:10. See also Bultmann, "ζωοποιέω," *TDNT*, 2:874-875.

¹⁴⁸ The NT attributes this life-giving function to God, Christ, and the Spirit, see for example, Rom 4:17; 8:10-11; 2 Cor 3:2-6; John 5:21-24; 1 Pet 3:18; and so on. See Minear, *New Creation*, 71–72.

¹⁴⁹ Beker, *Triumph*, 100.

resurrection into the world. The analogy is straightforward, and the emphasis is on Christ's human role in the new creation'.¹⁵⁰ In 15:23-28, Paul immediately follows these verses with an outline of the sequence of events that will ultimately unfold in the eschaton, as Christ, God's Son, hands the kingdom back to God (§3.2).

Paul returns to the Adam/Christ typology in 1 Cor 15:42-49. Semantically, this passage is connected to the immediately preceding analogy by the adverbial phrase οὕτως καί and to the larger sub-unit by its response to the introductory question 'With what kind of body do they come?' (15:35b-41). Certainly the reoccurrence of σῶμα seven times in these verses indicates the prominence of Paul's desire to correct misguided notions.¹⁵¹ One of the first distinctives of this unit is its shift from subtle echoes of the creation narrative as observable truisms drawn from nature (15:38-41; cf. Gen 1:11-26) to an explicit citation from Scripture that juxtaposes the first Adam with the second Adam (15:45-49).¹⁵² By placing this explicit reference between the texts that allude to the creation narrative and by making use of a sown seed analogy (1 Cor 15:42-44), Paul clarifies the relationship between the physical body (σῶμα ψυχικόν) and the spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν). These verses are organized with four parallel pairs of contrasting clauses that use vocabulary from earlier in the letter.^{153,154} Within each of these clauses, the repetition of the verbs σπείρω and ἐγείρω keeps alive the immediately preceding analogy yet applies the metaphor to the sown seeds *and* the raised body. This literary anaphora contrasts features of the present with the future, paradoxically affirming genuine *discontinuity* between the present body and its future bodily expression while simultaneously maintaining *continuity* through the use of σῶμα. The final two binary contrasting clauses depart from this pattern by excluding the repetition of ἐν as well as

¹⁵⁰ Fee, *Christology*, 516.

¹⁵¹ 1 Cor 15:35, 37, 38 (2x), 44 (3x).

¹⁵² Minear suggests that the intertextual density of Genesis within 1 Cor 15 is so pervasive that "it served as a map of Paul's thought world." See Minear, *New Creation*, xiii. Also note Fee's observation that the different types of flesh are drawn from the fifth and sixth days of the original creation, Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 783.

¹⁵³ For example, φθορά and ἀφθαρσία are unique to this letter which may indicate their distinctive use among the Corinthians. The next contrast between ἀτιμία and δόξα echo an earlier text where Paul identifies the Corinthians as those who are "held in honor" in comparison to himself who is in "disrepute" (4:10). The final pair ἀσθένεια and δύναμις also picks up prior themes when Paul compares himself with those at Corinth (e.g., 1:24f; 4:10; cf. 2 Cor 12:10; 13:3, 9). See also G. E. Sterling, "'Wisdom Among the Perfect:' Creation Traditions in Alexandrian Judaism and Corinthian Christianity," *NovT* 47, no. 4 (1995): 354–84 (357).

¹⁵⁴ Sterling, "Wisdom", (357).

introducing a combination of vocabulary that is unique to this text (σῶμα ψυχικόν and σῶμα πνευματικόν).

The combination of σῶμα with πνευματικόν is likely significant as well. Scholars have often noted the disproportionate amount of attention Paul gives to πνευματικός in this letter, perhaps indicating that it was a Corinthian catch phrase or preoccupation (e.g., 2:13-16). If there were those who denied bodily resurrection, then the use of πνευματικός to describe the raised, imperishable σῶμα would have been a troubling oxymoron. This makes identifying precisely what Paul envisions here difficult. Fee suggests, ‘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’.¹⁵⁵ Whereas C. Wolff more precisely states, ‘The spiritual body of the resurrection (*der pneumatische Auferstehungsleib*) is through and through a body under the control of the divine Spirit, according to v. 45 a creation of Christ (cf. also vv. 21-22) who is “the life-giving Spirit”’¹⁵⁶ Given the goals of my study, it is not critical to outline the different possibilities of what might constitute the spiritual, resurrected body, but what is relevant is that Paul here wishes to emphasize that Jesus Christ, as the first fruits of future resurrection, has inaugurated an entirely new reality within the first cosmos. In part, this eschatological reality is one feature of what Paul understands as the new creation.

To support this assertion, Paul shifts from abstract descriptors to a scriptural citation (15:44b, γέγραπται; 15:45-49). He offers a modified reading of Gen 2:7 (LXX) to logically substantiate and explain the immediately preceding thesis (Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν, 15:44). The primary text (Gen 2:7, LXX) and Paul’s hermeneutical addenda are included below with Paul’s additions underlined for reference:

καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς
καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς
καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν (Gen 2:7, LXX)

ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ, εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν,
ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν (1 Cor 15:45-46)

¹⁵⁵ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 786. See also 1 Cor 6:17 and 2 Cor 5:1. These analogies seem to confirm a new form of the body.

¹⁵⁶ C. Wolff, “Exkurs: Deutungsvorschläge zu 1 Kor 15:29,” in *Der erste Brief der Paulus an die Korinther* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlag, 1996), 392–96 (396).

Although the language in Paul's citation may reflect a textual tradition no longer extant, it is more likely that it reflects an intentional modification that was necessary to counter the Corinthians' misunderstandings. Paul adds the terms *πρῶτος* and *Ἀδάμ* to modify *ἄνθρωπος*. The significance of these qualifiers becomes apparent with Paul's added interpretive clause: *ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν*.¹⁵⁷ Through the addition of *πρῶτος* and *ἔσχατος*, Paul establishes a contrasting parallel between the first created Adam and the last Adam.¹⁵⁸ C. D. Stanley describes this as a hermeneutical foundation for the flow of the argument: 'the addition brings to formal expression the fundamental contrast between Adam and Christ . . . that forms the backbone of the ensuing argument'.¹⁵⁹

The description of the last Adam as *πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν* echoes two themes embedded in the phrase *πνοὴν ζωῆς* (Gen 2:7), and it further develops what was introduced in 1 Cor 15:21-22. *Πνοή* and *πνεῦμα* are related semantically, and the shift from *ζωή* to *ζωοποιέω* is significant. Just as the first creation was enlivened by God breathing 'a breath of life' into humanity, Christ as 'life-giving Spirit' substantiates the ongoing creative work of God inaugurated by the second Adam, Jesus Christ. As I have already noted, a clear distinction is made here in that the first human was given life, *not* immortality; only through Christ is immortality possible. Andrew Lincoln identifies the significance of this semantic connection: whereas the first Adam was the *recipient of life*, the second Adam 'has a new quality of life, for as *πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν* he is no longer merely alive and susceptible to death but rather has now become creatively life-giving'.¹⁶⁰ This contrast is emphatic, as Paul explicitly describes the unique role of Christ as the source/beginning point of the eschatological new creation.

As I discussed earlier in this chapter (§4.3.2), in the following passage (1 Cor 15:47-49), Paul develops the parallel between the first and second Adam to clarify their roles as

¹⁵⁷ As noted by some scholars, 15:45b is cited by Paul as if he perceives it as part of Scripture, see Conzelmann, *I Corinthians*, 284.

¹⁵⁸ M. D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 28.

¹⁵⁹ C. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 208. See also J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI/ Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998), 200; D. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986), 134-37.

¹⁶⁰ A. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 43-44.

representative figures. This further distinguishes between the first creation and the new creation by emphasizing the continuity and discontinuity between the two Adams. The second human is described as ἐξ οὐρανοῦ whereas the first human is described as ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός. Paul brings this didactic section to a crescendo by shifting from singular to plural (οἱ χοϊκοί to οἱ ἐπουράνιοι), thereby extending the analogy collectively to groups or classes of human persons, including his Corinthian readers.

These texts demonstrate that when Paul seeks to explain the radical newness which the Christ event has inaugurated, he goes back to the very beginning. By juxtaposing Adam with Christ, the universality of what each represents comes into sharper focus. Christ overcomes mortality and as the life-giving Spirit he is aligned with the creative power of the primal Creator in Genesis — yet Christ represents the *new* creation of God. This text provides a clear example of how the Christ event has shifted the epicenter for Paul and of how important origins are for his theology. For those in Christ, ‘in the beginning’ of Gen 1:1 has become eclipsed by ‘in the new beginning, in Jesus Christ’. Yet this is not only grounded on the distinctions between the two representative humans but also on their continuity; the resurrection is predicated on the incarnation and the relationship that Christ has *with* creation.

4.5 Conclusions

These texts shed light on Paul’s intertextual hermeneutic and his interpretation of creation motifs and themes. What is clear is that Paul interprets the first creation narrative in light of Christ. And in a similar way, he modifies and re-appropriates creation motifs to enrich his teaching on both Christ and the church. Hermeneutically, the first creation narrative functions as a theological lens for understanding God’s new creative work in Christ, which partly includes the creation of a church that embodies and reflects Christ to the world. Likewise, Jesus Christ becomes the interpretive lens whereby Paul provides innovative readings of primal creation.

Within the Pauline corpus, the image of God designation is employed in four distinct yet related ways. Particularly striking is the way that Paul uses the same semantic and conceptual field as Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:7 yet re-appropriates the image of God to inform and bind together his Christology and ecclesiology. Theologically, these passages

demonstrate that Paul has a theology of divine image; one that is conceptually grounded in Gen 1 yet significantly amended and fully comprehended only in the light of Jesus Christ. In agreement with Gen 1:26-27 and Ps 8:6, Paul seems to affirm that from the beginning Adam had a share in the image and glory of God (e.g. 1 Cor 11:7), yet he spends no time reflecting on or supporting this claim. Rather, Paul teaches that the fullest manifestation of the *imago Dei* is not to be found ‘in the beginning’ but rather ‘in the new beginning, Jesus Christ’. Thus, Paul draws a clear distinction between humans who were created *according to* the image of God, and Christ, who *is* the image of God. Kavin Rowe identifies the striking feature of this claim: ‘Paul’s explicit statement involves a direct identification of a particular, concrete human as the εἰκὼν Θεοῦ’.¹⁶¹ Therefore, in continuity with Gen 1:26-28, God’s image remains anthropocentric; yet in contrast to Gen 1:26-28, the universal becomes particular in Jesus Christ. These interpretive moves embed the image of God concept within a christological framework and signify the Christ event as the defining new creative act of God.

Although Paul leaves it up to his readers to ascertain why he makes this interpretive move, it is perhaps significant that the preposition *κατά* in Gen 1:26 prompted exegetical speculation among other ancient Jewish authors. For example, Philo’s reflections on the preposition *κατά* lead him to conclude that the very nature of God could not reside in anything other than God’s own entity. This necessitated mediating figures between God and the created material realm. The prominence of the spoken word in the creation narrative becomes a natural candidate for such a mediatorial role. For Philo, not only does *λόγος* function in an instrumental sense whereby God creates the world, but *λόγος* also becomes the archetypal image of God *through which* humanity is the derived image.¹⁶² The nature of God necessitated this distance between God and creation, which reflects standard Middle Platonic reasoning. As McDonough observes, ‘The *λόγος* is rather the blueprint for creation, or the stamp which prints the ideas onto the visible world’.¹⁶³ Whether Paul was dependent on or

¹⁶¹ Rowe, “Iconography”, 300.

¹⁶² See for example, *Opif.* 24-25; *Leg.* 1.19; *QG* 2.62. At times, Philo identifies Wisdom as having a role in creation (*Her.* 199; *Fug.* 109; *Ebr.* 31), yet more commonly he references *λόγος*. See McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 135–49; R. Cox, *By the Same Word: Creation and Salvation in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity* (BZNW; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 87–140.

¹⁶³ McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 145.

even aware of Philo's exegetical tradition is impossible to determine,¹⁶⁴ yet what does seem evident is that in a comparable way to λόγος in Philo, Paul's reading places Christ as the true *imago Dei*.

The Adam/Christ typology in 1 Cor 15 helps to clarify this Pauline distinctive. Within the broader discussion of resurrection, Paul affirms with Gen 1-2 that humanity has continuity with the created material order. The first Adam was always creature: he was a living being (1 Cor 15:45), physical (15:44), from the earth (15:47), a man of dust (15:47), mortal (1 Cor 15:21a, 22a), and perishable (1 Cor 15:42-44). In light of this connection, C. Gunton observes, 'We belong with and alongside the creatures whatever our in other ways special relationship with the creator. . . . We are material, bodily beings, and are so essentially. . . . Any notion of the image of God which spiritualizes it, in the sense of dematerializing it, misses its meaning'.¹⁶⁵

As a human, Jesus Christ shares with Adam this connection with the material creation; Jesus Christ is human (ἄνθρωπος), he has a body (σῶμα), and he experiences death (θάνατος). These parallels likely accord with Rom 5 where Adam is said to be a 'type of the one to come . . .' and in these ways he was. Paul, however, also identifies the radical distinctiveness of Jesus Christ. Unlike Adam, Christ is the one through whom all things were created (Col 1:15); he is life-giving Spirit (Col 1:18); his body is constituted as of heaven (1 Cor 15:47-48); he makes all alive (1 Cor 15:22, 45); and finally, he defeats death (1 Cor 15:21, 54-57).

These distinctives align Christ with the creative and redemptive purposes of God and feature in Paul's re-appropriation of the image of God language, *particularly* in reference to the one Lord Jesus Christ. In a unique and singular way, Christ reflects the fullest/most complete image of God. This conceptually and theologically allows Paul to attribute divine identity to Jesus Christ, an identity that does not reside, and never has resided, within human

¹⁶⁴ There are several indications in this text that Paul was aware of Philo's reading. For a brief discussion of the possibilities of this and reference to other scholarly works, see Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology*, 24-26, 39, 219 fn 77. See also the discussion in Steenburg, "Image," 104-6.

¹⁶⁵ Gunton, *Triune*, 205.

beings.¹⁶⁶ Pauline language suggests that men and women reflect the image of God in a limited, anticipatory way. I argue here that it is in this trajectory that Paul's use of image of God language distinguishes between humanity, Christ, and the church. Humans are creatures wed to their earthly origin; yet the image of God reflected through them and the breath of God that originally enlivened them enable humans to foreshadow the true image of God manifest particularly and uniquely in *the* Jesus Christ. This connection also necessitates that God be incarnate in human form.¹⁶⁷

As the creative and redemptive agent of God, Jesus Christ inaugurates a radical newness within the creation and points forward to the *telos*, not the beginning. No passage in the Pauline corpus suggests that the redemptive work of Christ functions to restore human beings to their primeval creation status. Rather, the eschatological presence of the Spirit becomes the first fruit of an entirely new creation, and the church is the embodiment of Christ within that new reality. As Gen 1:26-27 links the *imago Dei* to the unique capacity of the human race to relate to God and to the creation, the community of believers as the *imago Christi* corporately reflects the revelatory purposes of God *within* and *to* the creation. Believers are transferred into the kingdom of God on earth and, as enlivened by the Spirit of God, are to live a life of doxology and praise to God; this includes embodying the life of Jesus in fleshly bodies (2 Cor 4:10) and being God's ambassadors within and toward the creation (2 Cor 5:20-21). This ensures that the true image of God is not to be found in the beginning of history but rather at its end. This christocentric image is of a church that is being transformed ever closer to that ideal. J. Moltmann nicely captures the implications of this eschatological shift.

As the image of the invisible God, Christ is the mediator in creation, the reconciler of the world, and the Lord of the divine rule: God appears in his perfect image, God rules through his image, God reconciles and redeems through his image on earth. Since it is through Christ that the new, true creation begins, Christ must already be the mystery of creation in the beginning. The earlier is understood in the light of the later, and the beginning is comprehended in the light of the consummation.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ See the important work of Bauckham who develops this distinction, for example, R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 137, 176–77.

¹⁶⁷ See Watson who develops this thesis: Watson, *Text and Truth*, 277–304. For an alternative reading, perhaps even a corrective to Watson's reading of Ezek 1, see Van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology*, 3–7.

¹⁶⁸ J. Moltmann, "Creation and Redemption" (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1976), 226.

This christological and eschatological shift enables those created in the *imago Christi* to be the righteousness of God within the creation, and by reflecting the very glory of God in the face of Christ, they can redirect the entire cosmos back toward God for the glory of God (Rom 8:28-30; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; cf. Phil 2:15).¹⁶⁹ Each of these themes present trajectories about the human relationship to the creation; a relationship to be considered more intentionally in chapter seven.

¹⁶⁹ See Dahl, "Christ".

Chapter Five

Irenaeus of Lyons, Theologian of Creation

5.1 Introduction

Throughout the previous three chapters, I have demonstrated that the categories of creation and new creation provide theological trajectories which shape Paul's interpretation of the Christ event *within* creation. As Paul teases out the implications of the incarnate Christ for his Christology, ecclesiology, and ethics, he provides us with the earliest formulation of Christ as the creative agent of the cosmos, using motifs from Gen 1-3 to connect redemption with creation in ways that are meaningful not only for one's relationship to God but also for one's relationships with other humans and the broader created world. I now turn to Irenaeus of Lyons, an early Christian thinker for whom 'creation stands at the centre of [his] theology',¹ and for whom the Pauline corpus is a major source of inspiration and guidance.² As noted in the introduction to this study, the works of Irenaeus are valuable resources for gaining an early perspective on Pauline creation themes and motifs. Indeed, they provide a strong yet ancient corrective to the contemporary thread of scholarship, which tends to see Paul as having little to contribute to a biblical theology of creation or ecotheology.

Unlike Paul's Greco-Roman context where religious traditions elevated elements of creation to divine status, by the end of the second century, the historical situation had dramatically shifted. Matters of creation and materiality were in the foreground of theological discussion and, compared to Paul, Irenaeus faced a different challenge: the denigration of the material realm. This internal threat to the church resulted from the burgeoning 'Gnostic' traditions.³ Northrop Frye succinctly articulates the challenge facing the church of Irenaeus'

¹ M. C. Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation: The Cosmic Christ and Saga of Redemption* (VCSup; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 2.

² This thesis is suggested by many. See for example, J. Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London: The Epworth Press, 1948), 115; R. Pervo, *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 220–28.

³ Modern discussion surrounding the imprecise use of the terms *Gnostic* and *Gnosticism* in reference to historical movements is acknowledged here. Since the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices, it is also established that Irenaeus had significant knowledge of disparate "Gnostic" traditions and he presents a fair representation of their teaching. The general terms appear to function for Irenaeus as a rhetorical foil enabling him to respond collectively to a package of related doctrines and ideologies. Thus, for Irenaeus the terms *Gnostic* and *Gnosticism* became a useful rhetorical shorthand and likewise, they are used in this

day in this way: ‘Christianity clearly had to steer some sort of middle course between the Gnostic contempt for nature and the pagan adoration of it’.⁴

With the works of Irenaeus of Lyons we encounter the earliest articulation of a formal Christian theology of creation, an articulation he most clearly outlines in his primary composition, *Adversus haereses (Against Heresies)*,⁵ and in his later work *Epideixis tou*

general sense here, identified through the use of quotations throughout. For an in-depth discussion, see M. A. Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁴ N. Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1982), 112–13.

⁵ The complete title is *Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge falsely so-called*. The textual and translation tradition of this work has a long history. For a succinct overview see D. Unger, trans., further revised by J. Dillon, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons Against the Heresies: Book I* (ACW; New York: Newman, 1992), 11–18; P. Parvis, “Packaging Irenaeus: *Adversus haereses* and Its Editors,” in *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, Legacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 183–98 and Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 217–19, 227–228. Irenaeus wrote all his works originally in Greek with only fragments of the Greek extant. The complete work is preserved in Latin with sections preserved in Armenian and Syriac. The majority of scholars concur that the best critical edition of the Latin and extant Greek is in the *Sources Chrétiennes* series with French translation and critical notes. See Irenaeus, *Contre les hérésies, Livre I* (2 vols., SC 263, 264; eds. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau; Paris: Cerf, 1979); Irenaeus, *Contre les hérésies, Livre II* (2 vols., SC 293, 294; eds. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau; Paris: Cerf, 1982); Irenaeus, *Contre les hérésies, Livre III* (2 vols., SC 210, 211; eds. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau; Paris: Cerf, 1974); Irenaeus, *Contre les hérésies, Livre IV* (2 vols., SC 100 Tome I, 100 Tome II; ed. A. Rousseau; Paris: Cerf, 1965); Irenaeus, *Contre les hérésies, Livre V* (2 vols., SC 152, 153; eds. A. Rousseau, Doutreleau L., and C. Mercier; Paris: Cerf, 1969). These volumes replace the older critical editions of Harvey and Migne, W. W. Harvey, ed., *Saint Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons’: Five Books Against Heresies Vol I* (Rochester: St Irenaeus Press, 2013); W. W. Harvey, *Saint Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons’: Five Books Against Heresies, Vol II* (Rochester: St Irenaeus Press, 2013); E. Massuet [and J. P. Migne], ed., “Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis et Martyris Detectionis et Eversionis Falso” (1710, reprinted in Migne, PG 7 (Paris, 1857)). The most recent English translation of all five books is in the Ante-Nicene Fathers series, Irenaeus, “Against Heresies, Books 1–5 and Fragments,” in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Vol 1, The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*. (eds. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, Repr. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1885–87). The most updated English translation of books one, two, and three are included in the Ancient Christian Writers series, see Unger and, *Irenaeus Book 1*; D. Unger, trans., further revised by J. Dillon, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies Book 2* (ACW; New York: Newman, 2012); D. Unger, trans., with further revisions by I. Steenberg, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies Book 3* (ACW; New York: Newmann, 2012). Unless otherwise noted translations for books one, two, and three will come from the Ancient Christian Writers volumes. Selections from books four and five have been translated in works by Hans Urs von Balthasar, M. C. Steenberg, R. M. Grant, and J. Behr and noted in the footnotes. See translations in Steenberg, *Irenaeus*; H. U. Balthasar, *The Scandal of the Incarnation: Irenaeus Against the Heresies* (trans. J. Saward; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990); H. U. Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* (ed. J. Riches; vol. II of *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*; trans. A. Louth, F. McDonagh, and B. McNeil; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984) and J. Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons: Identifying Christianity* (CTC; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). In terms of chapter and paragraph divisions, I cite the numbering system of the *Sources Chrétiennes* series. The SC numbering system is used in the English translation of the ACW volumes and except for a few places aligns with the earlier ANF volume. For lengthy citations included within the main text of this dissertation, additional primary reference is provided. I include the SC volume number followed by the corresponding page number of the Latin. When an extant fragment of the original Greek is available, the page number of the Greek is also included following a forward slash. I do not reference Greek texts in the SC that are translations of the Latin.

apostolikou kērygmatos (Demonstration [Proof] of the Apostolic Preaching).⁶ His insightful response in these works has afforded him the reputation of the first great Christian theologian of creation.⁷ Historian Robert Grant considers Irenaeus ‘the most important Christian controversialist and theologian’ between the apostles and Origen,⁸ whereas Hans Urs von Balthasar claims Irenaeus as ‘theology’s founding father’.⁹

As already noted in the introduction, the challenge Irenaeus faced in considering creation amid the ‘Gnostic’ wave of thought has some correlation with the modern day (in as much as one’s ideological, religious, and philosophical view of created matter *does* shape how one relates to creation). His thinking and arguments are important to revisit for this study, especially in terms of how his creation theology was informed by Pauline categories. The approach I have taken in this examination is not to suggest that we emulate his interpretive methods or even necessarily affirm his theological conclusions; rather I seek to analyze how his hermeneutical method and theology are related and, more specifically, how he incorporates the Pauline corpus into his theological framework. Although modern questions related to ecology were not formulated in the first two centuries, this study attempts to establish trajectories and implications that may instigate fresh readings of Paul, particularly by exploration of Irenaeus’ employment of Pauline categories into his creation framework. It is my hope that by reading Irenaeus as an ancient analogue, a fresh conceptual approach to Paul may shed light on how Scripture might be interpreted within our modern ecological situation. The primary question that shapes my reading of Irenaeus is the following: *In what ways can Irenaeus’ theological readings of Scripture, which bind redemption to creation/pre-creation, be the stimulus for interpreting a substructure of creation theology in Paul?* Ultimately, this inquiry will provide a segue into chapter six where a closer analysis of

⁶ The three most recent English translations of this work include that of J. Armitage Robinson reprinted in I. M. Mackenzie, *Irenaeus’s Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching: A Theological Commentary and Translation* (trans. J. A. Robinson; England: Ashgate, 2002); J. P. Smith, trans., *St. Irenaeus: Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* (ACW; New York: Paulist Press, 1952) and most recently J. Behr, trans., *St Irenaeus of Lyons: On the Apostolic Preaching* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997). Unless otherwise noted, English translations are from Behr.

⁷ See the influential and classic work of G. Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation: A Study of the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus* (Edinburgh/London: Oliver & Boyd, 1959), 3.

⁸ R. M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (The Early Church Fathers; London/New York: Routledge, 1997), 1.

⁹ Balthasar, *Glory*, 8.

Irenaeus' hermeneutical approach to Scripture is undertaken in order to more accurately synthesize how his reading of Paul accentuates and interfaces with the exegetical and theological considerations presented in chapters two through four.

This chapter begins by outlining the recent scholarly attention given to Irenaeus and his teaching on creation, followed by a brief introduction to Irenaeus' setting, writing, and the 'Gnostic' teaching to which his work responds (§5.1.2, §5.1.3). This provides a contextual prelude for exploring the central focus of this chapter: an outline of Irenaeus' creation theology (§5.2).

One caveat: a comprehensive study of either 'Gnostic' thought or the Irenaeian theological framework is not possible within the confines of one chapter. Rather, my primary goal here is to summarize the main contours of both worldviews, particularly in terms of how they view God's relationship to humanity and to the broader creation. Within the Irenaeian corpus, particularly within *Adversus haereses*, I am especially attentive to the central role that the incarnation has in the divine economy.

5.1.1 Scholarship on Irenaeus and Creation

Although Irenaeus is arguably one of the most prominent theologians of the second century, most often cited for his polemics against 'Gnosticism', the influence of his writing extends well beyond the stereotype sometimes attributed to him as the anti-'Gnostic' Father.¹⁰ Indeed, a variety of other notable themes have attracted scholarly attention, including his teaching on the four-fold Gospel, his signature recapitulation theology, his articulation of the *regula fidei* and his insight into the triadic nature of God.¹¹ Each, to varying degrees, laid the groundwork

¹⁰ For a succinct summary of scholarship assessing the accuracy of Irenaeus' portrayal of "Gnosticism," see M. A. Donovan, "Irenaeus," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary: Volume 3* (D. N. Freedman, exec. ed.; New York/London: Doubleday, 1992), 457–61. For an analysis of this debate, see T. Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus and Genesis: A Study of Competition in Early Christian Hermeneutics* (JTISup; Warsaw, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 42–56. See also the discussion of the *Apocryphon of John* as a backdrop for assessing Irenaeus in Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 24–25.

¹¹ Although utilizing the creedal term *Trinity* to describe Irenaeus' formulation of the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit is anachronistic, his conceptualization of the triadic relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit is regularly noted by scholars. For example, see Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 62–71. In accord with current scholarly practice, the terms *triune* or *triadic* are used here. See also R. M. Grant, *The Formation of the New Testament* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1965), 151–56 and L. M. McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 289–301.

for the theological debates of the third and fourth centuries, culminating in the establishment of the boundaries of the NT canon and orthodox creedal formations.¹² In terms of his writings on creation, certain strains of his thinking influenced historical theological formulation (e.g., the goodness of creation and creation *ex nihilo*), whereas other features of his theology were side-lined (e.g., humanity as being created as infants and the eschatological perfection of creation).¹³

In recent scholarship, a growing interest in Irenaeus' theology of creation has emerged, and the classic work of Gustaf Wingren is often noted as initiating this interest.¹⁴ Since Wingren's publication of *Man and the Incarnation: A Study of the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus*, other scholars have followed this work with a number of articles and two recent monographs.¹⁵ The two latter works provide significant, yet distinct, contributions to Irenaean scholarship. In his book, *Irenaeus on Creation: The Cosmic Christ and the Saga of Redemption*, M. C. Steenberg provides a notable contribution toward understanding the prominence of Genesis 1-11 within the contours of Irenaeus' theology.¹⁶ This work provides insight into Irenaeus' christological reading of the creation narrative, and it serves as an important source for this study. The other monograph, published the following year and evidently completely independent of the former, is *Irenaeus and Genesis: A Study of Competition in Early Christian Hermeneutics* by Thomas Holsinger-Friesen.¹⁷ This work provides a comprehensive history of scholarly studies on recapitulation in Irenaeus and proposes that his recapitulation theory is primarily a hermeneutical model and secondarily a theological construct.

Particularly important to my research, however, are two smaller works that approach Irenaeus specifically with ecotheological concerns. Within a more comprehensive treatise,

¹² For a succinct summary of these influences, see Mackenzie, *Demonstration*, 29–34.

¹³ C. E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (ESCT; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 52–56. The influence of Irenaeus is particularly evident within the theology of Colin Gunton and Hans Urs von Balthasar. See for example, C. E. Gunton, *Christ and Creation* (The Didsbury Lectures 1990; Carlisle/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Eerdmans, 1992); Balthasar, *Glory*.

¹⁴ Wingren, *Man*.

¹⁵ Articles of note are referenced within this chapter.

¹⁶ Steenberg, *Irenaeus*.

¹⁷ Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus*.

Paul Santmire dedicates a few pages to a discussion of Irenaeus.¹⁸ Though brief, Santmire provides insightful observations that I incorporate and build upon in chapter seven. And a more recent article by Francis Watson, ‘In the Beginning: Irenaeus, Creation and The Environment’, considers how the focus of Irenaeus’ soteriology, which connects redemption to creation, might reshape modern ecotheological discussions.¹⁹ Although the textual focus for Watson is Irenaeus’ use of the Gospel of John, his conclusions are *apropos* and illuminating for my own work. In terms of scholarly contributions that specifically address the ways in which Irenaeus’ theology of creation might inform ecotheological readings of Scripture, there is much ground yet to be explored.

5.1.2 Background and Setting of Irenaeus

By the end of the second century, internal and external historical factors coalesced, creating a setting of anxiety and confusion for the Christian church.²⁰ Increased political persecution, the martyrdom of Pothinus, the bishop of Lyons, and a hostile cultural environment resulted in a disillusioned Christian community susceptible to the enticing ‘Gnostic’ theology of ascent. Irenaeus approaches this challenge with two strategies. First, he identifies and outlines various ‘Gnostic’ myths with particular focus on the Ptolemaean Valentinian school.²¹ Through an extended dialogue with their cosmological formulations in books one, two, and three of *Adversus haereses*, he demonstrates the inherent implausibility of their schemata and shows ‘how utterly absurd, inconsistent, and incongruous with the Truth their statements are’.²² Second, he offers a persuasive alternative to the ‘Gnostic’ worldview. His response unfolds as nothing less than a radical inversion of the ‘Gnostic’ disdain for the created realm.

¹⁸ H. P. Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 31–44.

¹⁹ F. Watson, “In the Beginning: Irenaeus, Creation and the Environment,” in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives* (eds. D. Horrell, et al.; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 127–39.

²⁰ See for example, W. H. C. Frend, *The Early Church: From the Beginnings to 461* (London: SCM, 2003); R. M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966); J. M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

²¹ Irenaeus refers to numerous “Gnostic” theologians and sects, including Valentinus, Ptolemy, Colorbasus, Marcus, Simon Magus, Menander, Marcionites, Ebionites, and Encratites, with the general term *Gnostics*. See for example, *Haer.* 1.29.1; 2.31.1; 4.6.4; 4.33.3; 4.35.1.

²² 1.Preface.2., *SC*, 264:24/same for Gr.

Although a comprehensive assessment of ‘Gnostic’ teaching is beyond the scope of this study, an outline of its basic tenets is included here to provide a context for analyzing Irenaeus’ theology.²³

5.1.3 ‘Gnostic’ Teaching on the Creator, Creation, and Redemption

In keeping with ancient views of reality, one formative feature of ‘Gnostic’ teaching was the belief that *origins mattered*. Questions related to the nature of God, creation, humanity, evil, and redemption were all explicated through an elaborate cosmological framework, virtually all of which was grounded in a pessimism about the motivating principles of creation.

Theological constructs were characterized by florid speculations informed by Scripture yet deeply influenced by philosophical cosmologies and ultimately shaped by a hidden *gnosis* exclusively revealed to a select few. Hermeneutically, numerology and extensive allegory were the favored exegetical methods of the ‘Gnostics’, though they were not universally employed by all sects.²⁴ The spiritual elite, who alone had access to divine knowledge, thereby became the authoritative gatekeepers for deciphering Scripture’s special revelation.

‘Gnostic’ cosmological systems developed partly as a response to the hardships endured within this historical era. Increased persecution, violence, and suffering led many to conclude that a benevolent, loving God who created and governed the visible material world was simply not plausible. Out of this milieu, a doctrinal system arose that was grounded in a radical anti-cosmic dualism of two distinct realms of reality.²⁵ The origins of the first immortal and spiritual cosmos were explained through an elaborate system of aeonic emissions that constituted a divine realm known as the Pleroma.²⁶ They believed that at the

²³ For more complete summaries of the teaching that Irenaeus confronted, see Grant, *Irenaeus*; K. King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage, 1979); B. A. Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

²⁴ For example, *Haer.* 1.3.3; 2.24.1-6. Irenaeus considers the “Gnostic” appropriation of Scripture as deliberately distorted, 1.8.1; 1.Preface.2; 3.16.8. See also the helpful discussion of L. Ayers, “Grammar, Anti-Valentinian Polemic and the Development of Patristic Exegesis AD 150–250” (Presented at NT Seminar; Durham, England, 2011), 22–37. Also J. T. Nielsen, *Adam and Christ in the Theology of Irenaeus of Lyons: An Examination of the Function of the Adam-Christ Typology in the Adversus Haereses of Irenaeus, Against the Background of the Gnosticism of His Time*. (Van Gorcum’s Theologische Bibliotheek; Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp. N. V., 1968), 5.

²⁵ For example, 3.25.3-5; 4.19.3. Some of the variations in “Gnosticism” involve three worlds or places. The intermediate one is the centre between heaven and earth. See Balthasar, *Glory*, 36.

²⁶ *Haer.*, book one.

apex of this spiritual realm existed the unknowable, perfect, divine Bythos, or Father, who by his very nature was disconnected from the distant, inferior material realm. This latter material world originated from an act of ignorance by Sophia (Achamoth), the daughter and latest formed aeon of the one true Father. Her passionate quest to seek after the Father resulted in the bringing forth of ‘a formless substance [material creation], namely, such a nature as a woman could bring forth. When she looked at it, she was filled first with grief on account of the unfinished nature of her offspring, then with fear lest her very existence should come to end’.²⁷ From the grief and fear of this fall of Sophia, all the corporeal elements of the world were brought forth.²⁸ Within most ‘Gnostic’ cosmologies creation has its origin in aeonic activities grounded in ignorance, grief, fear, and perplexity. And within these systems, the Creator identified in Gen 1, typically known as the Demiurge, was understood as a later emanation, with materiality constituting the furthest realm from primordial oneness,²⁹ and the spiritual and material realms had tenuous connections defined in terms of a radical dualism between good and evil, knowledge and deceit. This dualism made a clear distinction between the far-removed transcendent Father and the world of matter.

This thoroughgoing dualism had further implications for ‘Gnostic’ anthropology and soteriology. In most ‘Gnostic’ schemes, human beings, although composed of matter and flesh, had a ‘divine spark’ secretly implanted by their mother Achamoth.³⁰ Paul Santmire sets out the implications of this dualism within human nature. ‘From this perspective, then, humans are radically distinguished from the earth, as God is. Insofar as humans are carriers of the divine spark, the world is also an evil and hostile reality for them’.³¹ ‘Gnostics’ were

²⁷ 1.2.3 SC 264:40/41-42.

²⁸ See 1.2.2-3; 4.1.2. Francis Watson considers the *Sophia* fall narrative an early interpretation of Gen 3 and although this interpretation is certainly different from later interpretations, the inferences drawn are remarkably similar: “In both cases, our fallenness is a more fundamental truth about ourselves than our createdness. In both cases, we therefore have little stake in the created order, for our gaze must be directed not outward but upward and inward in view of our redemption through Jesus.” Watson, “Beginning,” 132. This theme is revisited in chapter six.

²⁹ 1.2.3 and 1.5.2-6 outline the details of this account from the Ptolemaean Valentinian perspective to which Irenaeus was responding. Within this cosmological framework, the Demiurge himself was duped because he believed the scriptural creation account and was unaware of the offspring of Achamoth. See particularly 1.5.3 and 2.5.3.

³⁰ 1.6.6; 1.7.1. This did not imply, however, that all human beings have this spark.

³¹ Santmire, *Travail*, 33.

particularly keen to demonstrate that the knowledgeable elite could be freed from the prison of material darkness through *gnosis*. The goal of salvation was to release the spiritual soul from the entrapments of the body and to ascend to one's transcendent destiny, to be united with the divine.³² Thus, the otherwise alien, transcendent Father could be accessed as humanity increased the spiritual and shed off the material. In relationship to this process, which blurred the lines between God and humanity, Julie Canlis observes, 'Despite the bravado of a resolutely dualist system, gnostic salvation can take place only when the differences between God and the world are erased: one is saved by virtue of the divinity one *already has*'.³³

According to the 'Gnostic' soteriology, knowledge of salvation came through the message of the Saviour Christ, who descended from the transcendent Father to reside temporarily within a material form in order to disclose to humanity their eternal potential revealed in the perfect knowledge of God.³⁴ This Saviour remained untainted by his human birth: 'This is he [Christ] who passed through Mary just as water passes through a tube'.³⁵ He received divinity at his baptism through the descent of the Pleroma and at his crucifixion he avoided suffering by ascending from the material body to the spiritual realm.³⁶ Since matter was unable to receive salvation, a clear distinction was drawn between the 'earthly' Jesus and the 'heavenly' Christ.³⁷ Final perfection and fulfillment would only come when all the spiritual seeds had ascended, having been awakened by Christ and stripped of materiality. Thus, 'Gnostic' soteriology is essentially an ascent *from creation*. When the process was complete, Sophia and the Saviour could be united in the nuptial chamber and become one with the Pleroma. In most 'Gnostic' cosmologies, the eschatological outcome for the material realm was destruction: 'When these things have taken place in that manner, they teach that

³² *Haer.* 1.21.4. Within the elaborate "Gnostic" system, human beings were delineated into two categories, the "higher spiritual" and the "lower carnal" or "animal"; only the higher spiritual beings have access to complete redemption.

³³ J. Canlis, "Being Made Human: The Significance of Creation for Irenaeus' Doctrine of Participation," *SJT* 58 (2005): 434–54 (443).

³⁴ *Haer.* 1.6.2. See also 1.5.6; 1.7,

³⁵ 1.7.2. *SC*, 264:102/103.

³⁶ 1.6.1; 1.7.2; 3.16.1. Both docetism and adoptionism were represented among Irenaeus' opponents.

³⁷ 3.17.4.

the fire which lies lurking in the world will blaze forth and be aflame, and having destroyed all matter will itself all be consumed along with matter, and pass into nothingness'.³⁸

5.2 The Irenaean Response

This pessimistic and dismal view of creation coupled with the bifurcation of the divine and human strikes Irenaeus as scandalous. He perceives that by effectively severing redemption from creation, his opponents challenge the very integrity of God, humanity, and the entire created realm. Such teaching not only results in a distorted relationship between Creator and creation, but also a denigration of both. Redemption becomes nothing but a remedy to ascend out of matter. To Irenaeus, such a worldview requires far more than a refutation, and so in response, he outlines a comprehensive eternal plan of the divine economy (οἰκονομία, *dispositio*), what P. Santmire describes as ‘a unified, universalized theology of creation history, from alpha to omega. The universal divine economy is the energizing theological dynamic of Irenaeus’ theological vision of reality’.³⁹ What becomes striking in an analysis of his response is how dependent Irenaeus is on the Pauline corpus, especially as he reads it in tandem with the strong incarnational theology of the Johannine corpus and other scriptural texts.⁴⁰ Given that Irenaeus blends Pauline texts with other scriptural texts, his methodological approach has often been the subject of scholarly criticism,⁴¹ yet as R. Pervo observes, ‘If one is seeking to create a theological synthesis, the practice [method employed by Irenaeus for reading Paul] is commendable’.⁴²

³⁸ 1.7.1., *SC* 264:102/103.

³⁹ Santmire, *Travail*, 44. E. Osborn also captures the expansive scope of the divine economy: “The coordinates of the economy are vertical (descent and ascent of God’s Son to redeem the earth) and horizontal (the unbroken line of God’s saving activity from the beginning to the end of time).” See E. F. Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 87.

⁴⁰ A succinct overview of Irenaeus’ use of Pauline texts in *Adversus haereses* is included in D. L. Balás, “The Use and Interpretation of Paul in Irenaeus’s Five Books *Adversus Haereses*,” *SecCen* (1992): 27–39. Included in this chapter are the Pauline texts that are most relevant to Irenaeus’ theology of creation. For a discussion of how Irenaeus merges Johannine material with Pauline, see E. Dassmann, *Der Stachel im Fleisch: Paulus in der frühchristlichen Literatur bis Irenäus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1979), 305–7.

⁴¹ The sentiment that Irenaeus was a polemically motivated and poor reader of Paul was especially prevalent during the nineteenth century; see for example, J. Werner, *Der Paulinismus des Irenaeus. Eine kirchen- und dogmengeschichtliche Untersuchung über das Verhältnis des Irenaeus zu der paulinischen Briefsammlung und Theologie* (TU; Leipzig, 1889). This interpretive trend shifted and that shift will be discussed later in the chapter.

⁴² Pervo, *Early Christianity*, 226.

My goal in this chapter is to outline a framework for understanding Irenaeus' theology of creation while identifying Pauline themes that undergird and inform his teaching on creation. M. Steenberg correctly notes that within the works of Irenaeus the theme of creation 'is obviously present, readily identifiable, yet [it] seems difficult to define with precision'.⁴³ These difficulties are directly related to his lack of systematical organization and the challenge in ascertaining his hermeneutical approach, especially as it is evaluated against modern historical-critical criteria. Given that there is a growing interest in theological interpretation of Scripture that is sensitive to intertextuality, interest in Irenaeus is also growing. My attempt to explicate Irenaeus' creation themes is a new conceptual framework that attempts to systematize the degree to which creation themes and motifs are thoroughly embedded within Irenaeus' theology. I have organized this framework around three primary pillars of Irenaeus' portrayal of the cosmic economy of God in Christ: the first pillar consists of the theocentric arguments that support Irenaeus' teaching on the sovereignty of the one Creator, who exists in triunity with the Son and Spirit; the second pillar which forms *the* interpretive key to Irenaeus' whole scheme, is the nature and integrity of the incarnate Jesus Christ; and the third pillar is an eschatological portrayal of creation that presents the climax to Irenaeus' creation project.

5.2.1 Pillar One: The Integrity and Unity of God Who Creates through His Two Hands, Son and Spirit

(a) The Motivating Principle of Creation

In agreement with 'Gnosticism', Irenaeus affirms that the *why* of creation is bound up with the *who* of creation,⁴⁴ yet Irenaeus' response to the *why* and *who* stands in diametric opposition to the 'Gnostic' response. One cardinal feature of Irenaeus' work is his characterization of creation as grounded in a good, loving, sovereign God. Although transcendent, this God is intimately involved with creation through his two hands, the

⁴³ Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 3.

⁴⁴ *Haer.* 4.19.2.

uncreated Word (Son) and the eternal Spirit (Wisdom):⁴⁵ ‘Now man is a mixture (*temperatio*/κρᾶσις) of soul and flesh, formed after the likeness of God, and moulded by His hands, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, to whom also he said, “Let us make man”’.⁴⁶ This rich triune language of God creating through his two hands, the Son and Spirit, is a signature metaphor of Irenaeus that according to Gunton, ‘enables him to give a clear account of how God relates to that which is not God: of how the creator interacts with his creation’.⁴⁷ Thus Irenaeus’ theology portrays an economic triunity that attests to a providential and engaged Creator.

Throughout his work, Irenaeus appeals to Scripture and apostolic tradition to affirm the Father as the one divine ἀρχή whose preexistent nature is co-equal in union with the Son and Spirit.⁴⁸ God directly creates ‘by the Word of His power’.⁴⁹ This theocentric foundation gets to the heart of the matter for Irenaeus. As Canlis observes, ‘To safeguard God is to safeguard the creation’.⁵⁰ Irenaeus emphatically draws a positive correlation between God and creation.

Therefore, there is one God, who by the Word and Wisdom made and harmonized everything. He is the Creator (Demiurge) who assigned this world to the human race. In his greatness, he is unknown to all who were made by him, for no one has investigated his height among the ancients or the moderns. In his love, however, he is always known through the one through whom he created everything. This is his Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the last times was made man so that he might join the end to the beginning, that is, man to God.⁵¹

Irenaeus does not hide his deep antipathy for the notion that the world originated from an inferior deity whose folly and ignorance brought forth unplanned progeny.⁵² This ‘Gnostic’ explanation for the origin of the world fueled an inferior ontology characterized by multiple

⁴⁵ The classic work of Wingren argues that the starting point for Irenaeus’ understanding of God is the sovereignty of God. Wingren, *Man*, 3. See also, Osborn, *Lyons*, 52–54.

⁴⁶ *Haer.* 4.preface.4, *SC* 100: 390; Cf. 2.2.4; 2.10.2-4; 2.30.9; 3.18.3; 3.22.2; 4.7.4; 4.20.1, 4; 4.33.7; 4.39.2; 5.1.3; 5.12.2. For an excellent secondary discussion of this metaphor, see Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 61–100.

⁴⁷ Gunton, *Triune*, 54; See also the discussion throughout Canlis, “Participation”.

⁴⁸ 3.1.1-2; cf. 2.30.9. In relationship to later trinitarian doctrine, Steenberg suggests Irenaeus’ theology “is a remarkable prolepsis of the discussion of future generations.” Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 114–15.

⁴⁹ 2.30.9; cf. 2.1-3.

⁵⁰ Canlis, “Participation,” 438.

⁵¹ *Haer.* 4.20.4, *SC* 100:634/635 (partial Gr.). Translation by Grant, *Irenaeus*, 151–52; cf. 2.30.9; 4.7.4.

⁵² 1.15.5; 1.16.3; 2.2.1-4; 2.4.1-2; interspersed throughout books one, two, and three.

gradations for humanity and the gods. With unrelenting resolve, Irenaeus appeals to Scripture to affirm creation as an extension of God's will, love, intention, and absolute freedom.⁵³

Drawing upon texts such as 1 Cor 8:6 and Eph 4:4-6, he concludes that every creature has its origin from God 'who contains all things, yet cannot Himself be contained. Now "all things" includes this world of ours, with man in it. So this world of ours too was created by God'.⁵⁴

Irenaeus' interpretations of Scripture conceptualize God's relationship with creation as a profound mystery whereby God's unity 'contains all things' while he simultaneously remains transcendent ('yet cannot Himself be contained'). Irenaeus also applies this relational attribute to the Son and Spirit.⁵⁵ As evident in *Adversus haereses* 4.20.4 (cited above), his doctrine of God is often discussed in tandem with an anthropology that acknowledges the inherent inability of humanity to fathom the mysteries of God. In stark contrast to spiritual 'Gnostics', Irenaeus highlights the limitation of human knowledge of God: 'If, therefore, even among things of the created world some are in God's keeping . . . we, with God's grace, explain some of the things, though we leave others in God's keeping'.⁵⁶

(b) *Creatio Ex Nihilo*

Another divine attribute important to the theology of Irenaeus is that God creates *ex nihilo*.⁵⁷ Moving conceptually further than all his Christian predecessors, Irenaeus recognizes God's creation *ex nihilo* as having far-reaching implications. Creation *ex nihilo* both undergirds his doctrine of God and brings clarity to his theology of the incarnation.⁵⁸ As the sovereign and *sole* pre-eternal being, God wills into existence a purposeful existence for all things, human and non-human. There can be no other origin for each entity within creation.

The reason for this is that men and women cannot make anything out of nothing, only out of matter that exists; God, however, is far superior to humankind inasmuch as he himself invented the matter of his work, since previously it did not exist.⁵⁹

⁵³ 1.2.3; 2.3.1-2; 2.16.3; 4.11.2; 4.39.2.

⁵⁴ *Epid.* 4-5; cf. 2.30.9; 47. Translation by Saward in Balthasar, *Scandal*, 19.

⁵⁵ For example, "Spirit of God, who contains all things," 5.2.3. Also, "For the Creator of the world is truly the Word of God: and this is our Lord, who in the last times was made man, existing in this world and who in an invisible manner contains all things created and is inherent in the entire creation," 5.18.3.

⁵⁶ 2.28.3, *SC* 294:274/274-275; cf. 2.25.2-4.

⁵⁷ Mackenzie, *Demonstration*, 92; Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 38-49; Osborn, *Lyons*, 69-73.

⁵⁸ *Haer.* 2.10.2; 2.10.4; 2.5.4; 2.30.9; 5.3.2-3; 5.18.1. See Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 32-49.

⁵⁹ 2.10.4, *SC* 294:90.

It is necessary that things that have come into being have received the origin of their being (ἀρχὴ γένεσεως) from some great cause; and the origin of all is God, for He Himself was not made by anyone, but everything was made by Him. And therefore it is proper, first of all, to believe that there is One God, the Father, who has created and fashioned all things, who made that which was not to be, who contains all and is alone uncontainable.⁶⁰

This feature of God's creative being affirms the motivating principle of creation as God's sovereign will and power rather than a need, necessity, reliance on, or response to anything. Demonstrating this creative independence is theologically critical to Irenaeus, for it undercuts the 'Gnostic' cosmologies where gods acted out of need, self-interest, or desire.⁶¹ He pointedly denounces such theories as 'incredible and foolish and impossible and unstable!'⁶² 'It is proper to God's preeminence not to be in need of other instruments for creating things to be made. His own Word is sufficient for the formation of all things'.⁶³

For Irenaeus, creation *ex nihilo* is not, however, a one-off statement about protology; he extends the concept to an illumination of the *ongoing* creative nature of God within history. In this way, he attributes a boundless attribute to the creativity of God who can transform corporeal flesh into incorporeal flesh and by citing Rom 4:17, he affirms that God can give life to that which is dead. As with every entity created by God, the incarnation stands uniquely willed and originating within God's nature for the purpose of redemption and the recapitulation of all things to God. Steenberg identifies the importance of this Irenaean christological doctrine: 'This [creation *ex nihilo*] is significant inasmuch as Christ's unique humanness is thus cosmic: he is able to become "Adam", and thus all humanity in the form of each human person, inasmuch as each human person *is* "Adam", since each is directly wrought by God. . . . *Unique* creation *ex nihilo* establishes the cosmic connection of the incarnate Christ to each created being, rather than simply to a generic substance somehow underlying it'.⁶⁴ Irenaeus' discussion of creation *ex nihilo* thus illustrates the free relational

⁶⁰ *Epid.* 4; cf. 2.10.4; 2.28.7; 4.20.2.

⁶¹ For example, Achamoth's reunion with the Pleroma was dependent on all of her seeds being brought to perfection, 1.7.1. Basilides taught that the Jewish God needed to establish the law in order to demonstrate his power and dominion over humanity, 1.14.4; 4.16.4.

⁶² 2.10.4, *SC* 294:90.

⁶³ 2.2.5, *SC* 294:40.

⁶⁴ Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 48. Italics in original.

dynamic within the divine, as well the way God extends goodness and redemption to all of creation. Redemption as embodied in the incarnation *is* predetermined by divine will.

For inasmuch as the Savior existed beforehand, it was necessary that what was to be saved should also exist, so that the Savior would not be something without a purpose . . . in point of fact, every economy of salvation that concerned humanity took place according to the Father's good pleasure.⁶⁵

God's power and wisdom and goodness are displayed simultaneously. He reveals His power and goodness by creating and establishing, by His own free will, things which have no previous existence. . . Thus God will have the primacy in all things, since He alone is uncreated and before all things; He causes everything to be.⁶⁶

5.2.2 Pillar Two: The Integrity of the Incarnation

(a) Incarnation and Protology: Mediating God to Creation

By delving into God's creation *ex nihilo*, Irenaeus directly links the question of *who* created things with the question of *why* things are, in fact, created.⁶⁷ For Irenaeus, in so far as the one creator God is omnipotent, benevolent, and holy, so also the creation *ex nihilo* is motivated by purposeful goodwill. Irenaeus reads Scripture as testifying to a divine economy (οἰκονομία, *dispositio*) established *prior* to the creation and then fulfilled in the recapitulation (ἀνακεφαλαίωσις, *recapitulatio*) of all things through the incarnate Jesus Christ *within* history.⁶⁸ In speaking of this divine economy, Irenaeus adopts the secular Hellenistic sense of the phrase, οἰκονομία, *dispositio* which indicates an arrangement or an orderly administration and which was often used to describe architecture and literary compositions.⁶⁹ In both secular and biblical texts, the meaning of the term often incorporated both the nominal sense (a plan/arrangement) and the verbal sense (an enactment or performance of the plan).⁷⁰ Unlike

⁶⁵ *Haer.* 3.22.3, *SC* 211:438; 3.23.1, *SC* 211:444.

⁶⁶ 4.38.3, *SC* 100:952, 954/953, 955; Translation by Saward in Balthasar, *Scandal*, 66–67. cf. Rom 4:17.

⁶⁷ This connection is reflected in other ancient authors. See for example, Philo, *Opif.* 21. “For if anyone should wish to examine the reason why this universe was constructed, I think he would not miss the mark if he affirmed, what one of the ancients also said, that the Father and maker was good.” Translation by D. T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses - Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (ed. G. Sterling; Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 51.

⁶⁸ The Latin *recapitulatio* occurs in *Haer.* 3.21.10; 3.23.1; 4.Preface.2; 4.2.1; 4.20.8; 5.12.4; 5.14.1; 5.19.1; 5.28.2; 5.29.2; 5.30.1. The phrase *dispositio Dei* occurs in 1.10.3; 3.21.1; 4.11.3; 5.2.2; 5.10.1; 5.13.2. See Osborn, *Lyons*, 74–140.

⁶⁹ See the very helpful discussions in Osborn, *Lyons*, 74–85; J. G. Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption. a Study in Pauline Theology* (NovTSup, Vol 27; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 120–23 and O. Michel, “οἰκονομία,” in *TDNT*, 5:151–53.

⁷⁰ See Luke 16:2-4 which combines these two concepts. Cf. 1 Cor 4:2; 9:17; Eph 3:2; Col 1:25.

the ‘Gnostic’ use of this term, which outlined a plan of salvation for the Aeons within the Pleroma, Irenaeus positions the incarnation as the central unifying point of the divine economy, squarely fixing the divine plan within, and for, creation. Nielsen highlights the importance of this term for Irenaeus: ‘When Irenaeus wishes to express in one word God’s salutary action, his plan and order of salvation as laid down in the O.T. and N.T. and comprising creation, salvation and completion, he uses the term οἰκονομία (*dispositio*)’.⁷¹ In relationship to this term, Eph 1:9-12 provides one of the most important organizing texts for Irenaeus’ theological articulation of a Christ centered vision of history moving from creation to eschatological fulfillment. This text from Ephesians provides the scriptural foundation for Irenaeus’ signature recapitulation theology.⁷²

For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will [τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ], according to the purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan [οἰκονομίαν] for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ [ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι⁷³ τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ], things in heaven and things on earth. In him, according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, we who first hoped in Christ have been destined [προορισθέντες] and appointed to live for the praise of his glory.⁷⁴

M. Steenberg points out that the Irenaeian reading of the economy of God parallels typical Jewish interpretations of creation. For example in Genesis Rabbah I, God is likened to an architect: ‘When a mortal builds a palace, he does not build it out of his head, but he follows a work-plan’.⁷⁵ Thus, in direct opposition to ‘Gnostic’ mythology, creation is not the result of a random primordial calamity nor a whimsical project.⁷⁶ For Irenaeus, the creation narrative provides the conceptual framework of the divine economy and proleptically anticipates the

⁷¹ Nielsen, *Adam*, 56–57. See also Grant, *Irenaeus*, 49–53.

⁷² *Haer.* 4.7.4; 5.29.1; cf. Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:9-10. See also Z. Hayes, *The Gift of Being: A Theology of Creation* (NTS 10; Minneapolis: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 102.

⁷³ See texts that develop this motif, 1.10.1; 3.16.6; 3.18; 5.20.2; 5.21.1. See discussion of ἀνακεφαλαιόομαι in Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption*, 118–20; H. Schlier, “κεφαλή, ἀνακεφαλαιόομαι,” TDNT, 673–82. Lawson, *Theology*, 140–61; Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus*, 1–33; Grant, *Irenaeus*, 50–53. Turner proposes a comprehensive definition of recapitulation which includes restoration, summation and iteration. H. E. Turner, *The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption: A Study of the Development of Doctrine During the First Five Centuries* (London: Mowbray, 1952), 63–72.

⁷⁴ Eph 1:9-12; The Adam-Christ typology of Rom 5:12ff also factors into the notion of recapitulation. Cf. Rom 8:28-29.

⁷⁵ Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 32. Genesis Rabbah I:1,2.D. The dating of Genesis Rabbah is difficult to establish, certainly later than Irenaeus, yet it is considered representative of an earlier tradition. Translation from J. Neusner, *Judaism’s Story of Creation: Scripture, Halakhah, Aggadah* (Brill Reference Library of Ancient Judaism; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 175.

⁷⁶ *Haer.* 5.29.1.

culmination of that divine economy in the Christ event.⁷⁷ Creation reflects the intentional, thoughtful plan of God who through the pre-existent Word and Spirit creates a world with relational creatures capable of comprehending and responding to divine initiative and gift.⁷⁸ Thus, Irenaeus concludes, ‘At the beginning it was not as if God needed man that He formed Adam, but to have someone to whom to present his benefits. . . . He Himself needed no one, but He bestowed communion with Himself on those who needed him. For those who were pleasing to Him, He sketched, like an architect, the plan of salvation’.⁷⁹

From beginning to end, this mediation of divine benefit to humanity is possible through God’s hands, Son and Spirit, as testified through Scripture and the apostolic witness. In *Epideixis*, Irenaeus outlines how the creative Word was present ‘before the world was made’ and, in direct fulfillment of OT prophecy, how the creative Word has mediated God’s grace to each generation.⁸⁰ The incarnation restores the ability of humanity, as material and spiritual beings, to fulfill their divinely intended eschatological purpose. Steenberg summarizes one aspect of this connection: ‘God creates, that creation might participate in his glory, his goodness, which is that shared eternally by Father, Son, and Spirit and exemplified by the Son’s incarnate relationship to the Father through the Spirit in the economy of salvation’.⁸¹ Likewise, Richard Pervo highlights the importance of the incarnation for the theology of Irenaeus: ‘For Irenaeus, the initial victory was not in the resurrection, but in the incarnation, by which the image of God was united with that of human beings’.⁸²

(b) Incarnation as Material and Spiritual: The Humanitas and Divinitas of Christ

Francis Watson identifies one of the key components of the Irenaeian project as ‘the need to demonstrate that the God revealed in Jesus is the God who created the heaven and earth’.⁸³ In

⁷⁷ 1.10.1; 3.16.6; 5.20.2. See the discussion of the centrality of the *oikonomia* for Irenaeus in Osborn, *Lyons*, 78.

⁷⁸ 3.25.5.

⁷⁹ 4.14.1-2, *SC* 100: 538, 544. Translation by Saward in Balthasar, *Scandal*, 104.

⁸⁰ *Epid.* 43 to 86; cf. 4.33.10. See also this excellent secondary discussion of these texts: Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 195–216.

⁸¹ Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 36. Gunton summarizes the eschatological trajectory in this way, “For Irenaeus, that which comes from nothing is destined to become *something* . . . *creation as that which is directed to an eschatological perfection.*” Gunton, *Triune*, 55. Italics in original.

⁸² Pervo, *Early Christianity*, 222.

⁸³ Watson, “Beginning,” 130. Also see Nielsen, *Adam*, 56. Cf. *Haer.* 3.16.5-6; 3.18; 3.19.

performing this task, Irenaeus contributes significantly toward an incarnational theology that links the *goodness* of God with the *goodness* of created matter. Through a careful weaving together of Scripture, Irenaeus articulates the ultimate paradox: that the uncreated spiritual Word became flesh and blood and reciprocally, that through flesh and blood, the uncreated Word unites the creation to God. *This is the heart of the divine oikonomia*: ‘It is evident that, having become man, he lived with his handiwork [men and women] and truly performed all things through God’s power according to the good pleasure of the Father of all things, as the prophets had foretold’.⁸⁴ For Irenaeus, this paradox did not occur through a ‘casting away of the flesh, but by the impartation of the Spirit’,⁸⁵ because the flesh itself is receptive to the Spirit and power of God (within this section he cites Eph 1:13; 2 Cor 5:4; and Rom 8:9 and, Rom 8:15). This scandalous claim, that the spiritual and material coalesce in the incarnate Jesus Christ, provides the *gnosis* that undercuts the entire ‘Gnostic’ scheme.⁸⁶ From every theological angle, Irenaeus teaches that the Incarnation functions to bind the Creator with the creation in a reciprocal relationship: ‘For it behooved *the Mediator of God and humanity*, by His kinship to both, to lead them back to friendship and concord, and to bring it about that God would take humankind to Himself, and that humankind would give itself to God’.⁸⁷

In opposition to the ‘Gnostic’ dualism that separated the pleromatic Christ from the earthy Jesus, Irenaeus argues for the unity of the incarnate Jesus Christ as real flesh (*plasmatio*) who as part of the creation experienced a human birth, suffered, died, and was raised. This organically links the plan of salvation history within and to material creation. As Blackwell suggests, ‘The fact that Christ suffered and died on the cross is central to his [Irenaeus’] Christology because it shows how divinity fully interacts with humanity’.⁸⁸

For Irenaeus, the integrity of the material and the spiritual within the Incarnation becomes the basis for his extensive typological reading of Adam and Christ and contributes to

⁸⁴ 2.32.5, *SC* 294:342. Irenaeus discusses the “Gnostic” bifurcation of the material and spiritual in Jesus Christ in 1.6-8.

⁸⁵ 5.8.1, *SC* 153:94.

⁸⁶ Developed throughout 3.16-23; for example, 3.16.3, 9; 3.18.1-3, 7.

⁸⁷ 3.18.7

⁸⁸ B. Blackwell, “Paul and Irenaeus,” in *Paul & The Second Century* (eds M. F. Bird and J. R. Dodson; New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 200.

his rich eucharistic theology. By way of extension, the goodness of the broader created realm is also affirmed.

(i) Incarnation as Human: Adam as a 'Type' of Christ

Paul's assertion that Adam 'is a type of the one to come' (ὅς ἐστιν τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, Rom 5:14) is an important intertextual link for a thoroughgoing christocentric reading of the creation narrative. As Holsinger-Friesen notes, 'The creation texts were irresistible and irreplaceable. Without them, Christ's soteriological work could not be connected with the larger narratives that related humanity to divinity and the cosmos'.⁸⁹ Within the economy of God, the recapitulation of Adam in Christ serves a double purpose. First, it authenticates the humanity of the incarnation, and second, it confirms the redemption of the material realm based upon the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Irenaeus sets out to demonstrate that Jesus had a fleshly birth, suffered as a human, and was resurrected in bodily form. Likewise Gen 1:26-27 functions as a principal text for Irenaeus informing his Christology and anthropology. Through a Pauline lens, Irenaeus concludes that Jesus Christ is the true image of God which was only anticipated in Adam.⁹⁰ Also, the teaching on the image of God in Jesus Christ is very much related to Irenaeus' teaching that humans were never uncreated, perfect, or immortal:

But the things He created come into existence later; their createdness has a beginning; and so they are of necessity inferior to the One who made them. . . . God had the power to give man perfection from the beginning, but man was incapable of receiving it, because he was an infant. This is why our Lord came to us in these last times, recapitulating all things in Himself, not as He might have done, but as we were capable of beholding Him.⁹¹

Irenaeus' reading of the creation narrative likens humans to *infants*, noting that in the beginning we are unable to ascertain or receive the full wisdom, knowledge, and perfection of God.⁹² Thus, inherent to human nature and scriptural history is a trajectory of growth from

⁸⁹ Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus*, 107. See also Nielsen, *Adam*.

⁹⁰ This will be developed further in chapter six where a more detailed analysis of Irenaeus' reading of the creation narrative is taken up.

⁹¹ *Haer.* 4.38.1, *SC* 100:944, 946/same for Gr. Translation by Seward in Balthasar, *Scandal*, 56. For a more extensive discussion of this concept, see R. F. Brown, "On the Necessary Imperfection of Creation: Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* IV, 38," *SJT* 28 (1975): 17–25.

⁹² Irenaeus develops this theme from Theophilus of Antioch, *ad Auto.* II, 25.

infancy to maturity. There is an evolutionary component to this theology,⁹³ with each period of God's economy helping prepare humanity for participation and union with God. Likewise, Irenaeus concludes that it was necessary for Jesus Christ to come as an infant in order to recapitulate each period of human growth in history: 'For that reason He also came [that is, lived] through every age, restoring to all the participation in God'.⁹⁴ The uncreated Word, as present throughout scriptural history, thus prefigures and guides humanity toward the historical moment of the incarnation. In building these kinds of arguments, Irenaeus' writings clearly reflect the influence of such Pauline texts as Rom 8:18-30.

Thus, humans were not perfect at the beginning — quite the contrary — yet their original creation in the likeness of God opens up potential for their eschatological perfection.⁹⁵ Irenaeus links this divine likeness with the human attribute of freewill and the ability to discern between good and evil.⁹⁶ Thus, through Jesus Christ's obedience in the incarnation and the endowment of the Spirit to humanity, human mortality is swallowed up by immortality.⁹⁷ In the fullest theological sense, 'In Christ's reality Adam's reality comes to its full truth'.⁹⁸

(ii) Incarnation and the Goodness of Creation

One clear implication of establishing the incarnation as a union of the spiritual and material is a theology that affirms the whole created realm. Irenaeus' conception of the relationship between God and creation undermines the 'Gnostic' portrayal of a supreme Father set against the creation and although the major focus for Irenaeus is the human-divine relationship, this conception *never severs God or humanity from the larger vision of the goodness and redemption of all of creation*. Creation 'is an aspect of the goodness of God'⁹⁹ and a gift to

⁹³ For one example of a discussion of the evolutionary elements in Irenaeus, see W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus* (trans. J. E. Steely, Nashville/New York: Abingdon, 1970), 442–46.

⁹⁴ *Haer.* 3.18.7, *SC* 211:366; cf. 2.22.4; 4.38.2. This trajectory leads Irenaeus to conclude that Jesus died at an advanced age of more than forty years old. This was necessary so that he could recapitulate each stage of human existence, see 2.22.5-6.

⁹⁵ Irenaeus' interpretation of likeness (*homoiosis*) is discussed in more detail later in 2.2.3.

⁹⁶ *Haer.* 4.37.4.

⁹⁷ 4.38.4; cf. 1 Cor 15:54-55.

⁹⁸ Balthasar, *Glory*, 52.

⁹⁹ *Haer.* 4.39.2, *SC* 100:966, 968; cf. 4.7.4; 4.19.2; 5.29.1.

humanity: ‘For the Son, who is the Word of God, arranged these things beforehand from the beginning . . . in order that He might call the creation into being, and form man, for whom also the creation was made’.¹⁰⁰ Elsewhere Irenaeus describes creation as revelatory, ‘Really, creation itself manifest him who created it, and the work itself suggest him who made it; and the world manifests him who put order into it’.¹⁰¹ And a similar Irenaeian passage echoes Rom 1 stating, ‘Through the creation itself, the Word reveals God to Creator, and through the work of art the Artist who fashioned it and through the Son the Father who begets the Son. . . .’¹⁰² In one of his most notable passages about the goodness of creation, Irenaeus develops an artistic analogy of creation as a harmonious musical composition where the proper interrelatedness of God, creation, and humanity contributes to the beauty and comprehension of the melody that is produced:

It is with great wisdom and delicate care that God confers proportion and harmony on what He has made. . . . Created things, in their great number and diversity, fit beautifully and harmoniously into the creation as a whole . . . and *those who listen to the melody ought to praise and glorify the Artist, and admire the tension of some notes, appreciate the relaxation in others, enjoy the moderation of those between the two extremes. Recalling that some things are symbols, they will consider what it is that each thing points to and what causes it. But they will never alter the rule, nor stray from the Artist, nor abandon faith in the one God who made all things, nor blaspheme our Creator. When someone fails to find the cause of all that he is investigating, he should recall that man is infinitely inferior to God. . . . Man, you are not uncreated, and you have not existed from eternity with God, as His own Word has done. No, by His overflowing goodness you received the beginning of your existence, and have gradually learned from the Word the dispositions of the God who made you.*¹⁰³

The depth of such a creation theology goes beyond simply affirming the goodness of creation. The interplay between the Creator, creation, and humanity within the cosmos generates an exchange where the humble, reflective posture of humanity toward creation is characterized by gratitude and doxology to God: ‘those who listen to the melody ought to praise and glorify the Artist’.¹⁰⁴ Behr suggests that a grateful response is an important feature of the divine economy: ‘It is, thus, as we have continually seen throughout our investigation of Irenaeus’

¹⁰⁰ 4.7.4, *SC* 100:462, 464/463.

¹⁰¹ 2.9.1, *SC* 294:84; cf. Rom 1. For a secondary discussion, see Balthasar, *Glory*, 72–73.

¹⁰² 4.6.6, *SC* 100: 448; Translation by Saward in Balthasar, *Scandal*, 46. cf. 2.34.2; 3.8.3.

¹⁰³ Selections from 2.25.1-3, *SC* 294:250, 252, 254; emphasis mine. Translation by Balthasar, *Scandal*, 40–41.

¹⁰⁴ See also 2.39.3.

theology of the economy, a matter of the receptiveness of man to the gifts of God and his thankfulness for them: his thankful use of the material things provided by God, in and through which he learns whence his life has its source, and an attitude of thankfulness, through which he comes to share ever more fully in that life'.¹⁰⁵ This relational theology of creation comes to its fullest expression within Irenaeus' understanding of the Eucharist.

(iii) Incarnation and the Eucharist

Within the divine economy, the Eucharist becomes an expression of the incarnation in two significant ways. First, it binds and affirms the divine and material realms, and second, it simultaneously communicates the pledge of redemption. Yet for Irenaeus, the Eucharist is not only *symbolic*; it is also efficacious. When bread and wine are joined with the power of the Word of God and the fecundity of the Spirit, a union of 'earthly and heavenly' results. The eucharistic elements nourish Christians and prepare them for taking on immortality. Behr summarizes this relatedness: 'Christians themselves, therefore, need to use the fruits of the world eucharistically, for it is by these that they are prepared for the resurrection and the gift of incorruptibility'.¹⁰⁶ Within wine and bread, a harmonious exchange between God, humanity, and the elements of creation transpires. This extends divine nourishment, salvation, and service to humanity:

And because we are his members, we are nourished by means of creation, the creation which He Himself gives us by making His sun to rise and sending the rain as He pleases. The cup, which is part of creation, He declares to be His Blood, by which our own blood is fortified, and the bread, which is part of creation, He affirms to be His Body, by which our own body is fortified. . . . The stem of the vine takes root in the earth and eventually bears fruit, and "the grain of wheat falls into the earth" (John 12:24), dissolves, rises again, multiplies by the all-containing Spirit of God, and finally, after skilled processing, is put to human use. These two then receive the Word of God and become the Eucharist, which is the Body and Blood of Christ'.¹⁰⁷

Irenaeus envisions the Eucharist as originating from the material realm and as an extension of the risen Christ to humanity. He argues that if the wine and bread are *not* in communion with

¹⁰⁵ J. Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 74.

¹⁰⁶ Behr, *Asceticism*, 73.

¹⁰⁷ *Haer.* 5.2.2-3, *SC* 153: 32, 36/33, 37; Translation by Saward in Balthasar, *Scandal*, 90–91; cf. 3.2.5; 3.11.5; 4.18.4-5.

Christ's blood and body, then one does not partake of salvation nor receive forgiveness; both are bound up in the flesh and blood of Christ, now embodied in the created elements.

Irenaeus' eucharistic theology is based on two key Pauline texts, 1 Cor 10:16-17 and 1 Cor 11:23-26.¹⁰⁸

Hans Urs von Balthasar understands Irenaeus' perspective concerning the Eucharist as the ultimate case against 'Gnostic' dualism: 'The living second Adam finally also enters into bread and wine, into products of the earth, in order to recapitulate in himself not just man but also nature and the cosmos, the most deeply realistic earth'.¹⁰⁹ In a correlative way to the incarnation, the Eucharist functions as a visible manifestation; it enables humanity to have communion with God: 'the incomprehensible through the comprehensible, and the invisible through the visible, since he does not exist outside of the father, but in his bosom'.¹¹⁰

(c) Incarnation and Soteriology

In keeping with his interpretive pattern, Irenaeus considers redemption through the framework of the divine οἰκονομία, linking soteriology to the beginning (protology) and end (eschatology) of all things. As already noted, Irenaeus does not believe humanity was perfect at the moment of creation. Contrary to later theological developments in the Western tradition, Irenaeus does not interpret Gen 3 as a catastrophic fall from perfection and immortality into an abyss of sin. In these more recent constructs, redemption takes on a decidedly anthropocentric focus; it is articulated within a pre- and post-*lapsidic* framework, with the so-called fall narrative as the defining text: Christ comes to redeem humanity from its fallen nature to restore humankind to Edenic perfection. Inevitably, within such soteriological frameworks, broader themes of creation are relegated to the margins.¹¹¹

Because Irenaeus primarily links redemption with creation (Gen 1-2) instead of the fall (Gen 3), his soteriological framework has a different emphasis. He interprets the

¹⁰⁸ For example, 4.17.5; 4.18.4-5; 5.2.2.

¹⁰⁹ Balthasar, *Glory*, 55.

¹¹⁰ *Haer.* 3.11.5, *SC* 211:154.

¹¹¹ Watson briefly discusses this, whereas Steenberg and MacKenzie provide a more comprehensive explanation. See Watson, "Beginning," 129–30; Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 153–93; Mackenzie, *Demonstration*, 111–30.

incarnation as having two distinct yet related redemptive functions. Because human beings, in accord with their nature as created beings, lack perfection and knowledge, they sin and are in need of redemption. He defines such sin as the *abuse of free will*, which is depicted in Gen 3 as disobedience, not as a *fall* that alters human nature. In this first sense, Christ redeems humanity, enabling humans to be redirected toward God in obedience.

The second soteriological function is inclusive of the first, yet it is far more expansive. Santmire notes the comprehensive scope of Irenaeus' soteriology: 'Irenaeus begins with the temporal beginning of the creation, as we have seen, and envisions *one act* of God, one divine economy, aimed at bringing the entire creation of a new status to a final fulfillment through the Word and the Spirit'.¹¹² Thus, the second function of soteriology is to bring the entire creation to eschatological perfection.¹¹³

(i) Soteriology as the Redemption of Sin: The Redirection of Human Free Will toward God

Just as the Adam-Christ typology informs Irenaeus' anthropology and Christology, it also informs his soteriology. He draws upon Pauline themes from 1 Cor 15:53-4, 2 Cor 5:4, and Gal 4:5 to communicate the accomplishment of the divine purpose in the Incarnation.

On the contrary, what He seemed to be, that He also was, namely, God, who recapitulated in Himself the ancient handiwork of man [Adam], that He might kill sin and destroy death and give life to humankind. And for this reason His works are true. . . . For the Word of God became man, and he who is God's Son became the Son of Man to this end, [that man,] having been united with the Word of God and receiving adoption, might become a son of God. Certainly in no other way could we have received imperishability and immortality unless we have been united with imperishability and immortality. But how could we be united with imperishability and immortality unless imperishability and immortality had first become what we are, in order that the perishable might be swallowed up by imperishability, and the mortal by immortality, that *we might receive the adoption of sons?*¹¹⁴

The key for Irenaeus' soteriology is the humanity of the incarnation, which he identifies most vividly through the comparison of Christ with Adam. Human nature from the beginning, 'from Adam', has been characterized by the potential to disobey.¹¹⁵ Important here is the connection that Irenaeus makes between the 'likeness of God' and human free will: 'Because

¹¹² Santmire, *Travail*, 41.

¹¹³ Discussed in 5.2.3.c.iii.

¹¹⁴ *Haer.* 3.18.7, *SC* 211:370/371; 3.19.1, *SC* 211:374/375, emphasis mine; see also 3.22.2; 4.22.1.

¹¹⁵ Rom 5:14.

man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created, advice is always given to him to keep fast the good, which thing is done by means of obedience to God'.¹¹⁶ The motif of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from Gen 3 symbolizes this latter point, that humans can choose obedience or disobedience: 'God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (*ad utendum sententia*) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God . . . and not merely in works, but also in faith, as God preserved the will of man free and under his own control'.¹¹⁷

Genesis 3 depicts the *first* sin, which for Irenaeus represents the kind of universal abuse of free will that is inherent in human nature. His detailed interpretation of post-Edenic history (Gen 3-11) depicts humanity as increasingly susceptible to disobedience and culpable to the snares of Satan, whom Irenaeus views as the primary protagonist within the Gen 3 narrative.¹¹⁸ He also cites Rom 4:2-7 and 1 Cor 6:12 to affirm that human were created with free will: 'For it is in man's power to disobey God, and to forfeit what is good. . . . And on this account Paul says, "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient"'.¹¹⁹

As beings created according to the image and likeness of God (who alone has absolute freedom), humans are endowed with a relative freedom corresponding to their created nature and stature. For Irenaeus, scriptural history testifies to the need of humanity to be redeemed from their propensity to sin. The love of God in the incarnation, perfected within humanity through the indwelling of the Spirit, is the avenue for this possibility: 'In His immeasurable love, He became what we are in order to make us what He is'.

(ii) Soteriology as the Redemption and Immortality of the Flesh

It has been noted that compared to his attentive commentary on the incarnation, Irenaeus gives a seemingly disproportionate lack of commentary to the death and resurrection of Jesus

¹¹⁶ *Haer.* 4.37.4, *SC* 100:932.

¹¹⁷ 4.37.1, 5, *SC* 100:918, 932.

¹¹⁸ For an outstanding and detailed account of the christological readings of Genesis 1-11 and the substantive role that the serpent plays in the narrative, see Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 153–212.

¹¹⁹ Developed throughout *Haer.* 4.37-39. Here citing 4.37.4, *SC* 100:928/929. Irenaeus also cites Eph 4:25-32 and 1 Cor 6:11. See secondary discussion in Behr, *Asceticism*, 43–52.

Christ.¹²⁰ For example, he never questions the historical fact of resurrection but rather approaches it as self-evident. As might be anticipated, he emphasizes the fleshly nature of the resurrection, ascension, and future return of Jesus Christ:¹²¹ ‘He [Jesus Christ] will also come in the same flesh in which he suffered, in order to reveal the glory of the Father’.¹²² In contrast, he considers the ‘Gnostic’ denial of bodily resurrection to be homicidal because it eliminates this aspect of the work of God.¹²³ In *Adversus haereses* 5.13.2, Irenaeus charges that the entire economy of God (*universa dispositio Dei*) is undermined by this one teaching. First Corinthians 15:50 is the principal text here and Irenaeus’ response culminates in an exegetical *tour de force*.¹²⁴

Drawing upon what Irenaeus takes to be the Pauline teaching of the threefold nature of humans as flesh, soul, and Spirit in 1 Thess 5:23, he argues that all three were intact at the resurrection of Jesus and extends this to all mortal humans, who are all moulded after the image of God.¹²⁵ He then argues that the Spirit gives life to bodies by drawing upon Spirit-flesh motifs in Rom 8:11, 1 Cor 3:16, 6:15, 13:9-12 and 15:42-44, Gal 6, and Eph 1:13-14.¹²⁶ He also cites Col 1:15-18 to connect Jesus, as ‘the first-begotten from the dead’, with the future bodily resurrection of all humanity, both occurring *ex una substantia*.¹²⁷ Those humans who died prior to the incarnation — Abraham, Moses, and the prophets — and those who died following the incarnation will rise bodily to immortality and glorification.¹²⁸ Just as the nature of the incarnation is ontologically dependent on Jesus Christ being born of real flesh, which experiences pain and death, redemption is also dependent on the resurrection of the material flesh.

¹²⁰ *Epid.* 83-88. See, Mackenzie, *Demonstration*, 215–23; Lawson, *Theology*, 186–97.

¹²¹ Developed in *Haer.* 5.1-14 and 5.31-32. See T. Hart, “Irenaeus, Recapitulation and Physical Redemption,” in *Christ in Our Place, the Humanity of God in Christ for the Reconciliation of the World* (eds T. Hart and D. Thimell; Exeter: Paternoster, 1989), 152–81. Also, see Balás, “Paul,” 36–37. Throughout this section certain Pauline texts are presupposed, for example, 1 Cor 10:16, Eph 3:19, Col 1:14 and 1 Tim 2:6.

¹²² 3.16.8, *SC* 211:320/321 (partial Gr.). See also *Epid.* 84.

¹²³ For example, 1.30.13; 5.2.2; 5.9.1; 5.13.2. See also D. J. Bingham, “Irenaeus Reads Romans 8: Resurrection and Renovation,” in *Early Patristic Readings of Romans* (eds. K. L. Gaca and L.L. Welborn; London: T & T Clark, 2005), 114–32.

¹²⁴ 5.9-14. Further discussed in §6.2.1.c.

¹²⁵ 5.6.2.

¹²⁶ 5.6.2; 5.7.1-8.2; 5.10.2-11.1. See also Bingham, “Romans 8”.

¹²⁷ 4.2.4, *SC* 100:404.

¹²⁸ 3.16-18; 4.20; 4.38.3-4; 5.14. Irenaeus is deeply dependent on Pauline texts here: 1 Cor 15, 2 Cor 4, and Phil 3. See also Blackwell, “Irenaeus,” 203.

(iii) Soteriology as the Perfecting of All Things

Irenaeus' conception of the plan to redeem humanity from sin is very much related to his larger soteriological vision of the participation and union of all things with God. Irenaeus understands movement toward this eschatological reality as inaugurated from the very beginning and enacted within history by the triune God: 'And so, through this disposition (*taxis*) and by such rhythms (*rhythmos*) and with such guides (*anagōgē*) man, who has been produced and shaped, is led towards the image and likeness of the ungenerate God. In all this the Father approves and prescribes, the Son executes and forms, the Spirit nourishes and increases, while man gently advances and moves towards perfection, in order, that is, to approach the Uncreated'.¹²⁹

For Irenaeus, the Incarnation thus serves as the redemptive hinge that unites the Uncreated with the created: 'transcendence has been redefined by the incarnation, and thus is transformed into humanity's path to union with God'.¹³⁰ This particular motif of movement toward perfection is drawn from such Pauline texts as Rom 8:28-30, 2 Cor 3:17-18, and Col 3:9-10, where humanity is described as in the process of being transformed into the image of Christ. Irenaeus also cites Rom 8 to link the salvation and glorification of humanity with the perfection of the whole of creation. The bodily resurrection makes union with God possible, enabling humanity to grow into the perfection and glory of God, 'attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God'.¹³¹ Drawing a correlation between the fleshly nature of Jesus, as dependent upon elements of the creation, and salvation, Irenaeus concludes, 'For all things are indications of the flesh that was taken from the earth, which He recapitulated in Himself, thus saving His handiwork'.¹³² Just as creation *ex nihilo* is not a one-off event, neither is redemption a one-off event. As the *hinge* of God's economy, the incarnate Christ recapitulates all things prior and catapults all things following toward eschatological completion, and this results in the glory of God.¹³³

¹²⁹ 4.38.3, SC 100:954, 956/955, 957. Translation by Balthasar, *Glory*, 77 from Harvey, *Irenaeus, Vol II*, 296.

¹³⁰ Canlis, "Participation," 437.

¹³¹ *Haer.* 5.1.1, SC 153:20.

¹³² 3.22.2, SC 211:436/437.

¹³³ 4.20; 4.38.3-4.

5.2.3 Pillar Three: The Climax of Creation in the Economy of God

(a) A Modified Chiliastic Vision

The eschatological process of growth and maturity centers on the incarnate Christ — inaugurated through the Son at the beginning of creation, enabled by the Spirit within history, and propelled forward toward the eschatological climax where the risen Christ will unite all things back to God. Thus, just as redemption is bound to creation, in the Irenaean framework, the *telos* is also bound to creation. Employing a rather literal interpretation of the apocalyptic texts of the OT and the New, and in keeping with the interpretive traditions of his day,¹³⁴ Irenaeus outlines a chiliastic vision of the kingdom of God that according to Steenberg, has ‘long plagued Irenaean scholars’.¹³⁵ This elaborate unfolding of the eschatological plan is described most thoroughly in *Adversus haereses* 5.25-35. Each period of history corresponds to the six days of creation and is interpreted through 2 Pet 3:8; each day is likened to a thousand years. The seventh day, God’s Sabbath, corresponds to and is brought to completion in the final eschatological period of the kingdom of God, the contours of which are understood through Christ who ‘joined the beginning to the end, and is the Lord of both’.¹³⁶ Just as in the beginning the intention and love of God was made known through the Son, in the end it is the same Son who, after the millennial kingdom is complete, will hand over the perfected creation to the Father. Thus, as Steenberg states, ‘It is precisely because the Son is both creator and redeemer, the alpha and omega, the foundation and the perfection of creation, that Irenaeus’ chiliasm and his protology are inextricably woven together, each influencing the other’.¹³⁷ In this way, Irenaeus is explicating the saving work of God in Christ within a theology of creation and new creation.

Outlining the specifics of Irenaeus’ eschatological interpretations is not as important here as identifying the over-arching contours of his vision. However one might evaluate the chiliastic details of his teaching, the eschatological portrayal effectively counters the

¹³⁴ For example, Daniel, 2 Thess, Rom 8, Revelation, and a variety of texts from the Gospels. For important secondary discussions see, Lawson, *Theology*, 279–91; C. R. Smith, “Chiliasm and Recapitulation in the Theology of Irenaeus,” *VC* 48, no. 4 (1994): 313–31; Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 49–60.

¹³⁵ Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 50.

¹³⁶ *Haer.* 4.34.4, *SC* 100:858; cf. 5.30.4; 5.33.2.

¹³⁷ Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 50. See also Lawson, *Theology*, 283–91.

‘Gnostic’ flight from the material realm, denigration of the flesh, and expectation of the final destruction of created matter. The most prominent eschatological themes for Irenaeus are the inheritance of the earth and human participation with God. For Irenaeus, the climax of creation is not merely a return to the beginning but also a fulfillment that culminates in a new, transformed reality with a distinct theistic vision where God will be all in all and ‘everywhere the Saviour shall be seen according as they who see Him shall be worthy’.¹³⁸

(i) The Inheritance of the Earth

Irenaeus clearly perceives the kingdom of God as the fulfillment of God’s promise of land to Abraham.¹³⁹ During the period prior to the final era, the reign of the antichrist will cause destruction to the creation — ‘he shall have devastated all things in this world’¹⁴⁰ and ‘he shall also come and devour the earth, and the fulness thereof, the city also, and they that dwell therein’¹⁴¹-- yet when the Lord descends, he will restore to the heirs of Abraham ‘the promised inheritance’,¹⁴² raise the dead, and ‘give them a place in His kingdom’.¹⁴³ God’s promise of the inheritance of land to Abraham and his descendants will at the *telos* come to fulfillment with Christ recapitulating the inheritance and restoring the earth.¹⁴⁴

Now God made promise of the earth to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed, that is, those who are justified by faith, do now receive any inheritance in it; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For God is true and faithful; and on this account He said, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. . . . He [Christ] will Himself renew the inheritance of the earth, and will re-organize the mystery of the glory of [His] sons. . . . The inheritance of the earth in which the new fruit of the vine is drunk, and the resurrection of His disciples in their flesh. For the new flesh which rises again is the same which also received the new cup.”¹⁴⁵

Incorporating Rom 8 into this framework, Irenaeus concludes, ‘It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition, should without restraint be under the

¹³⁸ *Haer.* 5.36.1, *SC* 153:456/457. See also 3.16.6.

¹³⁹ It is unclear whether Rom 4:13, which states that the inheritance promised to Abraham was the κόσμος, influenced Irenaeus at this point.

¹⁴⁰ *Haer.* 5.30.4, *SC* 153:386.

¹⁴¹ 5.30.2, *SC* 153:378; cf. Jer 8:16. Irenaeus applies the recapitulation motif to the antichrist who recapitulates all the former evil deeds done in history beginning with the serpent in the garden. See for example, 5.24-26; C. R. Smith, “Chiliasm,” 324–25.

¹⁴² 5.30.4, *SC* 153:386.

¹⁴³ 4.22.2, *SC* 100:688.

¹⁴⁴ This is a repeated theme throughout 5.25-35.

¹⁴⁵ 5.32.2-33.1, *AC* 153:404, 406. Translation from ANF.

dominion of the righteous'.¹⁴⁶ Paul Santmire suggests that the metaphor of 'migration to a good land' best depicts this eschatological motif, which depicts in the fullest sense the major theme of the goodness of God and the goodness of creation present in the divine economy.¹⁴⁷ Irenaeus incorporates imagery from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation that envisions a harmony and perfection within the created order, including relationships between animals and in the production of food.¹⁴⁸ Near the end of *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus summarizes this eschatological theme:

The apostle, too, has confessed that the creation shall be free from the bondage of corruption, [so as to pass] into the liberty of the sons of God. And in all these things, and by them all, the same God the Father is manifested, who fashioned man, and gave promise of the inheritance of the earth to the fathers, who brought it (the creature) forth [from bondage] at the resurrection of the just, and fulfils the promises for the kingdom of His Son.¹⁴⁹

(ii) Participation with God: A Theocentric Climax

In inheriting the earth, humans are invited to participate with God in the eschatological climax, a process that is manifest through the perfecting of humanity into the image of Christ. J. Canlis and I. MacKenzie highlight this Irenaeian theme, demonstrating that for Irenaeus, participation with God lies at the heart of the eschatological plan of the divine economy.¹⁵⁰ Relying heavily on Rom 8, Irenaeus links the redemption of the earth with the 'glorious liberty' of humanity. This is the *telos* to which the divine *paedagogia* of humanity is directed, prefigured in creation history, and progressing in accord with the discretion of the triune God; the entire creation is moving forward toward the climax of creation.

But how do humans participate with God in this climax? How does one come to *see* God? According to Irenaeus, in the past, God was seen 'prophetically through the *Spirit* and seen too, adoptively through the *Son*', and in the future, God 'will also be seen *paternally* in the kingdom of heaven; the Spirit truly preparing man in the Son of God, and the Son leading him to the Father, while the Father, too, confers [upon him] incorruption for eternal life'.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ 5.32.1.

¹⁴⁷ Santmire, *Travail*, 38–39.

¹⁴⁸ *Haer.* 5.33.4; 5.34.1.

¹⁴⁹ 5.36.3, *SC* 153:464; Translation from ANF, citing Rom 8:21.

¹⁵⁰ Canlis, "Participation"; Mackenzie, *Demonstration*.

¹⁵¹ *Haer.* 4.20.5, *SC* 100:638; For a discussion on this motif, see M. A. Donovan, "Alive to the Glory of God: A Key Insight in St. Irenaeus'," *TS* 49, no. 2 (1988): 288.

This final stage is complete when ‘man, having embraced the Spirit of God, might pass into the glory of the Father’¹⁵² and become ‘a perfect work of God’.¹⁵³

This eschatological climax is *theocentric*: humans partake of the glory of God so that as uniquely created relational beings, they may thank and worship God.¹⁵⁴ MacKenzie captures the significance of this eschatological nuance: ‘Thankfulness involves the totality of being so that it expresses the image of God by participation in and communion with the One who is himself the Image of God’.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the eschatological fulfillment is theocentric: ‘For the glory of God is the living man, and the life of man is the vision of God’.¹⁵⁶

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, it has not been possible to provide a comprehensive analysis of Irenaeus’ theology of creation; nevertheless, I have provided enough substance that we may make some key observations concerning its overall structure. Each of the threads of Irenaeus’ creation theology are woven together within his comprehensive divine economy, discussed here within a three-pillar organization. Central to the broadest Irenaean theological categories of creation, redemption, and eschatological fulfillment is the unity of the triune God who, through the incarnate Jesus Christ, has created all things and has sovereignty over all things. Irenaeus’ anthropology distinguishes humans as unique relational creatures who are organically bound with Jesus Christ and the material creation. Fleshly bodies, endowed with the Spirit, are in the process of being glorified; they are being brought into union with God and into the full knowledge of God. Within this cosmic *oikonomia*, one profound feature identified by Irenaeus is that human beings are not simply put back on course, but they are caught up into the very essence and love of God. In Christ, the new covenant *absorbs* the old, ‘which through the Gospel raises up and bears men on its wings to the heavenly kingdom’.¹⁵⁷ In fact, the entire creation, as the ultimate expression of God’s love, exists for Irenaeus as a harmonious whole

¹⁵² 4.20.4, SC 100:636; 5.14.1; 5.35.2.

¹⁵³ 4.39.2, SC 100:968. Translation from ANF. Especially see Canlis, “Participation.”

¹⁵⁴ 4.14.1.

¹⁵⁵ Mackenzie, *Demonstration*, 41.

¹⁵⁶ *Haer.* 4.20.7, SC 100:648. Translation by Saward in Balthasar, *Scandal*, 153.

¹⁵⁷ 3.11.8, SC 211:170/171 (partial Gr.).

and is caught up in this cosmic plan of God in Christ. As I have attempted to outline, Irenaeus' entire theological framework is shaped by the conviction that creation is central to the biblical narrative framework and the Pauline literature is formative for his construal.

In the face of 'Gnostic' dualism, which denied each of these ideas, Irenaeus draws deeply from the teaching of Paul, crafting innovative intertextual interpretations out of his intricate fusion of redemption with creation and eschatological new creation. He reflects deeply on the incarnate nature of Christ as *plasma* and insists on the incarnational reality of the Eucharist. J. Bassler summarizes Irenaeus' reading of Scripture as 'the one versus the many. . . . the oneness of God (versus Gnostic separation of the Gods of the OT and NT or the plurality of the Aeons), the oneness of Christ (versus the Gnostic separation of Jesus and the Christ), the unity of the body (versus Gnostic separation of spirit and flesh)'.¹⁵⁸

Having outlined the basic theological framework of Irenaeus' divine economy, I will now turn my attention in chapter six to the hermeneutical and exegetical conventions that shape his reading of Scripture, especially in his employment of Paul, and then, in chapter seven, I will conclude by drawing out the implications of Irenaeus and Paul for ecotheology.

¹⁵⁸ J. M. Bassler, "A Response to Jeffrey Bingham and Susan Graham: Networks and Noah's Sons," in *Early Patristic Readings of Romans* (eds K.L. Gaca and L.L. Welborn; Romans Through History and Cultures Series; New York/London: T & T Clark, 2005), 133–51 (139).

Chapter Six

Irenaeus and Paul

6.1 Hermeneutical and Exegetical Conventions

Having outlined and systematized Irenaeus' creation theology in broad strokes, I now focus more intently on an analysis and evaluation of his employment of Pauline texts within this framework. The key question guiding this inquiry is this: *How might the theological matrix of texts that Irenaeus weaves together establish a trajectory for reconceptualizing Paul's teaching on creation as outlined in chapters two, three, and four?* I begin with a brief analysis of the current scholarship on Irenaeus' reading of Paul. Then, in order to fully appreciate *how* Irenaeus reads Paul and how he arrives at this reading, I analyze the presuppositions that Irenaeus brings to the interpretive task -- what I call the prolegomena to the hermeneutical task (§6.1.2). Identifying this feature of Irenaeus' work is helpful because at this point in history, there were not yet established criteria for determining acceptable interpretations, much less an established canon. Thus, in response to the 'Gnostic' interpretations, Irenaeus was compelled to propose standards or parameters to evaluate any given interpretation. What Irenaeus proposed eventually paved the way for some of the earliest criteria for biblical hermeneutics and exegetical practices.

Outlining Irenaeus' presuppositions is also important because it demonstrates how his hermeneutical conventions significantly differ from modern biblical exegetical approaches. Irenaeus does not employ a modern biblical interpretive method of exegesis that focuses on the historical, sociological, literary, and/or rhetoric contexts of individual texts to extrapolate meaning -- an approach that is dominant in my own work in chapters two through four. Irenaeus has a different agenda altogether. He approaches Scriptures more as a 'thesaurus' or a 'treasury' of motifs, words, images, and stories which when linked and woven together shed light on Christ as the key to the divine economy. Thus, a christological pattern of thought emerges throughout his work.¹ He does not interpret Scripture as simply written to describe

¹ See for example, *Haer.* 4.20.8. Here Irenaeus expounds upon Ps 21:16 as pointing toward the incarnation of Christ, "In this manner, therefore, they did also see the Son of God as a human conversing with human beings; they prophesied what was to happen, saying that the one who was not come as yet is present [*eum qui*

what happened in the past nor is his goal to reveal the ‘original meaning’ of a text; rather, he approaches Scripture as a relevant revelation about Christ for his present community of believers.² Although there is not one single interpretive method to Irenaeus’ hermeneutics, I here outline his approach to biblical interpretation, giving special attention to the Pauline corpus so that modern readers may become more knowledgeable about how a pre-Nicean and pre-modern reader might inform and perhaps correct certain modern assumptions when reading Scripture.

6.1.1 Background and Current Scholarship on Irenaeus’ Reading of Paul

The fact that Irenaeus does not provide a systematic outline of his exegetical method has led some scholars to suggest that he had no ‘clear hermeneutical principles of his own’,³ whereas more favorable readings approach *Adversus haereses* 2.25-28 as a hermeneutical tractate of sorts.⁴ Although scholarship from the earlier part of the twentieth century was dismissive of Irenaeus’ use of Paul, more recent scholarly perspectives have shifted toward a deeper appreciation for Irenaeus’ engagement with Paul. In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of scholars revisited Irenaeus’ reading of Paul, which R. Noormann examined in a detailed book-length work in 1994. Noormann’s work cemented a much more favorable view of Irenaeus’ use of Paul in his theology.⁵ Other shorter contributions of note include works by

nondum aderat adesse] and proclaiming the impassible as passible, and declaring that the One in the heavens had descended into the ‘dust of the earth’.” See *SC* 100: 650-652.

² Irenaeus references 1 Cor 10:11 and Paul’s use of *τυπικῶς* as indicative of this type of typological reading of Scripture. For a more detailed analysis of early hermeneutics, see for example, J. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 15–19; C. Kannengiesser, “The ‘Speaking’ God and Irenaeus’s Interpretive Pattern: The Reception of Genesis,” *Annali di storia dell’ esegesi* 15 (1998): 337–52.

³ M. Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church* (trans. J. Hughes; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 23. Or see the earlier and more critical evaluation by Farrar, “Whatever may be his [Irenaeus’] other gifts, he shows no special wisdom in the application of hermeneutical methods.” F. W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation* (London: Richard, Clay & Sons, 1886), 174–75. Also, J. Quasten, *Patrology, I* (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1953), 289.

⁴ W. R. Schoedel, “Theological Method in Irenaeus (Adversus Haereses 2.25–28),” *JTS* 35 (1984): 31–49 (31). Other works include E. F. Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 162–92; J. Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London: The Epworth Press, 1948), 55–86; D. G. Resch, “The Fittingness and Harmony of Scripture: Toward an Irenaeian Hermeneutic,” *HeyJL* (2009): 74–84.

⁵ R. Noormann, *Irenäus als Paulusinterpret. Zur Rezeption und Wirkung der paulinischen und deuteropaulinischen Briefe im Werk des Irenäus von Lyon* (WUNT, Vol 66; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994). Noormann constructs the Irenaeian framework around salvation history, Christology, and anthropology, suggesting that these are the three main points of conflict with the “Gnostic” theology.

Norris, Balás, Pervo, and Blackwell.⁶ For the purposes of this study, a comprehensive analysis of Irenaeus' interpretation of Paul is neither possible nor necessary. Given that Noormann provides such a detailed account, my goal here is to identify clusters of Pauline texts that, when read with other biblical texts, provide the building blocks for Irenaeus' creation theology.⁷

Because of Irenaeus' commitment to the unity of the OT and to the apostolic documents he considered authoritative, he did not produce a theology of Paul. Rather, he links numerous texts from the Pauline corpus with other biblical texts, thereby producing a textual framework that supports his broader theological vision. Because the theological hinge of Irenaeus' framework is the incarnate Jesus Christ, the letters of Paul are a critical source for Irenaeus' insights.

According to Harvey, about 30 percent of the scriptural citations in Irenaeus are from the Pauline corpus.⁸ Irenaeus cites from all of the Pauline letters except Philemon,⁹ and of his nearly three hundred Pauline citations, the majority come from Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Galatians, with 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians also playing a key role.¹⁰ As Blackwell suggests, Irenaeus represents 'one of the earliest comprehensive engagements with the Pauline texts'.¹¹ I concur with Blackwell and consider the hermeneutical construct of Irenaeus' theology (sharpened by his compulsion to dismantle his opponents' interpretive practices) as an early and impressive biblical theological approach to

⁶ For a comprehensive list of works prior to Norris, see R. A. Norris, "Irenaeus' Use of Paul in His Polemic Against the Gnostics," in *Paul and the Legacies of Paul* (ed. W. S. Babcock; Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990), fn 1, 337–38; D. L. Balás, "The Use and Interpretation of Paul in Irenaeus's Five Books *Adversus Haereses*," *SecCen* (1992): 27–39; D. J. Bingham, "Irenaeus Reads Romans 8: Resurrection and Renovation," in *Early Patristic Readings of Romans* (eds. K. L. Gaca and L.L. Welborn; London: T & T Clark, 2005), 114–32; R. Pervo, *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 220–28 and B. Blackwell, "Paul and Irenaeus," in *Paul & The Second Century* (eds M. F. Bird and J. R. Dodson; New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 190–206. See also the recent monograph by Blackwell which includes a section on deification in Irenaeus; B. Blackwell, *Christosis* (WUNT, Vol 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

⁷ Noormann, *Irenáus*, 70–375.

⁸ W. W. Harvey, *Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis* (Cambridge: Typis Academicis, 1857). Of course the use of the term *Scripture* in relationship to the Pauline letters is somewhat anachronistic, yet Irenaeus does use this term for them and considers them authoritative. See also the calculations in R. M. Grant, *The Formation of the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 154.

⁹ B. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 153–57. Irenaeus does not reflect on any of the modern distinctions of authorship.

¹⁰ The pastoral letters are cited only 6 times and with little theological relevance. See Noormann, *Irenáus*, 522; R. M. Grant, *The Formation of the New Testament* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1965), 151–56.

¹¹ Blackwell, "Irenaeus," 205.

Scripture. He confronts the ‘Gnostic’ hermeneutical maneuvers on two distinct yet related fronts.

First, Irenaeus establishes the *ground rules* or the *nonnegotiable criteria* whereby biblical interpretation is to take place; this is what I call the prolegomena to the hermeneutical task, and it provides the broader purview for biblical interpretation — if the prolegomena to the hermeneutical task are missing, the interpretive process is destined for failure. This formative agenda is critical to Irenaeus because it is precisely at this starting point where he and his opponents part ways. Irenaeus draws a comparison between his ‘well-grounded system’ (*veritatis corpus*)¹² and that of his opponents, whose readings ‘amount to building one’s house not on solid and strong rock set in the open but on the uncertainty of shifting sand. That makes the overthrow of such a building easy’.¹³ Steenberg insightfully identifies the root of this hermeneutical divergence as ‘a different set of presuppositions: a different hypothesis of interpretation’.¹⁴

Second, Irenaeus addresses ‘Gnostic’ exegetical practices. He aptly uses a well-known proverb, claiming that the ‘Gnostics’ are *weaving ropes of sand*¹⁵ to communicate his disdain for ‘Gnostic’ handling of Scripture. Their lack of a substantive foundation inevitably results in erroneous interpretations. With his critique of the way they place ambiguous texts together, Irenaeus concludes that his opponents have ‘fabricated another God. And so, as we have said before, they braid ropes out of sand and add a bigger difficulty to the smaller one’.¹⁶ In other words, exegetical practices accurately explicate Scripture only to the degree that the foundational components (e.g., the substance of the ropes) are in place. Irenaeus describes his opponents’ interpretive methods using such scathing characterizations as ‘profundity of nonsense and blasphemy against God’,¹⁷ ‘fables’,¹⁸ or most pointedly, ‘homicidal’.¹⁹ Clearly,

¹² *Veritatis corpus* is literally translated as “body of truth.”

¹³ *Haer.* 2.27.3, *SC*, 294:268.

¹⁴ M. C. Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation: The Cosmic Christ and Saga of Redemption* (VCSup; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 23. See also, F. Young, *The Art of Performance: Towards a Theology of Holy Scripture* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1990), 56.

¹⁵ For example, *Haer.* 1.8.1; 2.10.1; 2.27.2-3.

¹⁶ 2.10.1. *SC*, 294:86.

¹⁷ 1.Preface.2.

¹⁸ 1.8.1

¹⁹ 3.16.8. See also *Epid.* 84.

he believes the ‘Gnostics’ have gone awry on both the prolegomena to the hermeneutical task and the exegesis itself.²⁰ Thus, for Irenaeus, hermeneutical prolegomena and exegetical practices are mutually constitutive.

6.1.2 *The Prolegomena to the Hermeneutical Task*

To undercut ‘Gnostic’ interpretations, Irenaeus attempts to articulate why the presuppositions they bring to the interpretive process inevitably produce fallacious interpretations. To this end, he identifies his opponents’ interpretive deficiencies in contrast to the foundation on which his own interpretations are grounded; these comparisons are consistent throughout *Adversus haereses*, yet they are not presented systematically. In the space below, I describe three hermeneutical prolegomena that Irenaeus considers essential for trustworthy biblical interpretation. As these propositions are fleshed out, the organic relationship each has with the Irenaean theological pillars should become evident. Irenaeus’ interpretive construct unfolds as a distinct theological hermeneutic, and like any interpretive framework, theology and hermeneutics are related in a reciprocal way; theology informs hermeneutical method and hermeneutical method informs theology.

(a) *Establishing Authoritative Texts: The Unity and Harmony of the New with the Old*

It is often noted that with Irenaeus we witness a significant shift toward canon formation.²¹ He cites extensively from the OT (LXX); he is the first to refer to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as the ‘four-formed Gospel’ (τετράμορφον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον); and he references the majority of texts from what we now consider the canonical NT as *γραφή* or *scripturae*.²² His functional *canon* is the apostolic tradition (παράδοσις) as handed down and proclaimed

²⁰ Osborn provides a comprehensive list of the interpretive errors of the “Gnostics” that Irenaeus identifies, see Osborn, *Lyons*, 174–75.

²¹ See A. H. Reed, “EΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ: Orality, Textuality, and the Christian Truth in Irenaeus’ *ADVERSUS HAERESSES*,” *VC* 56 (2002): 11–46; P. C. Bouteneff, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 73–87.

²² *Haer.* 3.11.8; 3.12.12; cf. 2.35.4. See T. C. Skeat, “Irenaeus and the Four-Gospel Canon,” *NovT* 34 (1992): 194–99. Also Lawson, *Theology*, 23–107. Metzger calculates that there are over 1,075 NT references in Irenaeus including citations from every NT book except Philemon, 2 Peter, 3 John, and Jude. See Metzger, *Canon*, 153–57. See also Metzger for an analysis of textual criticism in Irenaeus, B. Metzger, *The Practice of Textual Criticism Among the Church Fathers* (StPatr 12; Berlin: Adademie-Verlag, 1975), 341.

through the church and as read in tandem with the OT.²³ In response to the ‘Gnostic’ tendency to disparage the OT, Irenaeus attributes the tensions between the OT and New to the promise and fulfillment stages of God’s revelation in history.²⁴ He sees the OT and New as two stages of one divine plan and this leads him to conclude that the OT can only be properly understood in light of the new revelation of God in Christ. He pointedly critiques the use of other comparatively recent Gospels which he perceives as out of concord with the four-formed Gospel and outside of this divine plan, declaring that since ‘God arranged and harmonized all things well, it is necessary that also the form of the Gospel be arranged and fitted together well’.²⁵ When approached in this way, unity and logical cohesion become paramount as literary signs of the force and potency of God’s plan. Drawing upon the Pauline motifs that associate OT law with slavery and the New revelation with freedom in Christ, Irenaeus argues that both covenants are united by one and the same Lord.²⁶ His insistence on the harmony and unity of the New and the OT counters his opponents who maintain neither.²⁷

Such is their system which neither the prophets preached, nor the Lord taught, nor the apostles handed down. They boast rather loudly of knowing more about it than others do, citing it from non-scriptural works; and, as people would say, they attempt to braid ropes of sand. . . . They disregard the order and the connection of the Scriptures and, as much as in them lies, they disjoint the members of the Truth.²⁸

Irenaeus had several important aims in establishing an authoritative textual tradition. Theologically, it affirms the unity of the one God of the old and new covenants while simultaneously providing a basis from which to evaluate ‘Gnostic’ textual traditions as spurious compositions. And more particularly, it sets the stage for Irenaeus’ establishment of exegetical practices that approach the apostolic witness as a fulfillment of the OT.²⁹ Irenaeus

²³ For example, 1.10.1-2; 1.27.2-4; 3.4.1-2; 5.20.1-2. My emphasis here is on how Irenaeus argued from a set corpus of Scripture as a functional criterion to distinguish true doctrine from spurious speculations. For a more technical approach to his use of *kanón*, see for example, Reed, “Orality.” For a summary of the interpretive relationship of the OT and New, see D. M. Farkasfalvy, “Theology of Scripture in St. Irenaeus,” *RBén* 68 (1968): 319–33. Given that the designation of NT is anachronistic for this historical period, I use the term *New* to designate Irenaeus’ corpus of NT documents.

²⁴ For example, 3.10.2; 4.9.1.

²⁵ 3.11.9, *SC* 211:174; cf. 3.1.1; 3.5.1.

²⁶ 4.9.1; 4.13.4; 4.15.1; cf. Gal 3-5. He also cites 1 Cor 9:24-27.

²⁷ 4.9.1. See his discussion on the unity of these collections, 4.36-41. See Osborn, *Lyons*, 170–71.

²⁸ 1.8.1, *SC* 264:112/112-113.

²⁹ For example, 4.20-35 where he develops motifs of the OT as proleptically prefiguring the New.

thus portrays Scripture as a harmonious whole: ‘All Scripture given to us by God will be found to be harmonious (*symphōnos*). The parables will harmonize with plain speech, plain speech will unlock the parables and through the polyphony of the utterance a single symphonic melody will be audible within us’.³⁰ What cannot be emphasized enough is that this approach to the nature of the revelation of God and Scripture provides Irenaeus with a decidedly christological lens for reading texts.³¹

(b) Establishing Epistemological Limitations on Human Knowledge

Extending from his theological distinction between Creator and creature, Irenaeus outlines a temperate approach to epistemology. Referencing Rom 11:32-33, Irenaeus draws attention to the mystery of God’s plan: ‘Oh the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways’.³² From 1 Cor 13:9, he concludes that ‘Even among things of the created world some are in God’s keeping, while we, too, have knowledge of others’.³³ He observes here that even within the natural realm, there are unknown phenomena, and by inference he concludes that this effect must be multiplied in the spiritual realm.³⁴ This premise undergirds his cautious approach to natural revelation. If elements of the created realm reveal a truth that aligns with scriptural truth, then such natural insights can be affirmed as revelatory; yet natural revelation that goes beyond or contradicts Scripture is to be rejected. In other words, *some things are knowable while others are not*.³⁵

By establishing these boundaries of human accessibility to knowledge, Irenaeus sharply rebuffs the ‘Gnostic’ preoccupation with it, a preoccupation that Hans Urs von

³⁰ Translation by H. U. Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* (ed. J. Riches; vol. II of *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*; trans. A. Louth, F. McDonagh, and B. McNeil; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), 73 from W. W. Harvey, ed., *Saint Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons’: Five Books Against Heresies Vol 1* (Rochester: St Irenaeus Press, 2013), 352.

³¹ T. Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus and Genesis: A Study of Competition in Early Christian Hermeneutics* (JTISup; Warsaw, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 221–22; Osborn, *Lyons*, 185.

³² *Haer.* 1.10.3.

³³ 2.28.3, *SC* 294:274/same for Gk; cf. the broader discussion in 2.25-28 and 4.9.2. See the interesting article by Schoedel, “Theological Method”, which attempts to demonstrate that Irenaeus was indebted to the rhetorical features present in the empirical medicinal writings of his era.

³⁴ 2.28.2.

³⁵ This particular hermeneutical argument allows Irenaeus to set aside problematic texts that “Gnostics” would undoubtedly wish to press him on.

Balthasar describes as ‘intellectual concupiscence’ grounded in egocentrism.³⁶ Irenaeus argues that incessant inquiries into the *why* and *how* of our origins are beyond human modes of thought and that such inquiries inevitably lead to futile speculation and causal conjecture. For example, Scripture makes assertions ‘that’ (*quoniam*, ὅτι) God creates matter, but the *why* or *how* of that creation are not clearly stated in Scripture and are therefore, inaccessible.³⁷ Irenaeus references this as ‘the rule’ and concludes that ‘we, with God’s grace, explain some of the things, though we leave others in God’s keeping’.³⁸

A few chapters later, Irenaeus applies the same criterion against ‘obscure interpretations’ and allegorical readings of parables based on the particular inclinations of each individual reader. He scoffs at such readings not only because they are dissonant with the clear and unambiguous teaching of Scripture, but also because they imply a certain arrogance in each interpreter. Irenaeus teaches that a posture of humility is to guide sound biblical interpretation, a posture that is shaped by a love of truth, piety, meditation, and diligent daily study, with the ever-present *caveat* that humans have limitations with regard to divine knowledge.³⁹ In this way, Irenaeus reflects a reverent deference to the *not yet* of humanity’s ability to fully comprehend the mysteries of God. Any alternative course of conduct is doomed to fail, for as he repeatedly asserts, ‘And does this not amount to building one’s house not on solid and strong rock set in the open but on the uncertainty of shifting sand? That makes the overthrow of such a building easy’.⁴⁰ This prolegomenon is closely related to the final pillar, the ‘rule of faith’.

(c) Establishing the Rule of Faith as the Basis for Community Reading

In contrast to the ‘Gnostics’, who believe that a few spiritual elite receive revelations through private succession, Irenaeus maintains that biblical interpretation must take place within Christian community where ‘the entire Scriptures (*universae scripturae*), both the prophets

³⁶ Balthasar, *Glory*, 33. For example, *Haer.* 1.10.2-3; 2.26.1; 2.28.3,9; 3.12.12.

³⁷ 2.28.7; cf. 2.28.3. See also, Schoedel, “Theological Method”.

³⁸ 2.28.3, *SC* 294: 274 /275.

³⁹ H. U. Balthasar, *The Scandal of the Incarnation: Irenaeus Against the Heresies* (trans. J. Seward; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 30.

⁴⁰ *Haer.* 2.27.3, *SC* 294:268.

and the Gospels, clearly and unambiguously (*aperte et sine ambiguitate*) [is to be interpreted], so they can equally be heard by all, even though all do not believe that there is only one God to the exclusion of others'.⁴¹ Irenaeus refers to this process of interpretation as the 'method of discovery' (*disciplina inventionis*), and it *de facto* eliminates interpretive gatekeepers who claim private access to new revelations; avant-garde interpreters alienate themselves from the universal church and 'wallow in every error' because their biblical interpretation is grounded 'upon the sand'.⁴² The suggestion that faithful biblical interpretation relies on the essential interrelatedness of the universal church leads R. Grant to identify Irenaeus as the 'father of interpretation of the Bible'.⁴³

The received tradition, what Irenaeus calls the rule of truth (κανὼν τῆς ἀλήθειας) or canon of faith (κανὼν τῆς πίστεως), is firmly grounded on the public teaching of the prophets, apostles, and disciples. To what precisely the κανὼν τῆς ἀλήθειας refers, however, has been debated by scholars at length. A narrow definition limited to fixed creedal propositions is anachronistic, and the term certainly does not reference a collection of authoritative texts.⁴⁴ Irenaeus' own description suggests the framework of a received tradition that can be applied to the interpretation of individual texts.⁴⁵ The work of Schoedel, Young, Grant, and Ayers assists with understanding Irenaeus' discussion within the broader context of the standard grammatical interpretative principles of his period. For example, when Irenaeus charges his opponents with not conforming to the *hypothesis* of Scripture,⁴⁶ his polemical usage is in keeping with how the term was used by the grammarians of his day. *Hypothesis* refers to the plot, the structure, or a summary of a literary drama, leading Grant to conclude, 'Irenaeus' rule of faith or truth is the same as the *hypothesis* of the Scriptures'.⁴⁷

⁴¹ 2.27.2, *SC* 294:266, emphasis mine.

⁴² 3.24.1-2. For a secondary discussion on the formation of the rule of faith see, E. F. Osborn, "Reason and the Rule of Faith in the Second Century AD," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (ed. R. Williams; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 40-61.

⁴³ R. M. Grant and with the help of D. Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005, Revised and Enlarged Version), 51.

⁴⁴ See the helpful discussions of Reed, "Orality," 12-15; Young, *Art*, 48-65.

⁴⁵ *Haer.* 1.10.1; 1.22.1; 3.4.1; esp. *Epid.* 6.

⁴⁶ 1.8.1.

⁴⁷ R. M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (The Early Church Fathers; London/New York: Routledge, 1997), 47-49; F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of the Christian Culture* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2002), 18-19; Schoedel, "Theological Method". See also Blackwell, "Irenaeus," 197-98.

Irenaeus provides two specific analogies that support Grant's conclusion and that vividly demonstrate Irenaeus' judgment of his opponents' *hypothesis* as systematically flawed. In both analogies, Irenaeus' goal is to demonstrate how individual texts are to be interpreted in ways that fit harmoniously within the broader framework of the economy of God. To counter the exegetical practice of constructing doctrines by examining isolated proof texts or by connecting disparate texts together, Irenaeus likens Scripture to a mosaic depicting a king studded with jewels: 'Gnostics' dismember and destroy the image by piecing together texts from all throughout Scripture (and elsewhere) and thus 'they disregard the order and the connection of the Scriptures'. They 'transfer passages and rearrange them; and, making one thing out of another, they deceive many', and they effectively 'change around and rearrange the jewels, and make the form of a dog, or of a fox, out of them', declaring that '*this* is the beautiful image of the king that the skillful artist has made'.⁴⁸ What results is an odd pastiche with no resemblance to the original mosaic. Irenaeus further elaborates on the fallacy of this method by way of an analogy to the literary works of Homer: when interpreters take isolated texts from the *Odyssey* or *Iliad* and reorder them into a different narrative, the original meaning, he explains, is twisted 'from their natural meaning to an unnatural one'.⁴⁹ In the process of uniting two unrelated texts, the original context is lost and a new narrative, foreign to the original, emerges.⁵⁰

For Irenaeus, the *hypothesis* is essentially the framework of the divine economy, the metanarrative of Scripture, and he considers practices that weave together texts without consideration for this framework to be deliberate distortions of Scripture. For example, when discussing the proper interpretation of Eph 1:10, rather than directly confronting specific exegetical differences, he places the entire discussion within the context of *hypotheses*. He proceeds to discount the 'Gnostic' reading by restating in summary form the divine economy where the whole dispensational arrangements are centred on the incarnate Son.⁵¹ These illustrations specifically highlight the importance of textual interpretations that cohere within

⁴⁸ *Haer.* 1.8.1, *SC* 264: 112-116/same for Gr.

⁴⁹ 1.9.4, *SC* 296:147/same for Gk.

⁵⁰ Grant suggests further that "*Hypothesis* thus means the same thing in the Bible as in Homer, and Irenaeus uses it to attack Valentinian exegesis of the Bible." See Grant, *Irenaeus*, 49.

⁵¹ *Haer.* 3.26.6. See also the discussion in Norris, "Paul," 82.

the original form and theological framework of the comprehensive scriptural narrative.⁵² The divine economy is thus the framework within which individual texts fit, as well as a summation of the ‘rule of truth’ that the universal church proclaims.⁵³ Or as Young suggests, ‘The [rule of truth] articulated the essential hermeneutical key without which texts and community would disintegrate in incoherence’.⁵⁴ Its inclusion here as a hermeneutical prolegomenon is appropriate because it *pragmatically* functions for Irenaeus as the macro lens that demarcates interpretations which are truthful from those which are not, providing a theological litmus test of sorts. He will contend that Scriptures have not changed, but the catalyst for any correct biblical interpretation must be the new revelation of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

These three hermeneutical prolegomena -- establishing authoritative texts, establishing epistemological limitations, and establishing the rule of faith as the basis for community readings -- are woven throughout the writings of Irenaeus, functioning as a hedge to safeguard against reckless interpretation. Historically, they also reflect an early yet sophisticated approach to what is now commonly referred to as *theological hermeneutics*. Irenaeus’ interpretation of Scripture reflects the dynamic reciprocity that exists between a hermeneutical method and a received theological tradition. Moreover, Irenaeus’ approach to reading texts won the day, at least in terms of controlling the dialogue, which eventually became the framework informing Christian orthodoxy. These prolegomena not only safeguard against ‘different’ interpretations, but to some degree they also influence which texts are brought into the theological discussion.

By establishing clear parameters within which biblical interpretation may take place, Irenaeus has freedom when it comes to his exegetical method. In fact, at one level, he utilizes the same exegetical practices as his opponents; what differs are the prolegomena. J. Bassler states this idea in terms of *controlling patterns*: ‘Thus for Irenaeus it is not a matter of good versus bad exegetical practices, but the validity of the pattern that controls the exegesis,

⁵² Blackwell correctly identifies the way in which Irenaeus incorporates the principle of the rule of truth into his hermeneutical scheme. “The rule of truth . . . is mainly a tool to make a general point about coherence rather than a means for interpreting a specific text.” See Blackwell, “Irenaeus,” 199.

⁵³ Grant with the help of D. Tracy, *History*, 51.

⁵⁴ F. M. Young, *Exegesis*, 21.

whether Gnostic cosmology or the orthodox rule of faith, whether (in Irenaeus's polemical terms) myth or truth'.⁵⁵

Irenaeus does, however, specify basic principles of exegesis to be followed which are outlined below.

6.2 Irenaeus' Ktisiological Framework: The Pauline Texts

Having explored creation themes and motifs in Paul and Irenaeus and having outlined the prolegomena to Irenaeus' approach to reading Scripture, I now focus on a closer engagement with the Pauline texts which Irenaeus emphasizes in his theology in order to examine how he reads Paul and how he reaches his reading. This inquiry will also identify correspondence between Irenaeus' reading and the reading presented in chapters two through four. The goal of this exploration is to identify how the creation theology of Irenaeus complements and develops my reading of Paul, and therefore contribute more specifically to my thesis, which I explore fully in chapter seven, that Irenaeus's reading of Paul helps us discern a structural relationship between creation and Christology in Pauline theology in a way that could prove fruitful for a Christian ecotheology.

I begin here with general comments about the texts that shape our frameworks, and then, using the three pillars I outlined in chapter five, I discuss more carefully the features of Irenaeus' employment of Pauline texts. I begin with Irenaeus' christological reading of protological texts, then I shift my attention to the principal hermeneutical function of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and I conclude with comments related to the role of Pauline texts in Irenaeus' soteriology and eschatology.

6.2.1 *Christ and Creation: A Pauline Framework*

When comparing Irenaeus' reading of Paul to the explorations in chapters two through four, one might initially observe that although articulated quite differently and having different emphasis, there is significant resonance between our general conclusions. Because of our

⁵⁵ J. M. Bassler, "A Response to Jeffrey Bingham and Susan Graham: Networks and Noah's Sons," in *Early Patristic Readings of Romans* (eds K.L. Gaca and L.L. Welborn; Romans Through History and Cultures Series; New York/London: T & T Clark, 2005), 139.

attentiveness to both allusions and explicit references to creation concepts in Paul, our interpretations have much overlap — including that we share an interest in a common set of texts. With the exception of Paul’s new creation texts, nearly every text covered in chapters two, three, and four factors significantly into the Irenaean framework, though Irenaeus marshals several dozen additional Pauline texts to flesh out his biblical creation theology.

One of the most significant differences in our reading of Pauline thought is the selection of texts we identify to structure Paul’s creation theology. As outlined in chapter two, I suggest that the Christ event should be understood within an apocalyptic framework that demarcates between the old and new creation, and I have therefore systematically highlighted apocalyptic features within the Pauline corpus (§ 2.2.2). Drawing significantly upon the work of Martyn and Jackson, I propose that Paul’s new creation texts (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15) should be read as a succinct phrase whereby Paul summarizes the cosmic Christ event. I also propose Rom 8:18-25 as a complementary new creation text. These three texts function, therefore, as the framework for my construction of Pauline creation Christology, as developed in chapters three and four within the categories of protology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. In keeping with the trajectories of the majority of Pauline scholarship, my work tends to stress the death and bodily resurrection as the defining incidents of the Christ event. Irenaeus, however, organizes his Pauline theology around the divine *οικονομία* with Eph 1:9-12 as one of the most important organizing texts. From this text, he develops his famous recapitulation theology whereby the uncreated Word unites ‘all things’ to God in each phase of human history. As Nielsen correctly identifies, ‘For Irenaeus, the recapitulation of Christ determines the whole *οικονομία*’,⁵⁶ This central motif is crystallized in the rare Greek verbal term *ἀνακεφαλαίω*,⁵⁷ a term resonating with rich allusions and theological significance, including a sense of recapitulation, summing up, uniting, consummation, and restoration.⁵⁸ This term constitutes a key concept in Irenaeus’ repertoire or ‘treasury’ of theological terms. Although it occurs infrequently in the Pauline corpus, primarily in Eph 1:10 (cf. Rom 13:9), it

⁵⁶ J. T. Nielsen, *Adam and Christ in the Theology of Irenaeus of Lyons: An Examination of the Function of the Adam-Christ Typology in the Adversus Haereses of Irenaeus, Against the Background of the Gnosticism of His Time*. (Van Gorcum’s Theologische Bibliotheek; Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp. N. V., 1968), 60.

⁵⁷ For example, *Haer.* 1.10.1; 3.16.6; 3.18; 5.20.2; 5.21.1; *Epid.* 30.

⁵⁸ Osborn suggests at least eleven senses of *ἀνακεφαλαίω*. See Osborn, *Lyons*, 97–98.

hermeneutically functions as an organizing template for Irenaeus' creation theology. It is as if Irenaeus consistently approaches Scripture with the question, 'In what ways does the incarnation of Christ recapitulate all things?' Ephesians 1:9-12 provides a response to that question in a more specific manner than either 2 Cor 5:17 or Gal 6:15. It connects the incarnation as material (v. 7) in creation history (v. 10) to the broader cosmic plan of the recapitulation of all things (v. 10), thus enabling the movement of all creation toward a not yet experienced eschatological fullness (πλήρωμα).⁵⁹

Unlike my approach, Irenaeus does not explicitly use the language of apocalypticism, yet he certainly depicts a cosmic sphere where the Christ event demarcates the new from the old covenant; his soteriological and eschatological themes are not limited to anthropology. Instead of placing emphasis on the death and resurrection of Christ, Irenaeus identifies the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the central organizing motif of the divine economy.⁶⁰ As Richard Pervo correctly identifies, 'the initial victory [for Irenaeus] was not in the resurrection, but in the incarnation, by which the image of God was united with that of human beings'.⁶¹ From a modern scholarly perspective, identifying the incarnation as more prominent in Paul than the death and resurrection is atypical, but it is a reading that enables Irenaeus to draw a number of connections with, and implications from, other biblical themes and narratives not typically linked with Pauline texts. This incarnational emphasis could provide an avenue whereby Paul's contribution to ecotheology is advanced (e.g., §5.2.2.b.ii and §5.2.2.b.iii).

Although we use different texts to organize our framework, there remains significant correspondence between our approaches to Paul. We both identify the contours of how Paul understands the relation between Christ and creation: beginning with protology and ending with eschatology. Like Irenaeus, I hold that no single formula and no narrow theological category (e.g., human soteriology or justification by faith) captures the trajectory of Pauline

⁵⁹ This major sub-theme is woven throughout Irenaeus' work and is especially dominant in book four. He relies heavily on Rom 5-6, Col 1:15-20 and Eph 1:9-10. The work of Holsinger-Friesen provides a summary of secondary scholarly works; see Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus*, 1-41.

⁶⁰ In his desire for all things to be recapitulated in Christ, Irenaeus' readings go beyond the trajectories of Scripture at points. For example, his connection of the virgin soil of Gen 1-2 with the virgin Mary in 3.21.3 and his conclusion that Jesus died at age forty in 3.18.7.

⁶¹ Pervo, *Early Christianity*, 222.

thought. What is required is the connection of a web of texts that when woven together bring into sharper focus the christological pattern and logic of Paul's creation theology. It is within this broader purview that categories such as justification by faith should be placed. The texts outlined in this thesis, both the ones I identify and those in the works of Irenaeus demonstrate the breadth and complexity of the new creation theological framework of Paul.

As already noted in chapter five, in light of Irenaeus' context, one defining feature of his work is his effort to establish the unity and creative agency of God, Son, and Spirit, and central to this aim is his christological reading of Gen 1:26-28 and Gen 2:7. These origin texts are cited extensively throughout books three through five, and they establish at least three key theological themes in Irenaeus' divine economy framework. First, these texts function to establish that the creative activity of God is unmediated yet triune: Christ, as the divine Word, fashioned humanity in the divine image and likeness, whereas the Spirit through the 'breath of life' animates the human being (pillar one); second, because humanity has a special relationship to the incarnate Word, these texts cement the connection between Christology and anthropology and function to locate humanity in relationship to both God and the creation (pillar two); and third, they shed light on the eschatological goal of the divine economy (pillar three).

When observing how Irenaeus incorporates creation texts into his theology, it becomes clear how far he reads Scripture through the lens of Christ. His hermeneutical approach reflects a dynamic typological parallelism. It is clear that for Irenaeus, Gen 1-3 is not a fixed tractate about the beginning of the world; rather, he reads nearly every detail in that account as a prelude to Christ. Holsinger-Friesen captures this feature of Irenaeus' hermeneutic: 'Irenaeus sees in Genesis a picture of the divine arrangements and harmonies that order human existence. . . . When read in light of God's revelation in Christ, Genesis tells the whole story in rough outline and opens up the possibility of experiencing the world differently'.⁶²

We now turn to a closer look at how Irenaeus constructs his three pillar approach to creation theology and particular what Pauline texts contribute to his framework.

⁶² Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus*, 223.

(a) *Christ and Creation: Protology*

In relationship to these origin accounts, Irenaeus maintains a strong emphasis on the triadic relationship of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the creative process. He most commonly articulates this through his signature analogy of God's two creative hands: 'Now man is a mixture (*temperatio*/κρᾶσις) of soul and flesh, formed after the likeness of God and moulded by his hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit, to whom also he said, "Let us [ποιήσωμεν] make man"' .⁶³ Irenaeus cites Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:7 as key texts in support of this reading (§5.2.1.a) while simultaneously referencing NT texts that affirm the creative agency of the Word/Jesus Christ. The primary NT texts he cites to support this christological reading of the creation narrative include John 1:1-3, 1 Cor 8:6, and Col 1:15-20.

The text below represents Irenaeus' typical use of the motif of attributing creative agency to God's two hands. In this context, it functions as an emphatic challenge to alternative readings of Gen 1:26-27, readings that attribute the plurality of creative agency to the pleromatic aeons or angels.

It was not angels, therefore, who made or formed us, nor had angels power to make an image of God, nor any one else except the true God -- nor any power remotely distant from the Father of all things. For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to accomplish what he had determined with himself beforehand should be done, as if he did not possess his own hands. For with him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, he made all things, and to whom he speaks, saying, 'Let us make man after our image and likeness', taking from himself the substance of the creatures formed and the pattern of things made, and the type of all the adornments of the world.⁶⁴

The text raises several important points. First, Irenaeus approaches both creation accounts as a continuous creation narrative, which is a consistent pattern throughout his work. Second, Irenaeus is intent on communicating the unaided and unmediated creative spontaneity and freedom of God as highlighted by the use of the modifiers *libere* and *sponte*. Third, two times in this passage he mentions that 'all things' have come through God (echoes of 1 Cor 8:6 and Col 1:15-20). These references, coupled with the plural *creaturarum*, locates humanity within the larger created order of all created matter; yet the citation of Gen 1:26,

⁶³ *Haer.* 4.Praef.4, SC 100:390. Translation by J. Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons: Identifying Christianity* (CTC; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 74.

⁶⁴ 4.20.1, SC 100:624, 626. Translation by Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 75–76. See also 5.1.3, 5.15.4 and *Epid.* 11, 55.

immediately followed by the explicating phrase that God takes *ipse a semetipso substantiam creaturarum*, highlights the close relation of humanity to God, through the Word/Son and Wisdom/Spirit. This phrase can be translated in different ways; MacKenzie prefers the reading ‘God taking among himself. . .’, whereas Holsinger-Friesen, in keeping with Steenberg, suggests ‘taking from himself. . .’.⁶⁵ In light of the emphasis that Irenaeus places on *creatio ex nihilo* (§5.2.1.b), I believe that the latter reading is preferred. Thus, the origin of humanity is through the *will* of God, eliminating the possibility of preexistent matter from which God creates. The creation of humanity is highlighted as pre-appointed (*praeфинire*; a likely allusion to Rom 8:29), and the humanity is stamped with the image and likeness of God (*ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei*), yet the overall emphasis of this passage remains theocentric; it is clearly focused on a triune God who creates directly through his two hands. Irenaeus depicts the two hands as fully divine in keeping with other texts that highlight the christocentric reading of protology: the Son ‘administers all things for the Father’, and ‘his Son was his Word, by whom he founded all things’.⁶⁶

Drawing upon standard prepositional usage within ancient cosmological formulations, Irenaeus regularly describes creative agency in this way: Father, as Creator and origin of all things (ἐκ, ἀπό), Son as mediator of creation (διά), and Spirit as enabler and nourisher (ἐν).⁶⁷ Although the source of this formulation is not always explicit in his work, Irenaeus’ use of these prepositions likely is influenced by 1 Cor 8:6 and Rom 11:36, where such prepositions usage occurs.⁶⁸ Irenaeus’ use of these prepositions directly corresponds with my own development of their usage in ancient cosmological accounts (3.3.1.a.ii) accentuating the close creative agency between the natures of the triune God. To emphasize the coeternal relationship of the Son with the Father and the Spirit, Irenaeus also uses the term *semper co-existens*.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ I. M. Mackenzie, *Irenaeus’s Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching: A Theological Commentary and Translation* (trans. J. A. Robinson; England: Ashgate, 2002), 103–4; Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus*, 114–15.

⁶⁶ *Haer.* 4.6.7, *SC* 100: 452; 4.24.1, *SC* 100:700. Translation from ANF.

⁶⁷ J. Fantino, “La Création ex nihilo chez saint Irénée: Étude historique et théologique,” *RSPHTh* 76, no. 3 (1992): 421–42 (429). For example, 1.22. See also, R. M. Grant, “Causation and ‘The Ancient Worldview,’” *JBL* 83 (1964): 34–40 (37-38), which discusses Irenaeus’ use of ἐκ Μαρίας to emphasize the connection of human nature with the incarnation.

⁶⁸ For example, 2.30.9; 4.20.1, 3.

⁶⁹ For example, 2.25.3; 2.30.9; 3.18.1.

Whereas *Adversus haereses* 4.20.1 has allusions to Pauline motifs to establish the creativity of the one triune God, elsewhere the citation of Paul is more explicit. One text that demonstrates how Irenaeus weaves together Pauline christological themes to establish the creative agency of one God is *Adversus haereses* 3.6.5. In this passage, Irenaeus argues that for Paul, true knowledge acknowledges one God who exists apart from the ‘so-called’ gods -- that is gods who really do *not* exist. Irenaeus weaves together Gal 4:8-9, 2 Thess 2:4, and 1 Cor 8:6-8 to affirm that it is the one Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things came into being. He then concludes this section with a reference to Moses and the second commandment (Exod 20:4; Deut 5:8). These themes are repeated periodically throughout *Adversus haereses* 3.6-25 with Norris suggesting that 1 Cor 8:6 is the organizing principle for the much larger section.⁷⁰ Irenaeus also considers Luke’s account of Paul’s address to Lystra and Athens as a Pauline affirmation of the one creator God (Acts 14:14-18 and 17:22-31).⁷¹

Another specific Pauline exegetical example is Irenaeus’ response to the ‘Gnostic’ interpretation of the passage 2 Cor 4:4, which reads, ‘the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers’. This text factors significantly into the ‘Gnostic’ teaching of two deities. In order to expose this interpretive error, Irenaeus calls attentive to the sentence structure and authorial style, which, according to Irenaeus, readers who are familiar with Paul would easily recognize. Irenaeus argues that when one applies the appropriate rhetorical device of transposing words (*hyperbaton*), the text actually reads, ‘God had blinded the minds of the unbelievers of this world’. He further suggests that readers who properly proclaim the word of God would understand where to place the appropriate pause in the text, reading it as affirming the one creator God.⁷² By modern standards, this exegetical maneuver may be considered questionable, yet his interpretation allows the text to fit within the broader hermeneutical and theological framework that guides his reading.⁷³ Irenaeus charges that any

⁷⁰ Norris, “Paul,” 84–85. See also 2.2.5; 5.18.2. For an analysis of how Irenaeus reads Rom 8 to support the triune activity of God, Son, and Spirit, see Bingham, “Romans 8”.

⁷¹ John 1:1 also is a key text. See for example, 3.11.8; 5.18.2-3.

⁷² 3.7.1, *SC* 211:80, 82; elsewhere Irenaeus associates this “god” with Satan. See fragment 66 and discussion in Norris, “Paul,” 82–83.

⁷³ Irenaeus continues in 3.7.2 to discuss other similar examples in the Pauline texts. See the discussion in L. Ayers, “Grammar, Anti-Valentinian Polemic and the Development of Patristic Exegesis AD 150–250” (Presented at NT Seminar; Durham, England, 2011), 23–25.

interpretation of the relatively obscure text of 2 Cor 4:4 which does not align with the consistent and clear biblical teaching that there is ‘one God’ must be rejected.⁷⁴ Other examples of Irenaeus’ response to ‘Gnostic’ biblical interpretations are more clear-cut. For example, ‘Gnostic’ readings of texts that connect redemption with the fall of *Sophia* are easily dismantled by Irenaeus because such interpretations clearly stand outside the boundaries of each prologomenon as outlined above.

In terms of the correspondence between the way that Irenaeus reads Christ’s relationship to originating creation, I concur with Irenaeus that Paul makes the closest possible connection between the one Lord Jesus Christ and the one God while simultaneously establishing Jesus Christ as the creative agent of creation. Irenaeus’ selection of Pauline texts aligns with my own in chapters three (1 Cor 8:6) and four (Col 1:15-20), yet he also draws upon other Pauline texts that I do not consider (e.g., Gal 4:8-9, 2 Thess 2:4). Our intertextual connections likewise diverge at points. These differences emerge in part because of the different historical contexts and issues which we face. In response to ‘Gnostic’ cosmologies, the pressing need for Irenaeus was to demonstrate that there is one triune God who created and willed all things into existence. Because his opponents were using the creation narrative in support of a conflicting view, these creation texts were of central importance to the construction of Irenaeus’ theology, and his allegorical imagery of the two creative hands of God thus serves his theological needs well. Alternatively, I read 1 Cor 8:6 in light of the *Shema* and the broader historical and literary contexts of 1 Cor 8-10, giving priority to how Paul redraws the cosmological matrix by subsuming Christ *and* the church into the formulation which thereby allows Paul to provide the Corinthians with ethical teachings based on the role of Christ in originating creation and on the ongoing lordship of Jesus Christ over creation (1 Cor 10:26).

In tandem with Irenaeus, I also emphasize intertextual links between Col 1:15 and Gen 1:26-27. As I have attempted to demonstrate, the broader context of Col 1:15-20 seems clearly to have the original creation in view (§4.3.3.b). My emphasis, again, is not so much on defending Christ’s role in creation nor the incarnational status of Jesus Christ -- both

⁷⁴ 2.27.2.

theologies that are now affirmed within the creedal orthodox teachings of Christianity -- but to identify what Gen 1:26-28 implies about humanity being created in the image and likeness of God (§4.2) and, by way of extension, to determine the implications that can be drawn from Paul's application of this text to Christ. Then, furthermore, I consider what inferences might be drawn for believers who are re-created into the image of Christ. Thus, Irenaeus stresses the connection of the incarnation with protology -- which I note and affirm -- whereas I stress the connection of the incarnation with ecclesiology, as well as the ethical implications that we might draw from the literary and historical context of each text. Our readings complement each other and both clearly identify the christological contours and implications of each Pauline text. This leads naturally into a closer study of the incarnation as the central hinge for Irenaeus' theology of creation and soteriology.

(b) Christ and Creation: The Incarnation

For Irenaeus, the incarnation is the theological hinge binding the OT with the New, and this theological conviction undergirds his extensive exegetical use of typological parallelism to demonstrate that 'the treasure hid in Scriptures is Christ'.⁷⁵ This hermeneutical approach functions in a reciprocal relationship whereby the OT points toward Christ and then Christ incarnate illuminates the OT. Irenaeus' reading of the Adam-Christ typology demonstrates this method, as does his narrative reading of the prophets as both the *typoi* and *logoi* of Christ incarnate; for Irenaeus, both the *typoi* and *logoi* reflect the logic and movement of divine revelation.⁷⁶ A good example of the *typoi* method of binding the OT with the New is Irenaeus' interpretation of Galatian texts that present Christ as both the *arche* and the *telos* of the law: within history the law functions as the *paedagogum nostrum in Christum Jesum*.⁷⁷ Thus, what serves as the goal of something also serves as its origin and purpose.⁷⁸

In order to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is constituted of both *humanitas* and *divinitas*, Irenaeus constructs a theological argument by way of two interpretive approaches

⁷⁵ 4.26.1, *SC* 100: 712, 714; cf. 4.6.2; 4.23.1; 4.33.10; 5.26.2. See Osborn, *Lyons*, 182–89.

⁷⁶ For example, *Epid.* 57-85. Cf. 4.10.1; 4.23.1; 4.31.2; 5.26.2.

⁷⁷ For an example of the law functioning as the *paedagogum nostrum in Christum Jesum*, see 4.2.7; cf. Gal 3:24.

⁷⁸ Norris, "Paul," 86–89.

that centre on Pauline reading of the creation narrative from a christological vantage point. In part, Irenaeus shores up his theology of the incarnation by way of the Adam-Christ typologies of Rom 5:12-21 and 1 Cor 15:42-50, read in tandem with Gen 1:26 and 2:7.⁷⁹ His second approach is to mine the Pauline corpus for any text that identifies Jesus Christ as both human and divine.⁸⁰ The following passage from Irenaeus provides a closer look at how he uses the Adam-Christ typology to interpret Paul:

He has recapitulated in Himself even the ancient first-fashioned man. To explain, just as by one man's disobedience. . . sin came. . . and death through sin. . . reigned. . . , so by one man's obedience, justice was brought and produces the fruit of life for those who in times past were dead. First, just as the first-fashioned Adam got his substance from untilled and as yet virgin soil -- for God had not yet caused it to rain. . . and man had not tilled the ground - and formed by God's hand, that is, the Word of God - for all things were made through Him -- and the Lord took mud from the earth and fashioned man. In like manner, since He is the Word recapitulating Adam in Himself, He rightly took from Mary, who was yet a virgin, His birth that would be a recapitulation of Adam. If then the first Adam would have a human father and had been born of a man's seed, rightly would they assert that the second Adam too was born from Joseph. But if the former was from the earth and fashioned by the Word of God, it was necessary that the same Word, since He was recapitulating Adam in Himself, have the same kind of birth. Why, then, did God not take earth a second time, instead of making the handiwork from Mary? In order that no different handiwork might be made, and that it might not be a different handiwork that would be saved; but that the same might be recapitulated, the likeness having been preserved.⁸¹

This text is a vintage typological reading common to Irenaeus. Typical of Irenaeus' typologies, this correlation demonstrates both similarities and contrasts, here between Adam and Christ. In this passage, Irenaeus makes detailed connections between the OT and the New through the striking use of *recapitulation* -- five times in this short passage (see §5.2.2.a). This term functions as one of his key theological concepts which shapes his Christology. This section begins with *Et antiquam plasmationem* which thematically connects it with the immediately prior discussion on the origin of Christ as demonstrated by OT texts: 'According to the promise of God, from David's belly the King eternal is raised up, who sums up all

⁷⁹ In retrospect, I was no doubt indirectly influenced by Irenaeus through the work of Moltmann, Gunton, and others who also have been influenced by the work of Irenaeus on this theological point (§4.3.3 and §4.3.4).

⁸⁰ Irenaeus draws upon many texts to argue for the humanity and suffering of Jesus Christ. See for example, *Haer.* 1.24.4; 3.16.2-3; 3.18.1-6. Cf. Rom 1:3-4; 14:9; 1 Cor 15:4-5; Gal 4:4-6.

⁸¹ 3.21.9-10, *SC* 211:426-430/428-431; cf. 1.9.3; 3.18.7, 21.9, 22.1; 5.1.2, 12.4, 14.1-3. Large portions of book three develop Irenaeus' analysis of the incarnation as uniting the human and the divine. Cf. *Epid.* 32; *Dem.* 11.

things in Himself, and has gathered into Himself the ancient formation [of man]'.⁸² The verbal form *recapitulare* occurs with the object being Adam, who here represents all humanity.⁸³ Irenaeus develops the first usage by citing Rom 5:19, 12, and 14 to demonstrate how Christ replaces the disobedience and death brought by the acts of Adam. The Adam-Christ typology (Rom 5:14-17, 1 Cor 15:42-50) links Jesus Christ to fleshly Adam, the Word being the origin from which the likeness and image of God was originally endowed to humanity. The next three instances of *recapitulare* draw a parallelism between Adam and Christ, demonstrating that both have material origins from virginal matter (soil and the virgin Mary) and through the working of God (neither have origin in a 'man's seed'). To this end, Gen 2:7 is a key text because it describes humanity as uniquely crafted from the fullness of God, fashioned through dust by his hands, the Word.⁸⁴ The final instance affirms that Christ preserves the 'likeness' of humanity through recapitulation.⁸⁵ The immediately following sections (3.22-23) take up this theme at greater length to demonstrate that precisely because Adam was created 'according to His image and likeness', the incarnation of Christ in human form was necessary for salvation.

Many Ann Donovan identifies this critical feature of Irenaeus' image theology by explaining that for Irenaeus the essence of image implies a *visible* form: 'Since the divine is by definition formless, and image as form requires a material substratum, the archetype of the image of God in us is the incarnate Son'.⁸⁶ This essential correlation of *image* with *form* not

⁸² 3.21.9. *SC* 211: 426. *Recapitulation* is one of the key words used by Irenaeus to shed light on the Christ event. In this text Christ recapitulates "all things" (τὰ πάντα/*omnia, universa*), a usage occurring eleven times in his works. This aligns with the usage in Eph 1:10. Because of the thematic connection, *et* should be translated either as "even" or "also."

⁸³ A. Ottorino, "Problemi di origine in S. Irénéo," *Divinitas* 11 (1967): 95–116.

⁸⁴ Genesis 2:7 either appears directly or is alluded to in numerous passages. See for example, *Haer.* 1.5.5; 2.34.4; 3.21.10; 4.20.1; 4.39.2; 5.1.3; 5.3.2; 5.7.1; 5.14.2; 5.15.2; *Epid.* 11, 14, 15, 32.

⁸⁵ There is some disagreement among scholars regarding what humanity lost in Adam and regained in Christ. For example some scholars suggest that humanity lost the image and likeness of God referencing texts such as 3.18.1, "... that in Christ Jesus we might receive what we lost in Adam, namely, to have the status of creation 'according to the image and likeness of God'." See for example, Grant, *Irenaeus*, 52. The range of meaning for *perdere* can mean "to lose," but also the sense of "to mar" or "to destroy" is also possible. Behr suggests alternatively, that Irenaeus "never asserts that the human being stopped being 'in the image'," rather it is the "possession" of both that is lost. See Behr, *Identifying*, 166. See e.g., 3.22.1 which seems to support Behr's reading.

⁸⁶ Irenaeus develops this in 2.7 and *Epid.* 22. See M. A. Donovan, "Alive to the Glory of God: A Key Insight in St. Irenaeus'," *TS* 49, no. 2 (1988): 283–97 (294).

only affirms the material constitution of humanity (*plasma*) but also establishes *form* as an essential component of the image of God as embodied in Jesus Christ.⁸⁷ Humans, who are created in the image of God, thus are created in a way that is anticipatory of the incarnation. In relation to this theology, *plasma* is a key word in Irenaeus' thesaurus/treasury.

Irenaeus referenced Gen 1:26-28 in different ways depending on the theological context.⁸⁸ In terms of anthropology, he understands that the relational proximity of humanity to the triune Creator becomes clearer when read in connection to Gen 1:26-28.⁸⁹ As I have argued in chapter five, Irenaeus interprets the anthropology of Gen 1:26-27 in light of Paul's christological interpretive template in 2 Cor 4:4 and Col 1:15; yet Irenaeus goes further than I do by concluding that the original image and likeness was that of the creative Word.⁹⁰

For in times long past it was said man was made in the image of God, but it was not shown [to be so]; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created; and because of this he easily lost the likeness. When, however, the Word of God became flesh, he confirmed both of these: for he both showed forth the image truly, himself becoming that which was his image, and he re-established the likeness in a sure manner, by co-assimilating (συνεξομοιώσας) man to the invisible Father through the Word become visible.⁹¹

MacKenzie captures the focus of Irenaeus' interpretation: 'The image of God, for Irenaeus, is not a possession of the human being, but that for which it was created and towards which it moves - that which is mirrored in the whole human being as it advances in and towards the One who is Himself the Image of God'.⁹² This analysis aligns squarely with Irenaeus' anthropology elsewhere: he could never have conceived of humans as *the* image of God, a status he reserved for the divine uncreated being and who was manifest uniquely in Jesus Christ: 'In this God differs from the human being, that God makes and the human being is made'.⁹³ As Steenberg observes,

⁸⁷ See 1.9.3; 3.9.1; 4.6.6; 5.16.2; *Epid.* 11. Irenaeus rejects the notion of "image" as a spiritual reality void of form. See for example, 2.7.6; 2.19.6.

⁸⁸ See Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus*, 111–44.

⁸⁹ The intimate relationship between humanity and God is depicted through the analogy of friendship. See for example, *Haer.* 3.18.7; 4.13.4; 4.16.3-4; 4.18.3; 5.14.2.

⁹⁰ The following texts reference Gen 1:26-27: 1.24.1; 3.18.1; 3.22.1; 3.23.1-2; 4.Preface.4; 4.20.1; 4.33.4; 5.1.3; 5.2.1; 5.6.1; 5.8.1; 5.10.1; 5.12.4; 5.15.4; 5.16.1-2; 5.21.2; 5.28.4; 5.36.3.

⁹¹ 5.16.2, *SC* 153:216/same for Gr.; Translation by J. Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 114. Cf. *Epid.* 22. For a "Gnostic" interpretation of this text, see 1.24.1.

⁹² Mackenzie, *Demonstration*, 49. See also Balthasar, *Glory*, 65–66.

⁹³ *Haer.* 4.11.2, *SC* 100:500. Translation by Behr. Also see *Epid.* 22 where it explicitly states that Jesus is the image of God.

‘Adam’s formation from the untilled dust is worked out in accordance with Christ’s incarnational economy. For humanity to be created in the image of God means . . . that it was created in the image of the Son, and more precisely the incarnate Son’.⁹⁴ Thus, the image and likeness of God endowed to humanity was that of the pre-existent *Word*. Humans were created *after* the image, which, in accordance with God’s plan, was fully manifest through the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. Thus, Adam was a type, ‘a picture painted in unfinished outline’,⁹⁵ who bore witness to the incarnate Christ, who in the fullness of time ‘became Himself what was His image’.⁹⁶

Irenaeus’ second exegetical approach in support of the incarnation is to identify Pauline texts, which when read in tandem with texts such as John 1:14, ‘And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us’, can be construed as having incarnational contours. Again, this approach is directly relevant to Irenaeus’ context in that his opponents claim that Christ is constituted of two *substantiae*.⁹⁷ The following text is representative of Irenaeus’ reading, which links various Pauline texts to teach about the nature of the incarnation.

Paul, when writing to the Romans, explained this very thing [the He -- Jesus Christ -- is one and the same]: *Paul. . .an apostle. . .of Christ Jesus. . . set apart for the Gospel of God which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son who was descended from David according to the flesh, and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead, of Jesus Christ our Lord* [Rom 1:1-4]. Again, writing to the Romans about Israel, he said, *To them belong the patriarchs [lit., ‘fathers’], and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever* [Rom 9:5].

Once more, in his letter to the Galatians, he says, *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. He clearly points out one God who, through the prophets, made the promise regarding His Son* [Gal 4:4-5]; and that there is one Jesus Christ our Lord, who belongs to David’s offspring by virtue of the generation from Mary [Rom 1:3]; that this Jesus Christ was designated Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead [Rom 1:4], that He might be *the firstborn of the dead*, just as He is the firstborn of all creation [Col 1:5, 18]. The Son of God was made the Son of Man, that through Him we

⁹⁴ Steenberg, *Irenaeus*, 110.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹⁶ *Haer.* 5.16.2, *SC* 153:216. Translation from ANF.

⁹⁷ Among his most favored texts are those that highlight the human birth of Jesus (e.g., Rom 1:1-4; 8:3; 9:4-5; Gal 4:4-5), coalesce the Spirit and material nature of Jesus Christ (e.g., Rom 8:9-15; 2 Cor 5:4; Eph 1:13), equate the title of Jesus Christ to one Lord (1 Cor 8:6) or one man (Rom 5:17), and texts that highlight the suffering and death of Jesus (Rom 14:9; 1 Cor 15:3-4).

might receive adoption, since human nature bore and contained and embraced the Son of God.⁹⁸

In comparison to the typological method outlined earlier, here we observe another common hermeneutical approach of Irenaeus. Through the combination of isolated yet related texts in Paul (and elsewhere), he seeks to present a convincing case that Jesus Christ is both divine and human yet of one substance. Especially throughout sections 3.16-21.9 and 5.6-16, Irenaeus weaves together many Pauline texts appealing repeatedly to 1 Cor 8:6 and Rom 5:17 to emphasize the unity of Jesus and Christ as *unus et idem*.⁹⁹ In Rom 5:17, Paul describes ‘Jesus Christ’ as ‘one man’, whereas in 1 Cor 8:6 ‘Jesus Christ’ is equated to ‘one Lord’. Irenaeus marshals an impressive selection of Pauline texts to establish this theological point, including Gal 4:4-5: ‘God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law’. This passage forms a central tenet of Irenaeus’ incarnational theology and is cited thirteen times in books three and four.¹⁰⁰ This text is also discussed in tandem with Rom 1:1-4, where Jesus Christ is identified as the ‘seed of David according to the flesh’, presupposing that Christ assumed flesh and blood, and Col 1:15, where Jesus Christ is called the ‘firstborn of all creation’, affirming that he was the ‘Word’ who created all things.¹⁰¹ Other texts that are included in Irenaeus’ discussion of the unity of the earthly and divine in Jesus Christ are Rom 8:3, ‘his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh’,¹⁰² and Rom 9:4-5, ‘Christ according to the flesh’. Likewise, Rom 14:9 and 1 Cor 15:3-4 are representative texts that affirm the death and suffering of Jesus Christ; these two texts are important because they explicitly state that ‘Christ’ died, a claim that the ‘Gnostics’ denied.¹⁰³

Many of these brief references to Christ have not factored significantly into Pauline theology, nor are they typically woven together like this in support of an incarnational theology. Likewise, these texts do not factor into my own exegesis since the burden of my

⁹⁸ 3.16.3, *SC* 211:294, 296, 298. Irenaeus continues to demonstrate this same theology from the Gospels; see 3.16.5. Specifically he is refuting the claim that Jesus was formed of two different substances, *ex altera et altera substantia dicentes eum factum*.

⁹⁹ See esp., 3.16-18.

¹⁰⁰ 3.16.3, 7. This particular text does double duty since the birth of Jesus was “in the fullness of time” (τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου).

¹⁰¹ Norris, “Paul,” 85–86.

¹⁰² *Haer.* 3.20.2.

¹⁰³ 3.16.2.

work was not to demonstrate the incarnation of Jesus Christ. These texts, however, may be fruitful for consideration in the ecotheological discussion -- not so much to prove the incarnation, but rather to demonstrate that the Christ as constituted from the material creation is a stronger thread within Pauline theology than generally assumed. For Irenaeus, these texts are critical building blocks to demonstrate the centrality of the incarnation, which links the beginning (creation) to the end (eschatology), as well as the divine to the material creation. The incarnation also is the key to Irenaeus' soteriology.

Making the incarnation the hinge to the divine economy is one of the factors that leads Irenaeus to link redemption with creation and the *telos*. Irenaeus' construction is built upon texts such as Eph 1:9-12, Rom 8, and Gen 1-3; it is also further supported by his observation that humans are not immortal in the garden but, rather, created to be free agents within the creation (e.g., drawing from Paul in 1 Cor 6:11-12 and Eph 4:25-29) and created according to the image of God. This, he illustrates, is in contrast to Christ who is the image of God.

(c) Christ and Creation: Soteriology and Eschatology

As identified in chapter five, Irenaeus developed his soteriological and eschatological theology primarily in light of the incarnation; he describes those redeemed in Christ as in a process of maturity and growth toward the eschatological climax of union with God. As Behr identifies, this does not indicate a 'mystical union of the soul with God, but with the perfecting of the mud in the image and likeness of God'.¹⁰⁴ Thus Irenaeus links the soteriological work of Christ more with Gen 1-2 rather than Gen 3. Irenaeus parallels the disobedience of Adam with the obedience of Christ, yet not in keeping with the later Western theology that interprets Gen 3 as a fall of humanity from perfection and immortality. Rather Irenaeus' soteriology interprets the recapitulation of the incarnate Son, with every aspect and age of human life and death, as the means through which humanity has access to the forgiveness of sins (5.2.2.c.i), the immortality of the flesh (§5.2.2.c.ii), and the perfecting of all things (5.2.2.c.iii).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Behr, *Identifying*, 181.

¹⁰⁵ See for example, *Haer.* 2.22.4; 3.18.7; 3.19.3; *Epid.* 33.

Just as the Adam-Christ typology informs Irenaeus' protology, anthropology, and Christology, it also informs his soteriology. In the passage below, he weaves together Pauline themes from Rom 5:19, 8:15, 1 Cor 15:53-4, 2 Cor 5:4, Gal 4:5, and 2 Tim 1:10 along with motifs from the creation narrative to communicate the redemptive accomplishment of the divine purpose in the incarnation.

For just as through the disobedience of one man who was fashioned first from untilled earth many were made sinners and lost life, so it was fitting also through the obedience of the one man, who was born first of the Virgin, that many be made just [*juste*] and receive salvation. Thus, then, the Word of God was made Man. . . . But if He seemed to be flesh without becoming flesh, His work was not true. On the contrary, what He seemed to be, that He also was, namely, God, who recapitulated in Himself the ancient handiwork of man [Adam], that He might kill sin and destroy death and give life to humankind. And for this reason His works are true. . . . For the Word of God became man, and he who is God's Son became the Son of Man to this end, [that man,] having been united with the Word of God and receiving adoption, might become a son of God. Certainly in no other way could we have received imperishability and immortality unless we have been united with imperishability and immortality. But how could we be united with imperishability and immortality unless imperishability and immortality had first become what we are, in order that the perishable might be swallowed up by imperishability, and the mortal by immortality, that *we might receive the adoption of sons?*¹⁰⁶

Irenaeus begins this text by citing a modified form of Rom 5:19 drawing a parallel between the origin of Adam and Christ by juxtaposing 'untilled [virgin] earth' and the 'Virgin [Mary/birth]'. Clearly Irenaeus is drawing this correlation to demonstrate that only through a true human being could redemption and justice come to humanity. It is of note that the victory over sin and death is attributed most directly to the incarnate form of Christ and not explicitly to his death/blood as Rom 5 develops. As in this text, Irenaeus regularly uses the term *juste* to describe the work of Christ on behalf of humanity; most often, however, it is cited in relationship to his view that the devil has power over humanity who were 'held captive by him, whom he exploited unjustly' (5.21.3). This is the fashion in which Gen 3 is most often incorporated into Irenaeus' soteriology -- more as a battle between the serpent and God for the sake of humanity, 'For if humankind, which was made by God that it might live, but which lost that life when it was injured by the serpent who corrupted it would no longer return to life but would be altogether abandoned to death, God would be overcome and the

¹⁰⁶ 3.18.7, *SC* 211:368, 370/same for partial Fr. Gr. 27; 3.19.1, *SC* 211:374, emphasis mine; see also 3.22.2; 4.22.1. *Epid.* 32. See Behr, *Asceticism*, 60–61.

serpent's wickedness would thus prevail over God's will. . . . But God, who has given aid to humanity and restored humans to their freedom, is not devoid of power, nor is He unjust'.¹⁰⁷ This feature of Irenaeus' soteriology provides a key basis for the linkage of the incarnation with the salvation of humanity, a theme that is central to the text above. It is on the basis of the Word becoming flesh that imperishability, immortality, and adoption as sons is possible for humanity which is made in the image of the Word. Thus, redemption of humanity comes through a human, the very nature of that which the serpent enslaved.

Another interesting feature of the text above is Irenaeus' use of 'first' to describe Adam and Christ, a variation from Rom 5, which repeatedly uses the descriptor 'one'.¹⁰⁸ This modification strengthens the connection between Adam and Christ and, according to MacKenzie, 'brackets together' the typological relationship of the creation of humanity with the redemption of humanity.¹⁰⁹

Irenaeus' eschatological vision is an extension of his soteriology, and central to his vision is the Spirit's role in the transformation of humanity toward perfection in order to share in the glory of the Uncreated. One of the most famous passages of Irenaeus succinctly outlines this participation.

For the glory of God is a living man, and the life of man consists in beholding God: for if the manifestation of God through the creation affords life to all living on earth, much more does that revelation of the Father which comes through the Word give life to those who see God.¹¹⁰

Integrally connected to this glorification, and in light of the 'Gnostic' teaching to the contrary, Irenaeus constructs a theological case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and, by extension for those in Christ and for the restoration of 'all things' to God. In relationship to his comprehensive eschatological project, he draws upon numerous texts, particularly reading Revelation along with a variety of other texts throughout the OT and the New. As elsewhere the larger eschatological project is based on the original creation narrative (outlined more extensively in §5.2.3).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ *Haer.* 3.23.1-2, *SC* 211:445, 446, 450; See also 5.2.1; 5.21.3; 3.23.1.

¹⁰⁸ For example, the Greek fragment has additional adverbial phrases highlighting this connection, τοῦ πρώτως ἐκ γῆς . . . τοῦ πρώτως ἐκ παρθένου γεγεννημένου. In the Latin, *primus* is used. See 3.18.7, *SC* 211:368, 370/same for Fr. Gr. 27.

¹⁰⁹ Mackenzie, *Demonstration*, 101–3.

¹¹⁰ *Haer.* 4.20.7, *SC* 100:648. Translation by Behr, *Asceticism*, 56–57.

¹¹¹ See for example, 5.36.3. Also, Behr, *Identifying*, 82–84.

In relationship to Irenaeus' anthropological motif of movement from immaturity toward perfection, the Pauline corpus is valuable. He regularly references Rom 8:28-30, 2 Cor 3:17-18, and Col 3:9-10, where humanity is described as in the process of being transformed into the image of Christ. Thus, throughout each stage of the economy, the church is being conformed to the image of the Son. In another context, Irenaeus concludes that the incarnate Christ will transfigure (μετασχηματίζω) the fleshy body into the body of His glory; therefore, he gives the command to 'Glorify God in your body' (1 Cor 6:20; cf. 15:53-55, Phil 3:20-21).¹¹² This process begins at baptism, when the Spirit takes up residence in the church.¹¹³ Irenaeus describes the function of the Spirit in this way: 'The Holy Spirit, the pledge of imperishability, the strength of our faith, and the ladder of ascent to God. . . . For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where God's Spirit is, there is the Church, and all grace; and *the Spirit is truth*'.¹¹⁴ One of Irenaeus' favored Pauline themes in this vein is 1 Cor 15:45-8 read in tandem with Gen 2:7. In keeping with my own interpretation of this text in chapter four, Irenaeus draws a sharp contrast between the original animation of humanity who received the 'breath of God' and the eternal vivification received through the 'life-giving Spirit' of the incarnate one. From this retrospective perspective, Irenaeus concludes that there exist two contrasting modes of life.

At the beginning of our formation in Adam, the breath of life which proceeded from God, having been united to what had been fashioned, animated man, and manifested him as a being endowed with reason; so also, in the end, the Word of the Father and the Spirit of God having become united with the ancient substance of Adam's formation, rendered man living and perfect, receptive of the perfect Father, in order that as in the psychical we all die, so in the spiritual we all may be made alive.¹¹⁵

Irenaeus also cites Rom 8 to link the salvation and glorification of humanity with the perfection of the whole of creation. One passage that clearly describes salvation as the progression toward immortality, perfection, and glorification is cited here in its entirety.¹¹⁶ This text particularly outlines how the salvation of humanity *fits within* the much broader

¹¹² 5.8.3; cf. 1 Cor 6:20.

¹¹³ It is of interest that Irenaeus seldom describes the efficacy of baptism as the remission of sins; rather it is a 'regeneration unto God'. See for example, 1.21.1; 3.17.1; *Epid.* 7.

¹¹⁴ 3.24.1, *SC* 211:472, 474.

¹¹⁵ 5.1.3, *SC* 153:26. Translation by Behr, *Asceticism*, 59.

¹¹⁶ For a discussion on how Irenaeus plays down the connection between salvation and human sin, see Lawson, *Theology*, 187-89.

vision where redemption is an ongoing universal reality: Thus, the temporality of the creation, and humanity residing within the creation, becomes the context whereby humanity can mature and progress to immortality.

For from the very fact of these things having been created, [it follows] that they are not uncreated; but by their continuing in being throughout a long course of ages, they shall receive a faculty of the Uncreated, through the gratuitous bestowal of eternal existence upon them by God. And thus in all things God has the pre-eminence, who alone is uncreated, the first of all things, and the primary cause of the existence of all, while all other things remain under God's subjection. But being in subjection to God is continuance in immortality, and immortality is the glory of the uncreated One. By this arrangement, therefore, and these harmonies, and a sequence of this nature, man, a created and organized being, is rendered after the image and likeness of the uncreated God, — the Father planning everything well and giving His commands, the Son carrying these into execution and performing the work of creation, and the Spirit nourishing and increasing [what is made], but man making progress day by day, and ascending towards the perfect, that is, approximating to the uncreated One. For the Uncreated is perfect, that is God. Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance be created; and having been created, should receive growth; and having received growth, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened, should abound, should recover [from the disease of sin]; and having recovered, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord. For God is He who is yet to be seen, and the beholding of God is productive of immortality, but immortality renders one nigh unto God.¹¹⁷

Several observations from this eschatological vision are important. First, throughout the various temporal stages, the Spirit brings growth and nourishment for humanity to mature into the immortality of God. Humanity, however, remains distinct from the divine by nature, remaining a created being. There is a certain ordering to this progress which he calls 'ascending towards the perfect'; here, as in the text above, Irenaeus alludes to 1 Cor 15 and draws a distinction between the animation of Adam and the eschatological transformation of those in Christ. The latter have been given the Spirit as the first fruits yet the fullness is still to come (Rom 8). In connection with the redemption of humanity, Irenaeus also affirms the restoration of all of creation. First Corinthians 7:31 is an important text in this regard for it confirms that the creation is not destroyed but re-created anew, 'For neither is the substance (ὑπόστασις) nor the essence (οὐσία) of the creation annihilated . . . but "the fashion (σχῆμα, *figura*) of this world passeth away"¹¹⁸ These texts demonstrate that the eschatological vision

¹¹⁷ *Haer.* 4.38.3, *SC* 100:952-956/953-957.

¹¹⁸ 5.36.1; citing 1 Cor 7:31, *SC* 153:452, 454/same for Gr. Fr. 29.

of Paul is not bound to a return to some primordial state, but that it resides in a radical new reality.

Necessary to Irenaeus' agenda is the demonstration that the fullness of what is to come is bound to materiality and form, and thus he argues for the bodily resurrection of Christ and those in Christ. Hans von Balthasar notes that through this accent Irenaeus maintains an important counter to the 'Gnostic' flight from the world.¹¹⁹ One example of such exegesis appears in his lengthy counter to the 'Gnostic' interpretation of the phrase 'flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God' (1 Cor 15:50). This isolated text becomes *the* catch-phrase undergirding an elaborate doctrine that broadly denigrates the material realm and specifically denies the resurrection of the flesh, claiming 'that the handiwork of God (*plasmatio Dei*) is not saved'.¹²⁰ In response, Irenaeus marshals a matrix of texts to demonstrate the hermeneutical premise that *each text must be in harmony (consonare) with the broader theological divine economy*.¹²¹ His basic reconstruction is the one found in 1 Cor 15:50: 'flesh and blood' refers to 'the works of the flesh'. As humanity matures in obedience to God, the Spirit takes an ever-abiding presence in the body, 'death is swallowed up in victory', and the Spirit *inherits* the flesh. The result is that 'the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh', resulting in adoption into Christ. Those who reject this life-sustaining gift are left as mere 'flesh and blood' which is equated with death. This hermeneutical principle, which Osborn explains as inclusive of 'both logical coherence and aesthetic fitness', is one that Irenaeus draws on frequently to describe the integrity and reciprocity of the entire interpretive exchange between reader and text. The focus of *consonare* is related to the interpretive principle, sometimes called 'exegetical reciprocity', where clear passages must interpret less clear passages.¹²²

Except for this exegetical digression to confront the 'Gnostic' reading of the phrase in 1 Cor 15:50, the correspondence between Irenaeus' reading of 1 Cor 15 and my own is

¹¹⁹ Balthasar, *Glory*, 2, 93.

¹²⁰ *Haer.* 5.9.1, *SC* 153:106. Irenaeus dedicates six chapters in book five to this text, with a succinct summary in 5.13.2-3. See Norris, "Paul," 83-84.

¹²¹ 1.9-12; cf. 2.25.1-4. Cf. Rom 8:10-11, 13; 1 Cor 15:53-55; 2 Cor 4:11; Phil 3:20-21; Gal 5:19. See Osborn, *Lyons*, 159-61; Bingham, "Romans 8" (115); Blackwell, "Irenaeus," 198-99.

¹²² 2.27.1. Grant, Ayres, and others have contributed toward seeing these principles as common to the ancient grammarians' methodology. See for example, Grant, *Irenaeus*; Ayers, "Patristic Exegesis"; Farkasfalvy, "St. Irenaeus," 328.

striking (§3.2 and §4.3.2). We have both identified and developed key features of Paul’s teaching which highlight continuity with and divergence between Adam and Christ. They are called ἄνθρωποι, and both are subject to death. Yet Paul’s response to the question ‘With what type of body?’ draws the important distinction between the σῶμα ψυχικόν, represented by Adam, and the σῶμα πνευματικόν, represented by Jesus Christ. Likewise, we both identify and develop the distinction Paul draws between the ‘breath of God’ given in the first creation and the resurrected Christ who is a ‘life-giving Spirit’. The resurrection of Christ and the experience of the eschatological Spirit -- both as the first fruits -- are a guarantee of the future bodily resurrection for those in Christ.

Although Irenaeus stays clear of the full-fledged allegorical readings of Scripture that are more characteristic of ‘Gnostic’ exegesis, he does use allegory in ways that allow Scripture to illuminate Christ and the church.¹²³ For example, he reads Rom 11:17-21 as support for the resurrection of the flesh. The wild branch is the sinful body that when grafted into the fruit-bearing tree ‘does not lose the substance of its wood, but changes the quality of its fruit . . . so as, when man is grafted in by faith and receives the Spirit of God, he certainly does not lose the substance of flesh, but changes the quality of the fruit [brought forth] of his works’.¹²⁴

6.3 Conclusion

Although we have only observed a selection of Irenaeus’ interpretive renderings from the Pauline corpus, several key exegetical and hermeneutical observations can be made. First, in terms of his interpretive conventions, our findings confirm that Irenaeus employs a variety of approaches to the Pauline texts, with the majority shaped by a christological or, even more precisely, an incarnational lens. The divine economy provides not only an over-arching theological framework where the incarnate Christ is central, but it also provides the interpretive lens whereby all other texts are to be read. Additionally, by way of his evaluation

¹²³ It is important to note that Irenaeus does not draw the clear distinction between typology and allegory that is more characteristic of modern constructs. One example of the typical allegory present within Irenaeus is the correlation he draws between Christ taking up the cross and Isaac taking up the wood to follow Abraham (4.5.4). Lawson further describes these nuances in Irenaeus: Lawson, *Theology*, 81–86.

¹²⁴ *Haer.* 5.10.2, *SC* 153: 128. Elsewhere, Irenaeus uses this text in accord with the original sense, see 4.27.2.

of his opponents' reading of Scripture, it also becomes evident that the prolegomena as outlined above are extremely important in Irenaeus' assessment of alternative readings of Scripture. Finally, chapters five and six demonstrate that creation is central to Irenaeus' biblical narrative framework and that the Pauline literature is essential for his theological construction.

As an early interpreter of Paul, several key factors led Irenaeus to such a response. First, his historical setting prompted that he reflect deeply on how the Scriptures address issues related to creation and materiality. Faced with the 'Gnostic' contempt for the material creation, Irenaeus reads the text in order to counter what he perceives as misconstrued interpretations of Scripture regarding God, Christ, and the creation. Additionally, because he is an early reader of Paul, he has not yet inherited a 'fixed' interpretive tradition of the corpus -- traditions that later generations will be indebted to, yet also influenced by. Likewise, Irenaeus is not hampered by modern distinctions between the authentic letters of Paul and those that are considered pseudonymous; thus, he reads Ephesians and Colossians as he would read Romans and 1 Corinthians. Without these constraints, Irenaeus has the opportunity to present what moderns might judge as an innovative and instrumental reading of Paul's letters. Perhaps the most significant consideration that contributes toward his identification of creation themes and motifs in Paul is his reading of the Pauline letters in tandem with other literature he considers to be authoritative Scripture.

As noted in the beginning of this section, many features of our work share a common theological conclusion and textual base. In keeping with Irenaeus, I affirm that the creation narrative is critical for Pauline theology in relationship to anthropology and Christology and we regularly cite the same texts to demonstrate this. We also agree that for Paul, it is now the person and work of Jesus Christ that becomes the hermeneutical starting point for his readings of the creation narrative and many other OT texts. Chapter four particularly demonstrates great resonance with our theological conclusions concerning a Pauline reading of the creation narrative: Adam/Christ and the image of God motifs. On each theological point, however, our exegetical approaches differ. Likewise, because of our different historical contexts, our emphases differ as well.

In light of modern scholarly developments and insights on the influence of apocalyptic thought for Paul, I believe that the texts I suggest for developing a Pauline creation theology

are more likely to be received favorably by scholars as organizing texts for Pauline creation theology (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Rom 8:18-25). This is due in part to their location in authentic Pauline letters whereas many scholars remain unconvinced of the Pauline authorship of Ephesians. However, regardless of the individual texts we consider for organizing the Pauline framework, Irenaeus demonstrates and I concur that no one text will do; what is required for the development of Pauline theology is a web of texts woven together in order to better ascertain the christological pattern of Pauline thought on creation.

I particularly find two features of Irenaeus' theology both compelling and promising, not only for the construction of a Pauline theology of creation but also in terms of providing a foundation for creative ecotheological readings of Paul. The emphasis on the centrality of the incarnation within each theological aspect of Pauline theology is striking: protology, ecclesiology, soteriology and eschatology. Irenaeus' readings of Pauline texts in this regard challenge readings that place little weight on this feature of Pauline theology. This relates to the second feature related to Irenaeus' soteriology; he outlines a theology of redemption that links the Christ event to creation texts (Gen 1-2) rather than predominantly to the so-called fall (Gen 3). Both trajectories provide provocative and insightful contributions to Pauline theology and could prove fruitful as we turn to consider the potential value of the Pauline material for ecotheology.

In each of these distinct ways — , by emphasizing the incarnation as the hinge of that economy and by linking redemption to both creation and the *telos* — Irenaeus develops, corrects and refocuses the readings of individual texts advanced above (chapters two through four). Although there is considerable overlap in our readings, Irenaeus enables us to consider even more possibilities for identifying creation themes and motifs in the Pauline corpus, both at the surface of Paul's discourse and at a deeper substructural level, while also developing a large structural frame which is of potential value for ecotheology.

Chapter Seven

Paul, Irenaeus, and Ecotheology — Possibilities for Consideration

7.1 Pauline Creation Themes and Ecotheology

The final step in this dissertation is the suggestion that organizing Pauline ktisiology using a Christology-centred Irenaean creation theological framework may stimulate new possibilities for contemporary ecotheological discussion. Up to this point, my attention has been given more broadly to the creation theology of Paul and Irenaeus. Although this dissertation does not exhaust all the possible texts of either author, I have highlighted some of the key texts in the Pauline corpus which illustrate that Paul has either directly or indirectly drawn upon creation motifs to inform his Christology in significant ways. The works of Irenaeus further support, illuminate, and extend my reading of Paul, especially as one considers how Irenaeus marshals a number of Pauline texts to support his decision to structure his theological framework around the divine οἰκονομία. As established in the introduction, this study is not intended to produce a comprehensive Pauline or Irenaean theology of creation, nor does it aim to provide definitive answers to all of the questions presented. Rather, I have sought to present provocative trajectories and pointers from which readers of Paul may begin to conceptualize new questions and formulate new structures for Pauline theology -- a theology that has considerable links between creation and Christology that are not yet adequately acknowledged in scholarship.

In light of my findings, in this final chapter I consider the gains and implications that my exegetical and theological insights have for contemporary ecotheological discussion. Certainly neither Paul nor Irenaeus anticipate the ecological questions and concerns we face, yet their rich creation theology provides us with a useful framework for considering our human relationship to God/Christ, other humans, and the world in which we live. The pre-modern interpretation of Irenaeus helps to confirm some of work developed in chapters two through four, while the differences point to the incorporation of other texts and motifs that could further enhance and strengthen current readings of Paul. Irenaeus places the whole of Pauline theology into a single package, weaving Pauline motifs together with Gen 1-2 and other texts in a fresh way that makes the Pauline texts fruitful for ecotheology. Thus, this

chapter responds to one of the key questions of this research: *How does Irenaeus help us discern a structural relationship between creation and Christology in Pauline theology in a way that could prove fruitful for a Christian ecotheology?* In response to this question, I organize my suggestions into two main categories: ecological hermeneutical considerations (§7.2) and Pauline theological categories (§7.3).

7.2 Ecological Hermeneutic Considerations

7.2.1 A Christocentric Theological Hermeneutic

As biblical scholars and theologians move away from a form of historical criticism that might be stereotypically characterized as taking biblical texts apart piece by piece, the emerging hermeneutical trend is toward approaches to the biblical canon that consider over-arching theological narratives. Issues of authorship are now considered less important than a generation ago and a history-of-religions approach is giving way to theology-based biblical interpretations that are sensitive to intertextual connections. This latter point is especially important among biblical scholars who seek to identify ways that the NT authors interpret the Christ event in light of their scriptural canon.

Given these modern scholarly shifts, Irenaeus and his vast writings on creation, provide a hallmark contribution toward any discussion of the theology of creation. His ability to weave together a breadth of texts from the OT and the NT with an eye toward the over-arching biblical narrative represents a valuable early hermeneutical reading. Irenaeus approaches the Pauline corpus by connecting individual texts to larger themes in the biblical narrative; thus, he models what moderns might call a thorough-going biblical theological hermeneutic, and this hermeneutic clearly uses Pauline texts as its over-arching framework. Irenaeus identifies Christ as the theological hinge of the divine economy and likewise as the hermeneutical lens for biblical interpretation. In a correlative way, the concept of recapitulation, the summing up of all things in Christ provides an organizing centre for Irenaeus' theology.¹ H. U. Balthasar notes that this is what makes the theology of Irenaeus

¹ T. Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus and Genesis: A Study of Competition in Early Christian Hermeneutics* (JTISup; Warsaw, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 25–41.

timeless and that it sets the standard for the unified and cohesive interpretive practices of subsequent centuries:

The basic methodological structure reflects not only the central feature of theological truth — it is revelation — but also the most characteristic feature of this particular theologian, his ability to see, above all to see things in their relation to one another, in a compact concentrated whole, in a summary (*epitome, compendium*) which is prevented from being a falsification because it keeps the whole in view of its intensity and is able at any time to reproduce it again. This pulling together of his material produces a formula which outlasts and marks everything.²

Irenaeus' ability to synthesize Paul into the wider canon demonstrates how one may generate new readings of any singular biblical author or text in view of the whole. As ecotheologians consider how the Pauline corpus might be read in new and promising ways, a biblical theological approach may allow features of Pauline theology to come into sharper focus.

In tandem with Paul's intertextual hermeneutic, this study comports with the insight of R. Hays, who suggests that 'Paul finds in Scripture language and images that allow him to give expression to his kerygma. In reactivating these images, he necessarily (and sometimes artfully) twists them in such a way that new significations arise out of the interplay between the old and the new'.³ Irenaeus employs this same christocentric intertextuality (and in fact, he goes well beyond Paul at points) and thus Hays' observations seem *apropos* when considering the christocentric hermeneutic of Paul and Irenaeus. Both writers employ a sort of circular reciprocity where Christ, as the fullest image of God and as the last Adam, sheds light retrospectively on the first creation narrative in such a way that the first creation narrative points forward proleptically to the eternal plan of God as it is manifest in Christ. In light of this hermeneutical method, James Barr's keen observation is worth restating in relation to Paul and Irenaeus: 'Paul is not interpreting the story [creation] in and for itself; he was really interpreting Christ through the use of images from the story'.⁴

² H. U. Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* (ed. J. Riches; vol. II of *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*; trans. A. Louth, F. McDonagh, and B. McNeil; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), 50.

³ R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1989), 160.

⁴ J. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 89. In my judgment, some of the interpretive movements of Irenaeus overstep the trajectory of the biblical texts, but nevertheless, there is much to glean and consider from his reading of Paul.

In terms of ecotheology, this final point is crucial. The first generation of ecotheologians largely responded to J. L. White's article by arguing that the OT texts he identified, particularly Gen 1:26-28, were not intended to give humans authority to abuse the earth. Yet none of the scholarly responses thus far have considered Paul's christocentric reading of that Genesis passage. My work, in chapter four, and Irenaeus' reading both highlight the way that Paul transforms that text and applies it to Christ. As the true image of God and the one in whom God dwells in bodily form, Jesus Christ embodies a distinctively new creative act of God, one which illuminates the limitations of the old/first creation. It is Jesus Christ, through whom the creation came to be, who embodies the ideal dominion and kingly rule over the creation. Those in Christ collectively (not individually) are being transformed into the image of Christ and thus participate with, and are an extension of Christ in this earthly function -- yet Christ remains the 'Lord of creation'. Such christological readings of the creation narrative as intimated by Paul, could reshape the ongoing debate about the intersections of church and ecology, and could give impetus for Christian communities to more actively consider their role in creation care.

7.2.2 *Beyond Rom 8:19-25 and Col 1:15-20*

This model of christocentric theological hermeneutics is related to my second observation about utilizing the Pauline corpus for ecotheology. As Horrell, Hunt, and Southgate suggest in *Greening Paul*, Rom 8:19-25 and Col 1:15-20 are valuable texts, yet by intentionally expanding the number of Pauline texts that are drawn into this scholarly discussion we may helpfully further our exploration of ecotheology.⁵ They briefly identify Rom 5:12-21, 1 Cor 8:6, 15:22-28, Gal 3:28, Eph 1:10, and the Pauline new creation texts as possible scriptural starting points for widening the discussion.⁶ Their invitation to explore such texts is essentially what I have attempted here. My hope is that this study will provide the next step toward that initiative and will result in the exploration of a more expansive selection of Pauline texts within the broader ecotheological discussion.

⁵ D. Horrell, C. Hunt, and C. Southgate, *Greening Paul: Rereading the Apostle in a Time of Ecological Crisis* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 158-80.

7.2.3 Ecology as a Hermeneutical Lens

Another hermeneutical consideration is the way in which we allow our own setting to influence our readings of the Pauline corpus. Paul and Irenaeus provide superb examples of hermeneutical methods that allow the pressing questions of their time to shape their own readings of Scripture. In light of the Christ event and his mission to the Gentiles, Paul re-appropriates Scripture (i.e., the OT) in creative ways that no Jew of his day could have formerly conceived.⁷ Irenaeus' concerns were different than Paul's, and thus Irenaeus' focus was to weave creation texts together as a response to the interpretive challenge of his day: 'Gnostic' interpretations of Scripture that denigrated the material world and disputed the incarnation. We likewise need to read and interpret the text with the pressing issues of our day in the foreground. In regard to ecotheology, the approach taken by Horrell, Hunt, and Southgate is once again instructive. They reflect a self-conscious awareness that the Pauline corpus is composed of *ad hoc* letters written to men and women dealing with first-century issues — clearly our ecological concerns are not directly addressed by Paul (nor any other biblical author). Thus, they acknowledge that in their reading of Paul they may be 'making new meaning from the texts, but seeking to do so in a way that is in demonstrable continuity with the Pauline material and is thus potentially persuasive as a faithful form of Christian theology'.⁸ This approach acknowledges that our setting as readers is one filter which influences -- and should influence -- our interpretation and application of texts. Historically, this has happened in fruitful ways that liberate texts from their own historical/contextual boundaries. For example, the ways in which the church has read and applied Scripture in relation to slavery and the role and status of women has certainly been helpfully influenced by contemporary contexts. Paul was neither an abolitionist nor a feminist, yet there are texts from which trajectories can be established that acknowledge the authority of the text while simultaneously allowing it to address new questions and situations with a fresh and liberating word. This process especially stimulates creative interpretive possibilities as individual texts are read in view of the contours of broad biblical theological themes.

⁷ See for example, Hays, *Echoes*.

⁸ Horrell, Hunt, and Southgate, *Greening*, 4.

In keeping with such considerations, in this research I have attempted to identify texts that have not typically been part of the ecotheological discussion yet can speak to a new situation when read with sensitivity to creation themes and from a contemporary vantage. Chapter three is the clearest example of such a hermeneutical attempt, for Paul clearly did not write 1 Cor 8-10 with ecotheological questions in mind. Nevertheless, he was convinced that how one relates to food and other humans should be shaped by a proper christological framework, a framework that affirms Jesus Christ as the one through whom ‘all things’ have come and as the sovereign Lord over ‘all things’. This christological framework becomes the basis from which Paul directs those at Corinth to modify how they relate to food and to others in the community (§3.1.5). I suggest that applying this hermeneutical model to biblical texts has the potential to allow readers to see new meaning potential in the biblical message, thereby prompting innovative interpretations of Paul that can address our current ecological concerns.

7.3 Pauline Theological Categories

7.3.1 Soteriology: Redemption to Creation and *Telos*

As modeled by Irenaeus and suggested in this thesis, Paul binds redemption together with creation and the *telos*, with human sin only playing a subordinate role in that equation. It should be acknowledged that Irenaeus recognizes human sin and death, yet he strongly affirms that the human plight is only one component of the larger cosmic plight to which the Christ event responds. From the vantage of this soteriological model, at least two significant shifts begin to emerge that have ecotheological implications. First, such a reading begins to dismantle the anthropocentrism that Western Christianity has inherited, and second, a more organic relationship between humanity and the rest of creation begins to take a central place in Pauline theology (e.g., Rom 8; 1 Cor 8-10). In relation to this shift and its impact on ecotheological studies, both Watson and Santmire identify Irenaeus as a necessary corrective to the prevalent Western tradition that links redemption to the so-called fall of Adam/Eve in Gen 3.⁹ Thus, Watson observes:

⁹ H. P. Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); F. Watson, “In the Beginning: Irenaeus, Creation and the Environment,” in

Where the gospel story is set against the background of ‘the fall’, the result is not lacking in coherence. What must be shown is that the gospel story is grounded in creation as well as fall, that the Genesis creation narrative is a plausible and necessary beginning for a story that reaches its culmination in Jesus. Creation is not just the stage on which the real drama is enacted, but is itself the opening act of the drama. What Jesus does is oriented towards humans not just in their unique fallenness but also in the creatureliness they share with the rest of the natural or created order.¹⁰

Rather than positing a soteriology that is narrowly defined by the doctrine of human sin and grace, Irenaeus interprets Scripture as positioning humanity within the broader construct of the divine οἰκονομία. This framework leads to what Santmire calls a ‘qualified anthropocentrism’.¹¹ Certainly Irenaeus highlights humans as unique creatures in the greater scheme: *the incarnation confirms this for Irenaeus* — that the uncreated Word became incarnate in human flesh and blood is the central theological hinge holding together Irenaeus’ theology. Irenaeus, however, interprets the incarnation primarily through the lens of the creation account in Gen 1-2 and secondarily through Gen 3 which functions more as an interlude in the divine economy; this is why the Adam-Christ typology and the image texts in Paul are so central to Irenaeus’ Christology.

Recent efforts to distinguish anthropocentrism from anthropomorphism may help to clarify the trajectory of Irenaeus’ theology.¹² Vischer, Southgate, and Watson suggest a rendering of *anthropocentric* that acknowledges, in line with Irenaeus, that within the scriptural narrative, humanity is of central importance in terms of its role: ‘human beings are called to fulfill a special and specific role in [the] world’.¹³ In this context, Irenaeus portrays a functional ontology where every creature has ‘a nature suitable to the character of the life assigned them’.¹⁴ Yet as Watson identifies, the history of scriptural interpretation has been dominated by anthropomorphic readings where all reality is defined in relationship to

Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives (eds. D. Horrell, et al.; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 127–39.

¹⁰ Watson, “Beginning,” 130.

¹¹ Santmire, *Travail*, 41–43.

¹² See for example, L. Vischer, “Listening to Creation Groaning: A Survey of Main Themes in Christian Theology,” in *Listening to Creation Groaning: Report and Papers from a Consultation on Creation Theology Organized by the European Christian Environmental Network at the John Knox International Reformed Center from March 28 to April 1, 2004* (ed. L. Vischer; Geneva: Center International Réformé John Knox, 2004), 21–22; C. Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 93, 105; Watson, “Beginning,” 129–30.

¹³ Vischer, “Listening”.

¹⁴ *Haer.* 2.2.4, cf. 1 Cor 15:39-44.

humanity and individual salvation. Within these interpretive traditions, ‘the drama of sin and salvation is all-consuming. The created order provides the drama’s theatre, staging and scenery, but it is the problematics of the divine-human relationship that provide the exclusive locus of attention’.¹⁵ Thus, there is a tendency in theological traditions that adopt a fall/redemption model for Gen 3 to take central priority, and this inevitably results in biblical teachings where the value of creation is eclipsed by the value of and focus on humanity.

It is important to acknowledge that Paul’s letters are *ad hoc* correspondence written to human beings, particularly within the context of his missionary work to the Gentiles, and that this naturally results in anthropocentrism. In an analogous way, OT documents are significantly shaped by the narrative of God’s covenant with Israel. Yet as Jewish and OT scholars have begun to reconsider how this covenant narrative of Israel fits within the larger biblical theological framework, rich creation themes and motifs have been identified and now are considered central to OT theology (§1.2.1). This biblical and theological task remains incomplete in NT scholarship, especially in regard to the letters of Paul.

The second outcome that emerges from binding redemption to creation is that human beings are defined more by their relatedness and purpose *within* creation than by their sin. As Watson astutely observes, in the fall/redemption model ‘Humans are indeed created, but far more important is the fact that they are fallen, and more important still is the fact that though fallen they are also redeemed’.¹⁶ What pragmatically results in some theological constructs that embrace this thinking is that humans are approached as autonomous beings in relation to the rest of creation. As already noted, Irenaeus acknowledges human sin, but his redemptive model organically articulates the relationship between humanity and the rest of creation. In agreement with Irenaeus, I note that Paul highlights believers as uniquely made in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ and that, therefore, as christological image-bearers within creation, Christians occupy a central place. As relational and rational creatures endowed with the Spirit, humans, unlike other creatures, are capable of responding to God and participating in the enactment of God’s plan. In keeping with such a reading Santmire suggests that what we have in Irenaeus is really a ‘creation history’¹⁷ whereby

¹⁵ Watson, “Beginning,” 129.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Santmire, *Travail*, 37.

Creation's arrangement is for the sake of human life. But humanity is not its sole purpose. Indeed, that sole purpose for Irenaeus is theocentric, not anthropocentric: that the Creator might begin, nourish, and fulfill the whole creation and then be all in all. In this connection it is important to recall that Christ, for Irenaeus, is more than the one who provides the remedy, or the redemption, for human sin. His coming signals the coming of the Perfecter of creation, the one who carried the whole creation forward into its last days, which was the Creator's intention from the very beginning'.¹⁸

Elsewhere Santmire suggests that the term *divine ecology* best captures the essence of Irenaeus' theological framework.¹⁹ I would alternatively suggest that Irenaeus' redemption model is better articulated with the phrase *christological ecology* because this better captures the heart of God's economy for Irenaeus: the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ who entered into the creation for the sake of creation.

Romans 8 (along with 2 Cor 3:17-18 and Col 3:9-10) is a central text for Irenaeus and factors significantly into his articulation of the organic relationship between humanity and creation as well as into his eschatological vision for the perfection of all things (§5.2.2.c.iii).²⁰ Likewise, as I suggest in chapter two of this thesis, Rom 8 provides a synopsis of the new creation in which humanity is not shown in conflict with, nor autonomous in relation to, the broader creation. Irenaeus teaches that humanity and the creation are to exist within a relationship characterized by harmony, proportion, and mutual exchange for the purpose that God be praised. As I have pointed out, R. Jackson provides a particularly helpful correlation between Rom 8 and the broader ancient worldview which understood that within the order of creation humanity was intricately linked to the political, social, and cosmic structures of the creation. Colin Gunton reflects on the very important link that H. H. Schmid makes in relation to this and concludes that 'there is no redemption, no social and personal life, apart from the creation'.²¹ Thus, in the Second Temple period, the welfare of the creation was seen as dependent in part on the ethics of humanity (§2.1.3).

¹⁸ Ibid., 42.

¹⁹ H. P. Santmire, *Nature Reborn: The Ecological and Cosmic Promise of Christian Theology* (Theology and the Sciences; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 217.

²⁰ For an description of how Irenaeus links these texts, see for example, D. J. Bingham, "Irenaeus Reads Romans 8: Resurrection and Renovation," in *Early Patristic Readings of Romans* (eds. K. L. Gaca and L.L. Welborn; London: T & T Clark, 2005), 14–132.

²¹ C. E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (ESCT; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 33–34.

This observation fits nicely as a broader context for my work in chapter three. As I demonstrate the notion of the interrelatedness of all things in the creation is presupposed by Paul in his directives concerning the relationship between food, believers, non-believers, Christ, and God. One criterion for eating is whether food is directed toward God in thanksgiving (theocentric) or toward demons (away from God and thus not fulfilling its creational purpose). Although Irenaeus does not develop these chapters as I have, my reading aligns with and broadens his work at this point. In 1 Cor 8-10, Paul has quite remarkably subsumed believers into the cosmological formulation. This places Paul and his congregation within a broader matrix of relationships where the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over ‘all things’ trumps any notion of the independent nature or neutrality of believers’ actions within or toward the creation (§3.3). Such a model certainly has implications for the posture of believers to the creation in our modern day.

Each of these implications naturally flows from Irenaeus’ theological framework that aligns redemption with creation and the *telos*. As Western Christians there is great value in revisiting these categories. In so doing, the presence of creation theology within the NT will come into sharper focus, and this will inevitably result in more robust ecotheologies.

7.3.2 Incarnation and Eucharist in Relation to the Creation

For Irenaeus, the incarnation is both a key to soteriology and also the basis for the goodness of creation and an affirmation of the material realm. It provides a seal that enables humanity to flourish richly. This feature of his reading of Paul -- a reading which places the incarnation as central to his creation theology -- has merit for further consideration, especially as it might stimulate fresh ecotheological readings of Paul. Irenaeus also takes the incarnational principle one step further and applies it to the Eucharist. Here Irenaeus draws upon two Pauline texts, 1 Cor 10:16-17 and 1 Cor 11:23-26, concluding that in tandem with the incarnation of Jesus Christ in the flesh, God now comes to humanity in the fruits of creation, ‘the Incomprehensible [acting thus] by means of the comprehensible, and the invisible by the visible’.²² Thus, the Eucharist becomes an extension of the incarnate Christ. Steenberg

²² *Haer.* 3.11.5; See §5.2.2.b.iii.

reflects on the eucharistic theology of Irenaeus and concludes, ‘Humanity and the creation are to exist in mutual interaction and exchange, through which both come to exist fully according to the intention revealed by God at creation, who himself manifests divine glory on both the cosmos and humankind in this harmonious exchange. The most poignant of such interchange is, for Irenaeus, found in the eucharistic offering, through which humanity is “nourished by means of the creation.” In the eucharist the work of human hands brings forth bread from the earth, which in turn “receives” the Word of God’.²³ In the Irenaeian framework, the Eucharist thereby becomes the body and blood of Christ, manifesting the Son in the physical cosmos.

These two Pauline texts, read together with texts from the Gospels, become important resources for Irenaeus to build a eucharistic theology that affirms the material creation. Although not developed in chapters two, three, or four of this dissertation, the trajectories of Irenaeian scholarship could provide a basis for developing this theme for ecotheology. Paul does not actually address eucharistic theology at length, so scholars who pursue this line of inquiry should take care so that exegetical integrity is not jeopardized in this process.

7.3.3 Theocentric Directed Eschatology

For Irenaeus, the climax of the divine economy was the eschatological vision of ‘all things’ being restored to God. Christians, through the power of the Spirit, were to grow and mature toward the ultimate goal of being subsumed into the glory of God. The culmination of this goal was not, however, a release from materiality or the destruction of the material creation. Rather materiality and the flesh would be transformed and inherit full participation in God. Irenaeus draws this theological conclusion primarily from the teaching of Paul and from Gen 1 where the Sabbath is the climax of the original creation. I have developed at length in chapter four the Pauline motifs which Irenaeus uses to develop these themes (e.g., image of God/Christ, Adam/Christ typology, 1 Cor 15), and my work on *καταργέω* complements and further supports Irenaeus’ conclusions.

In relationship to Gen 1, in chapter four, I briefly introduce the work of scholars who have noted that the climax of the first creation narrative is not anthropocentric (with the

²³ M. C. Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation: The Cosmic Christ and Saga of Redemption* (VCSup; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 149. Citing *Haer.* 5.2.2.

creation of humanity in the image of God) but, rather, theocentric (with ‘God finishing his work’ through the incorporation of the Sabbath into the order of creation). Scholars have regularly identified the importance of Sabbath keeping for Jews as a central tenet of their community structure, life, and worship; yet it has only been more recently that scholars have identified its important role in the creation narrative. As cited earlier, Fishbane and Santmire suggest that its inclusion builds into the very order of creation a theocentric directedness (§4.2). Likewise, we see Irenaeus picking up on this theme in Paul and incorporating it into his eschatological framework. Irenaeus understands that the climax of life is theocentric: humans will partake in the glory of God so that as uniquely created relational beings thanksgiving and worship of God will be one goal of the eschaton (§5.2.3.a.ii).

In this study, I have identified this motif in several of the considered texts. As Paul concludes his three-chapter discussion on ethical questions related to food, for instance, he states, ‘so whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God’ (1 Cor 10:31; cf. 1 Cor 6:20). Likewise, this theme is clearly evident in Paul’s eschatology. For example, when he outlines the events of the *telos*, the climax occurs when God will be ‘all in all’ (1 Cor 15:28). These connections, which have not often been identified by scholars, have been explored by J. Moltmann in *God and Creation*²⁴ where he outlines an insightful connection between Sabbath, revelation, and redemption:

If we combine the two — the sabbath as the completion of creation and the sabbath as the revelation of God’s reposing existence in his creation — then these two elements point beyond the sabbath itself to a future in which God’s creation and his revelation will be one. That is redemption. We therefore have to understand redemption as both ‘the eternal sabbath’ and ‘the new creation’. When ‘the whole earth is full of his glory’ (Isa. 6.3), when God is ‘all in all’ (1 Cor. 15.28 AV) and when God ‘dwells’ in his whole creation (Rev. 21.3), then creation and revelation are truly one. God is then manifest in the whole creation, and the whole creation is the manifestation and mirror of his glory: that is the redeemed world.²⁵

This final consideration facilitates a reading of Paul which shifts the emphasis away from anthropocentric readings to a vision of how humanity fits within the broader plan of creation and redemption, with the glory of God as the ultimate eschatological goal.

²⁴ J. Moltmann, *God in Creation: The Gifford Lectures 1984–1985: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (trans. M. Kohl; England: SCM, 1985), 276–96.

²⁵ Moltmann, *God*, 288.

At a foundational level, even though Irenaeus does not articulate the broader framework by way of new creation terminology as I have, both approaches outline the contours of how Paul understands the relation between the original creation and the new creation. No single text or formula can summarize this point. Rather, a mosaic of Pauline texts provides a framework whereby the Christ event both illuminates and reveals the divine intentions of the first creation. At a foundational level, Jesus Christ provides the *clue* to and *fulfillment* of the first creation. The hermeneutical priority Paul gives to Jesus Christ allows him freedom to articulate the newness through multiple motifs: the new Adam, the law of Christ, the bodily resurrection of Christ, the new community, the new age, the new heart, the new humanity, the new covenant, the new creation, and so on.

Each of these four considerations — hermeneutics; the relationship between redemption, creation, and the *telos*; the incarnation and Eucharist in relation to the creation; and theocentric directed eschatology — have the potential to enhance ecotheological discussion and to provide stimulation for further scholarly inquiry. And each has important implications for identifying how Paul's use of creation motifs and themes might be applied fruitfully to ecotheological discussions.

7.4 Conclusion: In the Beginning . . . in the New Beginning 'in Christ'

Although I have reached the final paragraphs of this dissertation, my hope is that it is only the beginning of a future dialogue and exploration of how creation categories are present in the Pauline corpus and how vital these components are to Paul's Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology. The works of Irenaeus bring Paul's joining of these features together into sharper focus and they demonstrate that for Paul *origins matter*. Yet Paul's principal Jewish texts on origins have been eclipsed by the new origin account that now centers on Jesus Christ. The concepts of creation, new creation, protology, Adam, the image of God, eschatology, bodily resurrection, and the church (as those who are now being re-created into the image of Christ) are not subsidiary theological creation categories for Paul. Rather, they are central to his articulation of the Christ event and to his understanding of the shift of the ages that was inaugurated as a result of the Christ event. Paul comes to this new epiphany initially through an encounter with the risen Lord, what he calls an apocalypse of Jesus

Christ; this encounter prompts a reinterpretation of Scriptures in light of his experience of Christ. As McDonough suggests, the early church interpreted Christ as one who had ‘intruded into the creation stories not as a principle, but as a person. The same Messiah who willingly bought back the creation was the one who had brought it into being in the first place’.²⁶ As outlined above, Paul’s creation theology invites stimulating considerations for ecotheological possibilities; yet more work needs to be done.

I conclude by simply revisiting one of the masterful reflections of Irenaeus. In these beautifully crafted words, Irenaeus draws upon the direct and indirect creation motifs present within Paul’s most lengthy discussion of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ in 1 Cor 15. Here, Irenaeus creatively incorporates creation allusions into an analogy that likens the creation to a musical composition: it is perfectly crafted with proper proportion and balanced interrelationships. Underlying this reflection is Irenaeus’ own marveling at the miracle and gift of the incarnation — the Word.

It is with great wisdom and delicate care that God confers proportion and harmony on what He has made. . . . Created things, in their great number and diversity, fit beautifully and harmoniously into the creation as a whole . . . and *those who listen to the melody ought to praise and glorify the Artist, and admire the tension of some notes, appreciate the relaxation in others, enjoy the moderation of those between the two extremes. Recalling that some things are symbols, they will consider what it is that each thing points to and what causes it. But they will never alter the rule, nor stray from the Artist, nor abandon faith in the one God who made all things, nor blaspheme our Creator. When someone fails to find the cause of all that he is investigating, he should recall that man is infinitely inferior to God. . . . Man, you are not uncreated, and you have not existed from eternity with God, as His own Word has done. No, by His overflowing goodness you received the beginning of your existence, and have gradually learned from the Word the dispositions of the God who made you.*²⁷

²⁶ S. M. McDonough, *Christ as Creator: Origins of a New Testament Doctrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 236.

²⁷ Selections from *Haer.* 2.25.2-4; emphasis mine. Translation by H. U. Balthasar, *The Scandal of the Incarnation: Irenaeus Against the Heresies* (trans. J. Saward; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 40–41.

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